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Former UI adjunct, artist Gerald Eskin dies at 76

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A former University of Iowa adjunct professor, entrepreneur and artist with pieces in collections around the country has died.

Friends and family describe Gerald Eskin, 76, who died Tuesday in Iowa City following complications from heart surgery, as a man of many interests who loved to teach and learn.

"He had a kind of intelligence that challenged you and intrigued you, but he was also very funny," said Laurie Bedlington, 64, of Kansas City, Mo., who shared a friendship with Eskin for the past 40 years. "He was a potter. He was a man of many interests. He was an artist in the truest sense. And, as much as I loved his pots, I loved sailing with him more."

Eskin, who split time amongst Iowa City, Aspen, Colo., and Chicago, served as a photographer for the Air Force Reserves, taught marketing and market research at Stanford University and at UI.

He later founded Information Resources, Inc., a market-research firm based in Chicago involving grocery products being scanned by barcode.

"He was just as personable as can be ... just a heart of gold," said Gary Wicklund, of Coralville, who was a colleague of Eskin's at UI. "It's a loss. He was a great individual."

Eskin retired from his marketing company in 1995 and turned his focus to art, particularly ceramics.

"One of the many things I appreciated about him is he seemed to make the most out of his life. He excelled at teaching, as an entrepreneur and as an artist. He continued to grow his entire life, which I think is very inspiring," said Leah Eskin, 48, his daughter who lives in Baltimore.

As an artist, he made plates, cups, large platters, and eventually towering sculptural forms. His work can be found in the collections of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, the Museum of Arts & Design, Longhouse Reserve, the Mint Museum, the UI Museum of Art and the Racine, Wis., Art Museum.

He later returned to UI as an adjunct professor of studio art and art history and rekindled an interest in photography. He served as a member of the advisory board of the UI Museum of Art.

He also had a love for his dog, Claude, who died in 2006. On his website, gerryeskinstudio.com, a tribute concludes, "In lieu of flowers, feed a dog some table scraps or let your dog off the leash for a few minutes."