Memorial Resolution

Professor Emeritus Helmut Summ

Helmut Summ died October 14, 1992 at the age of 84 of heart problems. Born in Hamburg, Germany in 1908, he and his family immigrated to Kohler, Wisconsin in 1922. He received a Bachelor's degree from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and earned the M.Ed. from Marquette University in 1946. After a short teaching stint with the Milwaukee Public School system he was named chair of the Art Department of the UW Extension division in Milwaukee. In 1956, the date of the merger between the Extension division and the Wisconsin State College, he became a member of the UWM Art Department.

While in the department, which he chaired for one year and played a significant role in accomplishing the merging of the two departments, Helmut led five credit study tours to Europe. Much of his time and energies, however, were directed to the development and offering of the Art Survey course. To this end he travelled extensively and photographed the art and architecture throughout this continent and most of Europe. He was a generalist and committed to the contemporary, an interest he maintained up to and beyond his retirement in 1978.

As a teacher, Professor Summ's broad experience, vitality and enthusiasm infused his students with both an excitement and a respect for the arts. Affectionately known as "Papa Summ", he encouraged thousands of students to embrace art as a significant part of their lives. His teaching, however, was not confined only to the classroom. He was a much sought after lecturer to both professional art groups and non-art groups throughout the area and region. In this and in many other ways he established a liaison between the university and the community.

To support and to provide a basis in direct experience for his teaching, and also to meet the needs of a personal inner creativity. Helmut Summ was an active and prolific artist. Working in a variety of media, the image he employed was a clear reflection of his personality: vigorously expressive and strongly colorful. His work was exhibited widely and earned him a substantial number of awards and honors.

Professor Summ gave much to his students, the university, the art community and the community at large. He is survived by his wife, Helen, his son, Juris, and two grandchildren, all of Milwaukee.