

UNIVERSITY

Art history to receive \$1.2 million

□ Bequest left by late professor Marion Dean Ross, 'Oregon's dean of architectural history'

By Anne Scott
Emerald Contributor

The University's art history department will receive a \$1.2 million endowment from the estate of a former professor, University President Myles Brand announced Tuesday.

The endowment is from the estate of Marion Dean Ross, widely regarded as Oregon's "dean of architectural history." Ross died in April 1991.

"This bequest is the nation's largest private endowment for architecture library collections ... (and will be) available to everybody," Brand said at a press conference.

The bequest will establish a professorship, create a new junior faculty position and enable the library to compete for rare items that otherwise would be too expensive.

Jeffrey Hurwit, head of the art history department, said although the endowment is generous, "Measure 5 is coming at us like a freight train threatening to weaken all the components of architecture and art history. We're not out of the woods yet."

Almost nine percent of University students list a major from the school, which offers programs in art history, architecture, environmental design arts management, fine and applied arts, and planning, public policy and management, according to a press release.

Hurwit said he expects the endowment to yield about \$58,000 annually to help pay for acquisition of library materials and \$66,000 for professor salaries. He said students will now have the opportunity and resources to study art history they did not have before.

The department will use some of the money to buy original editions of rare and out-of print monographs, photographs, architectural drawings and other materials.

One of the items considered is the *Vitruvius*, a rare book of architecture. The collection will also reflect Ross' interest in Pacific Northwest architecture and anthropology, town-planning and the history of American, European, Islamic and Latin American architecture.

In addition, a nationwide search will start in February to find a junior faculty member.

Leland Roth, a professor of art history, will be the first to chair the endowment. A faculty member since 1978, Roth is "an ideal choice" for the

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chair, Hurwit said, "because his research and teaching interests greatly overlap with those of Marion Ross."

As endowment chairman, Roth's responsibilities will include developing new courses and overseeing research projects in architectural history.

Marion Ross joined the faculty in 1947 and retired in 1978, serving as head of the art history department for the last 15 years. He was 77 when he died last year.

He was instrumental in getting several campus buildings listed in the Historic Registry and began preservation efforts in Jacksonville, Ore. In 1981, the Historic Preservation League of Oregon honored Ross with the Distinguished Preservationist Award.

The state's Endowment Match Program will match the annual income at the rate of 5.5 percent in new private gifts of endowment for support made to the state's colleges and universities in the 1991-1993 biennium.

The University has a total of \$6 million available for the matching program and this award is the first made to the University this biennium. Any new private gifts of \$25,000 or more are eligible for this match in funds if they provide for faculty positions or related teaching and research support.

The Ross Chair is the third endowed professorship in AAA. The Frederick Charles Baker Chair in design and the Maude I. Kerns Professorship in Oriental art are the other two.

Colleagues who knew Ross say the gift comes from a man who never married, had no known family at the time of his death and never owned a car or a home.

Family inheritance and stock investments, along with his frugal lifestyle, accounted for much of Ross' personal fortune, said Karen Johnson, a University spokeswoman.

The Associated Press contributed to this report.

Blind faith



Photo by Michael Shindler

Sonya Singh carefully leads a cheerful blindfolded Pat Rardin around campus as part of an Acting I exercise.

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