



## Harlan H. Holladay

December 10, 1925 - June 23, 2019

Harlan (Dick or Doc) H. Holladay died on Sunday, June 23, 2019; he was 93. He was born in (Old) Greenville, Missouri, on December 10, 1925, the son and second child of Franklin Holladay and Johnnie Mae (Croy) Holladay. The family moved to Cape Girardeau in 1928, where he attended Franklin, Broadway, and May Greene Elementary Schools; during a number of summers he and his older sister, Dorothy, spent several weeks visiting their paternal grandmother and aunts, uncles, and cousins at “the old home place,” now known as Holliday Landing off Route 67 north of Poplar Bluff. He joined the Boy Scouts, attending Camp Lewallen, where he was also on the staff three different summers (the last in 1957), and earning his Eagle Scout while a student at Central High. One year he and some friends hiked some eighty miles back to Cape from Camp Lewallen, spending several days camping in the Arcadia Valley region. He also served as a paper carrier for the Southeast Missourian.

After graduating from Central High School, he enrolled as a pre-engineering student at Southeast Missouri State College for a year before being drafted into the Army in the spring of 1944. He completed basic training at Camp Hood in Texas and was assigned to the 66th (Black Panther) Division at Camp Rucker, Alabama; they sailed to England in November 1944 and crossed the English Channel a month later; his troop ship, the Leopoldville, was torpedoed

and sank outside Cherbourg harbor on Christmas Eve. The decimated 66th Division was then assigned to contain the German submarine port pockets outside Saint-Nazaire and Lorient. He spent the period between VE day and VJ day near Arles in southern France guarding German prisoners who were employed to equip American quartermaster and engineering troops being reassigned to the south Pacific.

After VJ day the 66th Division was decommissioned, and, now a sergeant, Holladay was assigned to the 42nd (Rainbow) Division and transferred to Austria, near Zell am See, where his unit was guarding prisoners working on a power project. He learned to ski, a sport which he—and later, his entire family—enjoyed for many years. From January to June of 1946, the 42nd was in Vienna as part of the occupation army, where he enjoyed going to the museums and the opera; both would remain life-long interests. Discharged with the rank of staff sergeant at Fort Dix NJ, he returned to Cape where he resumed his education at SEMO. In the summer of 1947 he and some buddies, Carney Fesler, Harold Fesler, and Fred Reich, built and operated a mini-golf course on Broadway, west of Perry Avenue.

Holladay transferred to Washington University in St. Louis in 1948 to study painting and history of art and architecture with George Mylanos, a specialist in archaeology of the ancient Mediterranean, Werner Drewes, a specialist in Bauhaus design, and painter Fred Conway. During this period he met his wife, Ruffena Calbert of Clinton KY, who was working for the Veterans Administration in St. Louis; they married in January of 1950, at the same time as he finished his B.S. in Education at SEMO.

He started his teaching career—one semester—in a fifth-grade class at Thomas Jefferson School in Normandy, a suburb of St. Louis. He studied art history and painting at the University of Iowa in 1950–51, earning an M.A. in Art. He then returned to Missouri where he taught art in high school and

served as the first art supervisor for the Poplar Bluff Public Schools until 1953. In the summers of 1952 and 1953 he taught in the summer programs at SEMO, and in September of 1953, the family moved to Des Moines, where Dick taught art at Des Moines Technical High School for two years. The University of Nevada hired him to teach art in the summer of 1955 and asked him to join the department, where he taught for three years. During this period and later he pursued an active painting career, submitting paintings to numerous open-juried exhibitions sponsored by museums in cities around the country. These paintings were regularly selected and exhibited and occasionally won prizes and/or were purchased by the museums. Among the most prestigious exhibitions were those at the Corcoran Gallery in Washington DC, the Whitney Museum Biennial in New York City, the Pennsylvania Academy in Philadelphia, and a national watercolor show, where he won an honorable mention.

In 1958 Holladay left Nevada with his family to work on a Ph.D. at Cornell University, where he wrote a dissertation on children's drawings. During three years taking classes at Cornell, he also taught as a faculty replacement in two different departments. In 1961 he took a position at St. Lawrence University in Canton NY, where he would spend the rest of his teaching career in the Department of Art. At first the only faculty member in that department, he taught both studio art and art history; by the time he retired as the first L. M. and G. L. Flint Professor of Fine Arts in 1991, the department had grown to a total of seven faculty members plus occasional adjunct faculty. He established a regular program of exhibitions in the university art gallery and organized a policy and advisory committee for acquiring a teaching collection of works of art. In addition to teaching responsibilities he was elected to the Faculty Council and to the Professional Standards Committee, and in his final year he was faculty representative to the University's Board of Trustees.

During his tenure at St. Lawrence he was able to spend several sabbaticals in Europe, including a year teaching at the American College of Switzerland in Leysin and several semesters in northern Italy. He took students to study art in Florence and Rome four times as well as to Greece, and he directed the university's London program in the fall of 1982. He was selected to participate in two summer seminars of the National Endowment for the Humanities, studying Renaissance art and architecture in Venice in 1979 and Roman mosaics between 300 and 1300 in Rome in 1984. Summer travels also took him all over Europe. He did not feel comfortable teaching works he hadn't seen, buildings he hadn't experienced, or sites of important events that he hadn't visited. On one sabbatical, for example, he visited all the eastern Mediterranean ports held by the Venetians in the late medieval and Renaissance periods.

In 1995, Dick and Ruffena moved from upstate New York to Cape Girardeau to be near relatives then living in Missouri and Kentucky and in 2008 to Saxony Village on Bloomfield Road. During his long retirement he played frequent golf as a member of the Kimbeland golf course and enjoyed frequent visits to the Metropolitan Opera simulcasts at Carbondale. He and Ruffena also visited family historical sites and pursued their interests in the history of Cape and the region and local scenic sites.

He is survived by his wife, Ruffena; their three children, Joan, of Tucson AZ and Zurich, Switzerland and her husband, Daniel Hofmann, Carol, of Oswego NY, and Jeffrey, of Mount Morris NY; two grandchildren, Andy Gardner and his wife, Betty, of Fulton NY, and Julia Gardner, of Salt Lake City UT; and two great-grandchildren, Emily and Andrew Gardner; his sister Kitty Mazina, of Charlotte NC; and numerous nieces, nephews, and their children. He was predeceased by his parents, an older sister, Dorothy Marie, and a younger brother, Joe Frank.

Friends may call 10:00 am to 11:00 am on Saturday, June 29, 2019 at Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel in Cape Girardeau.

Memorial Service will be at 11:00 am Saturday, June 29, 2019 at Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel in Cape Girardeau with the Rev. Dr. Barry Winders officiating.

Memorial contributions may be given to the Harlan Holladay Memorial Fund at Southeast Missouri University Foundation.

Online condolences may be made at [www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com](http://www.fordandsonsfuneralhome.com).

# Previous Events

## Visitation

JUN **29**. 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM (CT)

Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel  
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Rd.  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

## Memorial Service

JUN **29**. 11:00 AM (CT)

Ford & Sons Mt. Auburn Chapel  
1001 N. Mt. Auburn Rd.  
Cape Girardeau, MO 63701

# Tribute Wall

DR

“ On return visits to Canton in the early 1960s I--as an art history major at Harvard, and then grad student--greatly enjoyed my visits with Dick, both at the SLU art department building--one of the Victorian houses facing the main campus--and at his Park Street home; having seen so many of the great works of architecture and art in Europe, esp. Italy and Greece, that Dick also had enjoyed, we had much to talk about. I also really loved his paintings, and ultimately bought two: a square rather abstract "landscape," and a larger, vertical one of lofty trees, that was more realistic. (When I had moved to Texas and then Washington, it was displayed in the living room of my parents, Harry and Lone Reiff for a great many years).

*Dick loved telling stories, and a good joke, and had a ready laugh. He had wide interests in humor: he lent me his copy of "Count Palmiro Vicarian's Book of Dirty Limericks" (if I remember the title correctly; it was only 60 years ago...), from which I copied some gems; six of them I remember to this day! And in teaching ancient art, when I got to the Minoan goddess waving two snakes in her hands...I had to quote to the class [with only one bleep] one of our favorites, "Two Ladies while Dining at Crew..."*

*Dick was a fine artist, a delightful person, and--clearly--a quiet force to be reckoned with at SLU, developing the art department into something special from virtually nothing. A man still worth admiring! and emulating.*

---

Daniel Reiff - January 31, 2023 at 09:52 PM

JK

“ Dear Ruffena, dear Joan,

*I am very sorry to hear the news of Doc's death. As you may remember, he meant a lot to me at an important time in my life and professional career--the one semester I spent teaching at St. Lawrence in 1987. He and Ruffena were so kind to me, both generally because I was so far from home and my new wife Liz, and specifically after I ruptured an Achilles tendon. Doc drove me to several places--in hideous weather--to get multiple opinions about how to treat the injury. His essential help, and his practical, calming influence were important at a stressful time. I offer my condolences to you and your entire family on his passing.*

*John Klein*

---

**John Klein** - July 04, 2019 at 01:01 PM

GD

“ Ruffena and family.

*I have wonderful memories of your family and Dick. Daily I look at the wonderful painting of his which has hung on our walls from 1965. It makes my house a home!*

*Blessings on you all as you relive the memories with the family you created.*

*Affectionately, Ginny Dittman*

---

**Ginny Dittman** - July 02, 2019 at 10:32 AM

BC

“ *Ruffena, Joan, Carol and Jeff.  
These things I know and fondly remember about Dick.  
He personally found the jokes he told us as kids hilarious even if  
they were God awful.  
He was absolutely correct that Pear liquor and a demitasse of  
espresso were a winning combination.  
And he was capable of loving a dog to a fault.*  
*Brian*

-----  
**Brian Coots** - June 30, 2019 at 08:35 PM



“ *Sweet Sincerity was purchased for the family of  
Harlan H. Holladay.*



-----  
June 28, 2019 at 02:26 PM

KF

“ *Kitty Mazina & Family purchased the Country Ba  
sket Blooms for the family of Harlan H. Holladay.*



-----  
**Kitty Mazina & Family** - June 26, 2019 at 02:48 PM



“ *Full Of Love Bouquet was purchased for the  
family of Harlan H. Holladay.*



-----  
June 26, 2019 at 11:19 AM