

**MEMORIAL RESOLUTION OF THE FACULTY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON**

ON THE DEATH OF PROFESSOR EMERITUS NORMAN WAYNE TAYLOR

Norman Wayne Taylor, emeritus professor of Art, died on July 30, 2001. Taylor came to Madison to teach at the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1963 after starting his career in California. He taught painting, sculpture, and ceramics during his thirty-two years at UW-Madison and retired as an emeritus professor in 1994 to concentrate on his art. He served as Department of Art chair from 1981 to 1984 with distinction and a high level of professionalism. He aggressively worked toward acceptance of artists' creative work as equivalent to academic research within the university setting.

Born in Nampa, Idaho in 1931, N. Wayne Taylor grew up in Northern California. He developed an interest in art at an early age and participated in the First International Exhibition at the 1939 San Francisco's World Fair. (As he recalls, the piece was a crayon drawing of flamingos.)

After a tour of duty in the U. S. Navy he reentered college at Sacramento State, receiving an A.B. in Art (Painting) in 1957. He then was awarded a Trustee Fellowship for graduate study in ceramics at Mills College where he earned the M.F.A. degree in 1959. He taught at Encino High School outside Sacramento before leaving California for a position at Northern Illinois University in DeKalb. He moved to the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1963.

Taylor grew up loving the outdoors. An avid fisherman, he spent much of his time along riversides, lakes and the ocean enjoying his solitude and commune with nature. At moments, he thought of capturing what he saw and felt about the landscape. After all, artists have shared the beauty and intimacy of nature for several generations. These spirituous moments have inspired great works of art.

But Wayne Taylor's concerns about art were those of a generation whose thoughts and actions were based on exploring new concepts and materials, striving for an expression of wit and innovation, establishing a new culture. His early work probed abstraction and images taken from our daily popular culture. He worked in clay during the early 1960's and created highly polychromed stylized objects such as fire hydrants adorning breasts or slot machines and pinball machines with strange appendages and funky decals. He lost the majority of these works in a studio fire in 1967.

His work gradually shifted to a refined, reductive approach of enigmatic forms created out of various flexible vinyls stretched over wood structures sometimes combined with aluminum. These were followed by large scaled multiple units of assembled modules made of fiberglass embedded with metal fleck colors reflecting the high fashion world of mod style.

Mr. Taylor took leave of absence from Wisconsin in 1968-69 to be Visiting Sculptor at Rutgers University while he lived and worked in a loft on the Bowery in Manhattan. There his work gained the attention of the Whitney Museum of American Art and was selected for the Whitney's "Sculpture Biennial, 1968", and again in the Whitney's exhibition, "American Sculpture Selection II" in 1969, which traveled to major U.S. museums 1969-72. His work was purchased for the Whitney's permanent collection and showcased in a national traveling exhibition of contemporary trends assembled by the Whitney. In 1970, he was included in the special exhibit, "A Plastic Presence" at the Jewish Museum of New York, also shown at the Milwaukee Museum and the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art. His work was selected for the 1975 United States Bicentennial Exhibition, "Art In Public Places," held at the U.S. Federal Plaza in Chicago.

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While his early career was established in sculpture, Taylor returned to painting and the monotype process in the 1980's. He began working with abstract images related to the landscape and evolved into bold abstractions of energized linear movement creating mass rhythms. But after undergoing two quadruple bypass surgeries in 1986 and 1989, Taylor's expression altered to a mystical, poetic, metaphysical nature that "bespeaks a personal relationship to art and the world from the view one gains while standing at death's door." What followed was "The Mandala Series" in 1989-90, watercolors and monotypes in whose image one witnesses a world that we can dream about or see only in visions. His art retains this "insight" through bold application of shapes and color alternately layered through collage and direct painting with monoprint transfer.

On a fishing trip to the Andros Islands, Bahamas in the 1995, the beauty of the spectacular clouds, skies and light that formed after the rainy, windy mornings overwhelmed him. Inspired by this strong impression of nature's grandeur, Taylor produced a series of watercolors that seem abstract, but in essence are literal interpretations of island vistas. Once again, Wayne Taylor returned to the inspiration of the outdoors.

Taylor was one of Wisconsin's most significant artists. His art is included in the collections of New York's Whitney Museum of American Art, the Milwaukee Art Museum and the Madison Art Center as well as in other important collections around the country. His artwork has also been shown at numerous galleries and museums throughout the United States and abroad.

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