July 21, 2015

Maria Pallante
Register of Copyrights
U.S. Copyright Office
101 Independence Ave. S.E.
Washington, DC 20559-6000

RE: Notice of Inquiry, copyright Office, Library of Congress
Copyright Protection for Certain Visual Works

Dear Ms. Pallante and Staff,

I am writing to regarding copyright protection. I am retired now, but for 25 years I worked in textbook publishing for a major math and science textbook publisher, Addison-Wesley Publishing, now a part of Pearson Education.

As a designer and later senior designer, part of my job-- a favorite part-- was art direction: finding just the right illustrator for a concept and working with him or her to bring the often-complex information to life, making it accessible and comprehensible to the target range of students. The illustrators worked hard, often long hours to meet deadlines that got progressively shorter over the years. As these were textbooks, they did much research on their own to make sure the information they were presenting was actually correct, not simply trusting to guidelines from the editors via myself. They were not highly paid. In the 25 years I worked in the industry, the fees paid to illustrators did not go up substantially, if at all. (I would have loved to pay more in many cases, but had a budget to work with and it wasn't up to me.)

I am not a lawyer, and despite my background in publishing, have not much more than the lay person's understanding of copyright law. I believe strongly that the existing law is not perfect, that there is often not enough protection for artists, who see their work regularly stolen or "borrowed", i.e. used without permission or benefit to themselves. I am writing to let you know that these artists are not faceless, nameless machines cranking out artwork, but real people, with real mortgages to pay, real children to support, real cats, dogs, gerbils, etc. to feed. They work long hours for relatively little pay--you rarely if ever see their homes in the pages of glossy magazines! They have trees that fall on their studios while they're working (true story) and still strive to meet their deadlines.

Please protect their rights and their livelihoods. Big corporations: the Googles, Adobes, Apples, Hearsts, yes, even Pearsons, of the world do not need to make more money at the expense of real people: artists and illustrators, photographers, writers, musicians, and just plain folks who create. Please be just.

Thank you,
Linda Stinchfield