MEMORIAL RESOLUTION FOR ELSA ULRICH, 1885-1980

Elsa Ulbricht started her life's work in grade school. Her teacher liked the daisy she had painted and asked her to make a daisy border around the entire classroom. Thus began a remarkable career in the arts that spanned eight decades, and managed to touch every facet of the arts during that time.

Elsa Ulbricht graduated from Milwaukee Normal School in 1906, having completed the program for kindergarten teachers. While teaching in the Milwaukee Public Schools she attended the Wisconsin School of Arts. In 1911 she graduate from the Pratt Institute in Brooklyn where she studied art and manual training. Her B.A. was received in 1930 from Wisconsin State Teachers College (now UWM). Because of her leadership abilities and administrative skill, Elsa was chosen the Director of the federally funded handicraft project of the Works Progress Administration in Milwaukee. For the two years preceding her retirement in 1955 she headed the Art Department. This climaxed a teaching career of 43 years in the Department of Art.

This petite lady had wide-spread interests and boundless energy. For over 40 years her summers were spent at the Ox-Bow Summer School of Painting in Saugatuck, Michigan. Her work reached into weaving, bookbinding, jewelry and metalwork, lithography, pottery, serigraphy, spinning, etching, enameling, block printing, basketry, leatherwork, and wood turning. Due to Elsa's catholic interest and knowledge in these various art forms, she was instrumental in originating many new courses in the curriculum of the art student.

Among the groups she worked with (most of which she served as President) were: The Art Students League, which grew into the association that founded the first Milwaukee Art Center, Wisconsin Designer Craftsmen, (which she co-founded), Wisconsin Painters and Sculptors, Mid-West Designer Craftsmen, American Crafts Council, Wisconsin Players and the Walrus Club.

In 1973, at the age of 88, she held a retrospective one-woman show at the Charles Allis Art Library. That was also the year she received the UWM Distinguished Alumna Award.

To the generation upon generation of students that experienced Miss Ulbricht's class, she is best remembered by these words: "I believe in people as individuals and have a 'live and let live' philosophy. I refuse to prod my students. I want to help stimulate them to be themselves and to show initiative and effort and to solve their own problems. I believe in never growing stale. There is always something new and different to be done even with the old." When Miss Ulbricht died last week, both art and education lost a great friend and inspiration. So did we all.

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