DOCUMENTS OF THE GENERAL FACULTY

REPORT OF THE MEMORIAL RESOLUTION COMMITTEE FOR MCDONALD SMITH

The special committee of the General Faculty to prepare a memorial resolution for McDonald Smith, associate professor, art and art history, has filed with the secretary of the General Faculty the following report.

Sue Alexander Greninger, Secretary
General Faculty and Faculty Council

IN MEMORIAM
MCDONALD SMITH

McDonald Smith, a much-beloved teacher at The University of Texas at Austin from 1966 until his retirement in 1999, died on December 16, 2012. Born in Ft. Worth, Mac began studying painting as a teenager, although his major focus as a student at The University of Texas was zoology. Those two directions would define his future work following his graduation in 1947. After studying painting at Southern Methodist University for a time, Mac earned an MMA in medical art at the University of Texas Southwestern Medical School in Dallas. This field allowed him to combine his science background with his artistic talent. He then worked for several years in the Tissue Culture Laboratory at The University of Texas Medical Branch in Galveston, providing illustrations for a number of articles on cell activity by C. M. Pomerat and his research team. When Mac joined the U.S. Army in 1954, he was assigned to the Armed Forces Institute of Pathology in Washington, D.C. Washington also brought him into proximity with the Corcoran Museum of Art college, where he studied painting in the evenings and won several painting prizes.

Mac’s passionate love of art, which he would subsequently share with generations of students, drew him toward a career in art history, and he entered the University of Chicago in 1957. There, he completed all his coursework for a Ph.D. and in 1960/61, he carried out extensive research in Italy for a dissertation on Bolognese painter Francesco Albani. Mac began his teaching career the next year at Baylor University and, a year later, at Arizona State University, where he taught art history until joining the faculty at The University of Texas at Austin in 1966.

Mac was extremely knowledgeable about Italian art of the Renaissance, Mannerism, and the Baroque, his particular specialty. He taught upper-division courses in these areas, where his own experience as a draftsman and painter gave him invaluable insights into the crafting of works by the great artists working in these periods. Mac’s broadest impact occurred through his ARH 303 Survey of Renaissance to Modern Art course, where he taught thousands of students over the years, transforming their lives by the enthusiasm he instilled on the subject of art. Faculty who shared hours with him in the departmental Slide Collection—long before the advent of digital images for teaching—learned priceless lessons from him about Italian art and artists. In the 1970s, Mac inaugurated the first “Art History in Europe” summer trip sponsored by the Department of Art and Art History, and he subsequently taught several times in the department’s “Study in Italy” program, which he had helped to create. Over the years, Mac also shared his love of art via lectures around the state, in the Austin community, and for the Department of Continuing Education’s SAGE and LAMP programs, developing an extremely loyal following. He led his last trip to Italy in the winter of 2006.

McDonald Smith was truly an ambassador for the cause of art who made a major difference in the lives of students, faculty, and members of the Austin community.

This memorial resolution was prepared by a special committee consisting of Professors Linda Dalrymple Henderson (chair) and Jeffrey Chipps Smith.

Distributed to the dean of the College of Fine Arts on June 17, 2013, and posted under “Memorials” at http://www.utexas.edu/faculty/council/.