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**Toast**

I'd like to propose a toast to Jim, Berrisford and the entire Petrucci Family Foundation for finally bringing to the forefront of the Art community the often neglected African American Artists and in my father's case the art of "persons of color" who found themselves conflicted and restricted in the pursuit of a career in "Art."

I have always known from a very early age that my father's art was vastly important to this man, who in life unconsciously used his art to address the issues he thought restricted him from attaining the goals he had set for himself.

My father was a very complex and fearful man who would have been very pleased to know that through the Petrucci Family Foundation he had finally found his audience. For to long a time he, like many others, has been one of the most well-known, unknown artists of his generation.

My father was a WPA Artist when art flourished during the 30's & 40's. The WPA was the greatest social experiment to ever take place in this country. Through their programs individuals like my father and his generation and artists of color thrived and were able to work at their craft. Thanks to the work you are doing people of my father's generation are finally finding their rightful recognition.. I am old enough to have experienced that American Renaissance. For me art means nothing if it isn't preserved and above all seen.

I feel very honored that you have sought out the paintings of my father Ralph Chessé and have seen fit to add a diverse selection of them to your growing collection with a degree of commitment that I find very humbling.

*Bruce K Chessé*