

In Memoriam — Harold Hardeman (Hardy) Hanson

February 07, 2012

By [Office of Public Affairs](#), UCSC



Colleagues in UC Santa Cruz's [Division of Arts](#) have prepared the following remembrance of Harold Hardeman (Hardy) Hanson, a beloved member of UCSC's arts community since 1969. Hanson passed away on January 25.

We are saddened to learn of the death on January 25 of Hardy Hanson, professor emeritus of art. Hardy taught visual art at UCSC for many years and continued to create drawings, paintings and intaglio prints and show his artwork in a variety of galleries after he retired from the Art Department in 1994. He will be remembered for his sensitive teaching style, his intensive drawing classes, and his intricate explorations of color, line, and space.

Hardy and his family moved to Santa Cruz in 1969. He joined the arts faculty that year, appointed by the department's first chairman, Gurdon Woods. Woods led the hiring process for Hanson's colleagues in those early days of the Art Department; colleagues included Patrick Ahearne, Don Weygandt, and Doyle Foreman.

Born on February 16, 1935, Hanson took his Bachelor of Fine Arts at Yale University, and taught at University of Southern California, and at California State University, Northridge before his appointment to UCSC. During the early 1970s, Professor Hanson was one of 23 UC faculty appointed to the University's Creative Arts Institute, designed to provide opportunities for sustained creative efforts. A lifelong painter, printmaker and sculptor, Hanson operated his own handpress since his undergraduate days, and had designed, illustrated, printed and bound limited editions of poetry by Eric Baker, Estelle Kurzen, and Douglas Clayton, as well as portfolios of his own drawings.

Always passionate about the foundational skills of drawing and painting, which were central not only into his output of intricate, multiple-stage color etchings, but remained at the heart of his teaching philosophy, Hanson has been recalled fondly by his many students over the years. Betsy Miller Anderson, director of the Museo Eduardo Carrillo, remembers Hardy as one of her favorite teachers from her UCSC experience. Book artist Felicia Rice paid tribute to Hanson in a

recent statement:

Hardy Hanson was one of the three sponsors for my independent major and helped me get my first letterpress printing job in Santa Cruz (announcements for an art gallery on Cedar St.). His knowledge and appreciation of type and typography were rare on campus at the time. Without his support I might not have launched myself on my life's trajectory, certainly not in Santa Cruz. I look forward to attending his remembrance.

"I regard him as a fabulous artist, I truly do," added sculptor Jack Zajac, Hanson's longtime colleague and fellow Art Department member. "We were there at UCSC together until I retired. There's no one working in his way, with his vision. The things that he put together, some of them simple and commonplace, became objects of extraordinary distinction in his hands." Acknowledging Hanson's rigorous dedication to developing students' skills, Zajac noted that Hanson "held the point of view that drawing was fundamental." Hardy Hanson's passing has touched all who knew and worked with him. "This is a huge loss," Jack Zajac admits. "We are having a terrible time absorbing it."

In the tradition of Professor Hanson's work and philosophy and his artistic focus, a new fund has been created to support UCSC students, faculty and visiting artists whose work remains true to his spirit. Donations may be made to:

The Hardy Hanson Memorial Fund,
c/o UC Santa Cruz Foundation, Dept. 44787
P.O. Box 44000
San Francisco, CA 94144-4787

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Harold Hardeman (Hardy) Hanson

Feb. 16, 1935 - Jan. 25, 2012

Resident of Santa Cruz

Born and raised in Long Beach, California and a resident of Santa Cruz since 1969.

Educated at Long Beach City College, [UCLA](#), and [Yale University](#).

Art professor at San Fernando Valley Junior College; USC; Californial State University, Northridge; UCLA; and Professor of Art Emeritus, UCSC, College V, for 29 years where he was a core member of the UCSC Art Department.

At UCSC, Hardy formed lifelong friendships with numerous fellow colleagues and long-standing relationships with multitudes of students. Informed by his own interdisciplinary

studio practices, he shaped the ambitions of hundreds of young artists by inspiring and validating a rigorous and genuine inquiry. Known for his profound dedication, he mentored many of his former students after graduation, even after his retirement, as he continued to show a genuine interest in their personal lives and creative aspirations. An articulate and inquisitive teacher, Hardy taught the visual fundamentals of drawing and painting informed by his own passionate convictions, sharp intellect, and humor. He believed that discipline, introspection, honesty and integrity served as the touchstones of the creative process and they formed the basis of his teaching philosophy. His serious approach to teaching demanded and brought out the best in his students.

A prolific and multi-dimensional artist, Hardy's works grace several museums and numerous private collections. In his solo exhibitions, his beautiful and intricate works revealed his cerebral interests and sensitive thought process. In a career that spanned six decades, Hardy's continued experimentation with scale, color, and form enabled him to explore timeless themes through the use of diverse mediums. This evolution culminated in a series of exquisite pointillist paintings that compose his "Meditation Series."

When not in his studio, Hardy's artistic expression took its most powerful and enduring form in the four-acre terraced garden surrounding the home he and his wife Ruth designed and built in 1971. An insatiable collector, he was an early proponent of "repurposing" as evidenced by the truckloads of reclaimed concrete slabs that defined the numerous terraces that transformed their hilly and rugged property. His fine art also emphasized the challenge of using found materials to express his vision of the world and its meaning. His creative vision ranged from the macro, sculpted hillsides, to the micro, intricate lapidary constructions. Hardy's fertile mind found no object too mundane to escape his use; from the common fish-hook to the obsolete transistor, anything in quantity was rich inspiration for his imagination. His endless patience was evidenced in his dozens of espaliered fruit trees and intricate wall-pieces composed of hundreds of repeated found objects.

Hardy and Ruth's shared passions included politics, travel, books and literature, and gardening. Lifelong Democrats, their passionate political expression was ignited during the Sixties and continued throughout the duration of his life. Their avid curiosity and open hearts lead to trips to Europe, India and Mexico as well as all over the States and a shared love of reading resulted in a home overflowing with books of every genre. Together their love and passion changed their raw hillside acreage into a rich source of visual pleasure.

A tender-hearted husband, father, and brother, his loyalty to family and friends was without equal. Hardy's humor, innate kindness, and ability to make everyone in his life feel special were only a few of his many extraordinary qualities. However, his love of Ruth formed the center of his life and their fifty-five years of love, laughter, and passion inspired all who knew them. He will be profoundly missed.

Survived by Ruth, his devoted and loving wife; his four loving children, Toby Hanson (Michael Elwell), Poppy Hanson (Edgar Ehu), Jody Hanson (Matthew Schiffgens), Peter Hanson (Mary); grandchildren Sarah Elwell, James Towey (Kymmie), Candace Redongo, Sarah Hayes, Kieran and Elsa Hanson-Schiffgens, Molly Hanson, Iris and Ruby Hanson; and great-grandchildren, Justice and Kekoa Towey. Also survived by his older brother Stewart Hanson Jr. (Rosemary), and his sister Beverly Samuelson (Jack), and nephews Steven, John and Timothy Firestone, and Andrew and Benjamin Neuhart.

In lieu of flowers, donations to The Hardy Hanson Memorial Scholarship Fund, c/o UC Santa

Cruz Foundation, Dept. 44787, P.O. Box 44000, San Francisco, CA 94144-4787. In the tradition of Hardy's work and philosophy and his artistic focus, this fund will support UCSC students, faculty and visiting artists whose work remains true to his spirit.