Ruth Milofsky, our friend and colleague, died after a prolonged illness on May 15, 1982, two weeks before she was to have retired.

Born in Lexington, Kentucky in 1917, Ruth's talent and interest in art were recognized early in her childhood; after high school she went to study painting and sculpture at the Corcoran School of Art, Washington, D.C. Later, studies took her to New York, where she did work in ceramic design at Alfred University and further study in painting from Hans Hofmann and Vaclav Vytlacil. With her husband, Bernard, and two young sons, she moved to Madison, Wisconsin where he became violist of the Pro Arte Quartet.

During those years in Madison she completed her Master of Science Degree, teaching certification and her Master of Fine Arts Degree in 1959, the year she began her twenty-two year tenure at UWM. She later became a doctoral candidate at Madison and completed all the necessary course work.

It was the illness of her husband that brought her to Milwaukee to begin a long and distinguished career. Ruth was endowed with many qualities which enabled her to be a fine teacher as well as a symbol of modern woman. She carried strong ideals to fulfillment. A tireless worker for what she deemed to be righteous causes, Ruth was always ready to experiment and to learn - working on civil rights issues when these were not the most popular causes. Perhaps her most notable achievement was the creation of the "Paint Box" at Northcott House in Milwaukee's Central City where she almost singlehandedly achieved a breakthrough in teaching art to economically deprived people. Ruth, then in her late 40's, brought about through her energies and abilities, a vital program that was to serve as a model for others across the nation. This effort won for her admiration from the Black as well as the White communities. Ruth received special awards from the Urban League and Northcott Neighborhood House, and in 1972 she was a recipient of the Governor's Award in the Arts.

Within the University she was a tireless worker on behalf of human rights. She had a feeling for the disenfranchised, disadvantaged students and they, in turn, were drawn to her. Many went on to successful careers and became her lifetime friends.

Her life was like a work of art, which required not only passion but design and imagination, and because of the strength of the idea, a result was accomplished, not always perfect, but open-ended, that materialized as it grew. A fighting spirit carried her through in all aspects of her life. Some of that spirit lives on in everyone whose life she touched.

HCS:re
Joseph Friebert
Howard Schroedter
Leon Travanti