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SHELDON EXHIBIT PAYS TRIBUTE TO ARCHITECT GENE MACKEY

ST. LOUIS, MO - The Sheldon Art Galleries presents *Remembering Gene Mackey (1938-2016)*, a tribute that celebrates the architectural and artistic contributions of Eugene J. Mackey, FAIA, founder of Mackey Mitchell Architects, March 2-April 21, 2018 in the Bernoudy Gallery of Architecture. **An opening reception is scheduled for Friday, March 2 from 5 – 7 p.m.** and the galleries will be open until 9 p.m. for First Fridays in Grand Center. The Sheldon Art Galleries are open Tuesdays, Noon – 8 p.m.; Wednesdays – Fridays, Noon – 5 p.m.; Saturdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. and one hour prior to Sheldon performances and during intermission. Admission is free. For more information on exhibitions, visit the galleries' website at TheSheldon.org. *The exhibition is made possible through in-kind support by Mackey Mitchell Architects, with additional support from Philip and Mary Mackey and Alper Audi Inc., Structural Engineers.*



In a career that spanned more than 50 years, Gene Mackey infused more than 3,000 spaces with a spirit of humanity. Henry S. Webber of Washington University in St. Louis called him “the most humanistic of architects” and critic Robert Duffy, writing for the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, noted that, “What distinguishes his work is elegance, confidence, gravity, an understanding of the eloquence of understatement, and an appreciation of beauty and utility, along with generosity, humanity and grace.”

Illustrated with photographs, water colors, travel sketches and architectural drawings, the show is arranged as a time-line, representing five decades of Mackey’s contributions to the architectural profession and the City of St. Louis. A six-week trip to Europe with his father while Mackey was a sophomore at St. John’s University, opened his eyes to the world of architecture.

Mackey graduated with a bachelor’s degree in architecture from Washington University, then after graduating with a master’s degree from Harvard, decided to open a one-man firm in downtown St. Louis, which has since become one of St. Louis’ largest architectural firms. His father, Eugene J. Mackey, Jr., was also a noted architect with Murphy & Mackey, known for architectural innovations that included the Climatron at the Missouri Botanical Garden, Olin Library at Washington University and the Court of Honor of the World War II Memorial.

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Mackey also embraced his father's drawing skills, producing hundreds of travel sketches, and drawings for his family. These sketches, along with several watercolors will be on view in the gallery.

Along with his devotion to architecture Mackey was committed to the City of St. Louis. In 1992, the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* noted that he was "one of a tiny handful of local architects ever to go public with views on issues of urban design." He produced several architectural lecture series and "trolley tours" to inform the public about the importance of architecture. He received numerous honors, including elevation to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Architects (AIA), and served two terms as president of the local AIA Chapter. Mackey received the chapter's Gold Honor Award, the organization's highest individual award.

The number and size of Mackey's projects grew over time, including the Chaifetz Arena at Saint Louis University, Christian Brothers College High School (CBC), Central Institute for the Deaf and the Highlands Office Building, along with the restoration of hundreds of buildings throughout the city. He was also grateful to have the opportunity to build on his father's legacy with the renovation of the Old Cathedral and the current renovations of Soldiers Memorial and Court of Honor, originally designed by the elder Mackey more than 60 years before.

He found great joy working on fountains and landmark projects at the Missouri Botanical Garden, and cherished his life-long relationship with the Washington University campus. "Gene designed beautiful and functional buildings," said Webber in a website tribute. "He made the work of other architects and planners better, enriching the lives of everyone he touched."

Mackey died on November 27, 2016 from an aggressive form of squamous cell carcinoma (skin cancer) at Barnes-Jewish Hospital. He was 77 years old.

"Gene was one of our most accomplished and dedicated alumni, serving as an ambassador for architecture and an advisor for the School and the University," said Carmon Colangelo, the Ralph J. Nagel Dean of the Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts at Washington University in St. Louis. "His contributions are profound and lasting. They will resonate as part of the great legacy of the school." Jamie Kolker, Washington University architect and associate vice chancellor for facilities added, "Gene was a dear friend, trusted colleague, inspiring mentor and amazing advocate for the architectural profession. He has deepened my understanding of the built environment, always reminding us all to think first about the experience and not the physical. His impact on our community, its individuals and the profession is deep and will endure forever."

The not-for-profit Sheldon Art Galleries exhibits works by local, national and international artists in all media. Over 6,000 square feet of the galleries' spaces on the 2nd floor are permanently devoted to rotating exhibits of photography, architecture, music art and history and children's art. A sculpture garden, seen from both the atrium lobby and the connecting glass bridge, features periodic rotations and installations, and the Nancy Spirtas Kranzberg Gallery on the lower level features art of all media. The Sheldon actively supports the work of St. Louis artists in all mediums and features a dedicated gallery with museum-quality exhibits by St. Louis artists, past and present.

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Image caption: Alberici Corporation Headquarters, Courtesy of Mackey Mitchell Architects.