

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS



LINDA CHOMIN

## Architect inspired all to cherish the arts

"From time to time it is good to reflect on the meaning of art in our life" and the special people that enrich our existence. I can't take credit for the first half of that worldly-wise statement written by Louis G. Redstone in an editorial for the Observer & Eccentric Newspapers in September 1993 - and the late architect/artist inspired the rest. Born in Grodno, Russia in 1903 to a Jewish family, Redstone (formerly Rutenstein) pursued life with a passion even when adversity stood in the way. He inspired those around him to do the same. I know I'm going to miss discussing art over Sunday brunch with him and his wife Ruth. Redstone died Sunday, March 30 from cardiac arrest after visiting Ruth in Beaumont Hospital. He was 99.



**Inspiring:** Louis Redstone never late age slow him down. He's pictured here with the travel sketches he showed at the Huntington Woods Library Gallery in January.

We had a routine the three of us and my sister Gwen followed after we finished our last bite of Ruth's famous kugel. Ruth would insist on the three of us going up to Louis's studio (as she affectionately called him) while she did the dishes. Once in the naturally-lit space he designed as part of the house some 60-years ago, we'd marvel over the hundreds of vibrant abstract water-colors and travel sketches completed over the years.

### Art and architecture

Redstone became enamored with the medium his last semester of architectural studies at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor in the late 1920s. His love for watercolor continued through the days of pursuing a master's degree in urban design at Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills where he studied under Eliel Saarinen. In fact, it was Saarinen who inspired Redstone to integrate art into architecture when he opened his own architectural office, first in Detroit then later in Livonia for 15 years and finally in Southfield where they're currently located.

Advocating for public art and encouraging young artists and architects are two of many traits I will remember. His accomplishments as an architect - the Michael Berry International Terminal at Detroit Metropolitan Airport, Jewish Community Center in West Bloomfield

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STAFF PHOTO BY ELIZABETH CARREON

**Journey of discovery:** Leslie Greeneisen shows William Anderson one of the portfolios and cultural boxes for Romanesque and Gothic art. Volunteers use the materials in school programs presented by the Plymouth Community Arts Council.

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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William Anderson listened intently as Jennifer Tobin told the story of the Plymouth Community Arts Council and the building renovations made possible with grants from the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

As director of Michigan's newly established Department of History, Arts and Libraries, Anderson was in town to meet with leaders of organizations and institutions in Plymouth, Northville and Birmingham to learn more about the areas he oversees.

Arts and cultural groups have wondered about the mission of the 21st Cabinet level department since Gov. John Engler announced he would sign an executive order to create HAL during his State of the State address in January 2001. Many distrusted the Governor after devastating budget cuts in 1997 forced the Detroit Institute of Arts, among others, to take drastic measures. The DIA closed half of its galleries at any one time and reduced staff by 40 percent.

Tobin, executive director of the Plymouth Community Arts Council, especially wanted to know about the goals for the department - and the future of state funding. For seven hours, representatives of the Plymouth Symphony, Historical Museum and Library, Northville Library, Arts Commission and historic Millrace Village, Detroit Public TV, and the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center bombarded Anderson with questions about receiving financial support from the State. Along the way, he explained to each the mission of the department governing five agencies - Michigan

Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, Michigan Film Office, Michigan Historical Center, Library of Michigan, and Mackinac State Historic Parks. But most importantly he informed them, funding for MCACA, the agency supporting arts and cultural programming in all 83 counties, would remain at nearly the same level. Anderson was happy to report \$23.4 million of the department's \$72 million budget would be available to not only major institutions like the DIA and Detroit Symphony Orchestra, but local arts centers, symphonies and museums.

"A major role is for us to serve as a champion for museums, libraries and arts organizations," said Anderson. "To be effective as a department, I need to build relationships or strengthen them. I don't think you can do that by sitting in an office in Lansing."

Promoting cultural tourism is one of the primary objectives of the department, said Anderson.

"If we're going to become a leader in arts and culture, we

need to attract people to Michigan to spend money in Michigan," he said. "We have to create destination. People aren't going to come here if there isn't an attraction. We need to strengthen our product and make it an experience that is engaging and memorable."

### Arts supporter

Anderson believes his experience and love for the arts will guide him in creating a strategic plan for the department. A historian and writer, Anderson spent 33 years in higher education at Carl Sandburg College in Galesburg, Ill. and West Shore Community College located between Ludington and Manistee. He also served on the Knox-Galesburg Symphony board and was lending a Sculpture in the Park project before he left Ludington for Lansing last August.

Anderson urged all of the organizations to be more enterprising and more entrepreneurial while applauding them for their ongoing efforts on behalf of the arts, including the Plymouth Community Arts Council's Cultural Diversity Series and the Birmingham Bloomfield Art Center's annual Michigan Fine Arts Competition. He commended the Plymouth

Historical Museum leadership for making artifacts accessible via a Web site and encouraged them to document rare aspects of the Lincoln Collection unveiled in February.

Anderson toured the Birmingham Bloomfield exhibition of works by 53 artists with executive director Janet Torno, state Reps. John Stewart (R-Plymouth) and Pam Godchaux (R-Birmingham), and board members Carl Muma, Lee Evelev and Dr. Myron LaBan.

"Two weeks ago I spent time with the leadership of the DSO," Anderson said. "There's always a higher bar to aspire to."

Dan Alpert and Steven Antonioti plan to do just that by expanding their arts and cultural programming at Detroit Public TV.

"We have a proposal with Greenfield Village and Henry Ford Museum to tell people the stories behind objects in the collection," said Alpert, chief operating officer and station manager of WTVS Channel 56. "Antiques Roadshow is the most popular program and we thought we'd like to run it after the Road-

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CONCERT

## Experience the arts at Nardin Park

**Let Your Spirit Soar**  
What: Festival featuring art exhibit, seminars and concerts  
When: Friday-Sunday, April 19-21, opens with an artists reception 7:30-9 p.m. Friday. Hours are 9:30 a.m. to 9:30 p.m. Saturday and 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Sunday  
Where: Nardin Park United Methodist Church, 29887 West 11 Mile, Farmington Hills. Call (248) 476-8880  
Highlights  
■ MSU Men's Glee Club concert 7:30 p.m. Saturday  
■ Live at Five jazz concert 2:30 p.m. Sunday  
Admission: No charge except for concerts, tickets \$7 each or \$10 for both performances

BY LINDA ANN CHOMIN  
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When Melvin Rookus decided to expand the music series at Nardin Park United Methodist Church, he never imagined it would turn into a weekend arts festival. Jazz, paintings, men's choral music, art seminars for young and old alike - Let Your Spirit Soar offers all that more at its third annual event Friday-Sunday, April 19-21 in Farmington Hills.

"We started the music series in 1987 and have seven major concerts from September through June but we felt we needed to include the other arts," said Rookus, minister of music.

Rookus taught choral music in Waterford Schools for 34 years and has served as director of music at Nardin Park for 25 years.

"This year we've invited 22 artists to display their work in the fellowship hall on panels and in booths. Some of the artists have work in the permanent collection of the church. This is the high point of the year. We encourage artists to be there with their work so people can have a first hand appreciation of the arts. It's a marvelous experience for people."

Wesley Berry Flowers of West Bloomfield



**Folkly characters:** Kathy Phillips is exhibiting in the "Let Your Spirit Soar" festival. Pictured is the West Bloomfield artist's watercolor painting of a day at the museum.

Please see NARDIN PARK, B6

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