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## Norman Bursheim, an intense zest for art

A man walks into a class of students and begins lecturing. It's an event that happens countless times on campus everyday, but in one the students see it differently. "He is such a dynamic person that he gets everyone involved," said one student.

The teacher is Norman Bursheim, art department chairperson. "His personality is forceful and that comes across to his class," comments another student. "I feel that an instructor doesn't just go to school and lecture," he commented. "I watch myself because I feel it's my responsibility to be active and to be involved."

"I like teaching," Bursheim continued. "As long as I know that I can do

the art, I don't feel a compelling need to go out and do it. I enjoy being in the art environment. But my real joy is having the students and working with them.

"I have the old mid-west work ethic in me," he said. "If you were are a good provider you'll make it to heaven or something like that."

Bursheim received his first degree, a B.S. in art instruction, from Moorehead State College. He then attended the University of North Dakota where he graduated with a M.A. in fine arts. Eventually, he came to Oregon and attended Lewis and Clark and Portland State University, and University of Oregon where he later graduated with a M.F.A.

"At the time, I was graduating from Moorehead, several of the art students began looking for a college to go to," Bursheim said. "We learned about Robert Nelson, who had attended the Chicago Art Institute, and some of the things he was doing at the University of North Dakota. Five of us eventually ended up going there.

"I was living in Minnesota and received a job offer from Rogue River Community College," he said. "But, after I had resigned my job in Minnesota and accepted the position at Rogue, I was told that there were no openings. The art instructor had said he was going to resign, but later decided not to.

"I knew that I wanted to work in Oregon," he continued, "so I contacted the Oregon Educational Association." Shortly thereafter, he was offered a teaching position at Oregon City High School. Then late in 1967 when Clackamas Community College was being formed, he was offered a job here.

In addition to teaching, and being the Art Department chairperson, Bursheim has been instrumental in promoting art on campus and advising the Art Advisory Committee.

The 15-member Art Advisory Committee is the group responsible for art on campus, Bursheim explained. "They're the group that pulls the funds together to buy art pieces. They also report to the College Board of Education.

"The Art Committee has tried to bring a variety of art to the campus," he commented. "And, as long as we deal only with quality pieces, I see no reason not to have a variety.

"Although most people don't realize it, the College is very fortunate to have the art pieces we have," Bursheim continued.

"Gordon Gilkey, curator of the Portland Art Museum, recently purchased one print by Robert Nelson. Gilkey was delighted to get just that one print. He was amazed to learn that we have seven Nelson prints," Bursheim said.

"But, more importantly," he added, "the College only had to pay for four prints. The others were donations or bought with grants. Bursheim noted that two of Nelson prints are in an art text. "Just being in the text will have an amazing effect on the value of the prints.

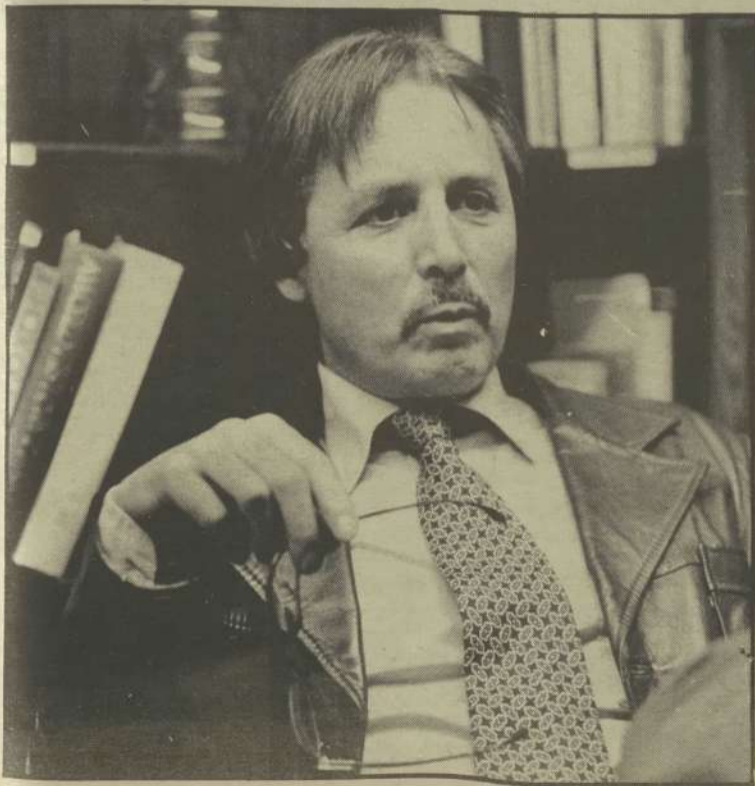
"There's a great deal of academic snobbery among colleges," he commented. "We're one of the few colleges to have western art on campus. As long as we have quality pieces there's no reason not to have western art especially in a community like ours.

"I've had several staff and faculty members come up and say how much they enjoy the Meek statue," Bursheim continued. "Mark Essig, a faculty member, said it was one of the greatest pieces we have. I also had this little old lady come up and hug me.

"One thing that seems to bother some people is that we spend money on art at all," he commented. He noticed the Kelly mural, located in Barlow Hall, all of the Nelson prints, the Poets Chair, the sculpture by the cafeteria, and many of the other pieces were purchased for \$4,000.

To commission the "Poet's Chair" the artist would charge \$20,000 dollars. The large Nelson prints would sell for \$1,000 and the small prints would sell for \$800, conservatively. "I'd bet we've made some of the best art investments of any college," he said.

Commenting about retirement, Bursheim said "I've never met an older artist who's senile. Robert Nelson once said 'the life I've lived I would trade for no other.' I agree totally."



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