

Robert J. “Jack” Lambert

August 25, 1927 – August 8, 2014

Professor of Freehand Drawing, Jack Lambert, instructed in and directed a program of visual communication established at Cornell University's founding for landscape design majors. He demonstrated a remarkable combination of natural ability in drawing, sketching, and watercolor painting with ability to impart techniques and knowledge to his students. In recent decades, his elective Freehand Drawing courses also nurtured the artistic development of innumerable students throughout the University.

Born in Tremont, Indiana, and raised there and in Dayton, Ohio, Professor Lambert served in the military in 1945-1946. He then entered Cornell University as an undergraduate majoring in Zoology (Anthropology), where he also assisted in the teaching of drawing. He served as fisheries aide, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Woods Hole, Massachusetts, summer of 1949. Lambert received a Master of Science degree in Anthropology and Zoology at the University of Michigan in 1951. In 1951-1952, he was chemical laboratory assistant for Dayton, Ohio, Water Department, analyzing industrial waste and domestic pollution. He spent much of 1952-1953 in anthropological fieldwork in the mountains of Peru in cooperation with the Cornell-Peru Project, the University of San Marcos, and the U.S. Point Four Program, before receiving a letter from Professor Elizabeth Burckmyer, offering an instructorship in drawing at Cornell. Accepting the offer, he returned to Ithaca fall, 1953, where he would spend the next 45 years teaching drawing and watercolor painting in the Freehand Drawing program. Anthropology still interested him, and he devoted many of his first summers to fieldwork in Cuba, Jamaica, and the British West Indies. In following summers he painted in the islands of the Fiji group, South Pacific, as well as along the New England Coast, Nova Scotia, and Quebec. He met Nina E. Weingarten at Cornell studying for her masters in Child Development in 1955; they were married in 1956.

During unsalaried leave, he continued professional improvement through formal and informal studies with Norman Daly, Cornell University, 1957; Woodcut studies with Antonio Frasconi, Pratt Contemporary Graphic Art Centre, New York, NY, 1957; lithography course with Richard

Graf and painting course with Richard Diebenkorn, California School of Fine Art, San Francisco, CA, 1959-1960; and study and practice of Japanese Sumi ink painting with Chiura Obata, Berkeley, CA, 1960-1961.

He was promoted to Assistant Professor in 1958, Associate Professor in 1965, Professor in 1977, and Professor Emeritus in 1998. He was a valued member of a faculty where art and science did not always intermingle comfortably, and led the Freehand Drawing program from 1962 until his retirement.

Sabbatical leaves in 1968 and 1975 were devoted to sketching and watercolor painting of landscapes in England. In 1981 he toured and sketched gardens of the eastern United States seaboard.

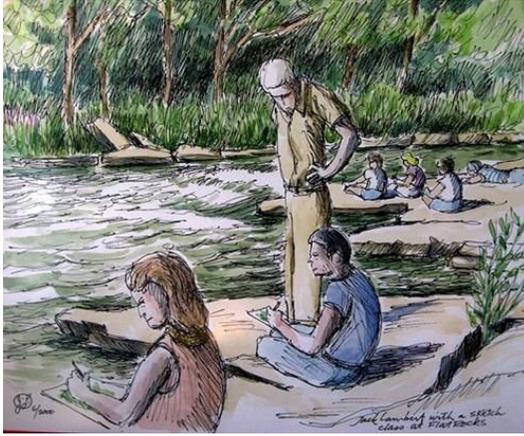
Lambert's artwork has been exhibited in numerous galleries, museums, and juried shows – including Upstairs Gallery and Ithaca College Group Show. His art work is found in many private collections and was featured in publications, including *Good Times Gazette* and *Cornell Countryman*. Cornell University commissioned many of his works. Kendal of Ithaca featured a retrospective of his work fall, 2013, and in 2015, the Village of Cayuga Heights, for which Lambert's artwork is still found on the letterhead, also featured a retrospective of his work in celebration of the Village Centennial.

Gardening was a passion he shared with his wife, Nina, creating together a much toured rock garden at their home in Cayuga Heights. He collaborated with Professor William C. Dilger on the design of the rock garden at the Cornell Plantations. He taught numerous mini-courses and workshops at Cornell Plantations, Boards of Cooperative Educational Services, and meetings of the New York Federated Garden Clubs. He participated in running the American Rock Garden Seed Exchange in 1975-1976. From 1973-1976, he volunteered with the Tompkins Girls Hockey Association as timer, assistant coach, and coach.

Even in this increasingly digital age, a stub of pencil and a scrap of paper remained Professor Lambert's primary means of expression, and he always found time and inspiration to sketch a little every day. Jack inspired generations of artists who now engage in all walks of life, from the life sciences, to communications, marketing, medicine and a host of other disciplines. He taught the power of keen observation, and encouraged students to pause to record nature's beauty everywhere. He possessed a wry wit, strong opinion, and a unique lens through which he viewed the world. And his dedication to teaching made him beloved by students. After additional years of emeritus teaching concluded, he continued to teach an informal class with a select group on campus.

Visit the Jack Lambert memorial website, <http://jack.lambert.muchloved.com/>, [for examples of his art and where friends, former students, and admirers have posted remembrances.](#)

Thomas C. Weiler, chair; Marcia Eames-Sheavly, Carl F. Gortzig



Self-portrait: Professor Jack Lambert in 2000 with a sketch class at Flatrocks, Ithaca, New York.