University Museum at UNH Features Scheier Exhibition

Lori Gula

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DURHAM, N.H. – The University Museum at the University of New Hampshire will highlight the accomplishments and works of Ed and Mary Scheier, two former UNH faculty members who rose to the top of the American studio pottery movement and whose works are coveted by collectors worldwide.

“Learning from the Masters: The Legacy of Ed and Mary Scheier” exhibition runs Sept. 5 to Dec. 19, 2003, at The University Museum in UNH’s Dimond Library. It will feature a portion of the university's collection of Scheier pots, as well as works by their former students and artists influenced by them.

On Oct. 4, Ken Browne, executive producer of “Four Hands, One Heart: Ed and Mary Scheier,” will join the University Museum for a special program that will feature selected out-takes from his film. Exeter potter Kit Cornell will demonstrate Scheier techniques. The program begins at 3 p.m., and will be followed with a reception. The event is sponsored by the Friends of the UNH Library, and is free and open to the public.

The Scheiers came to UNH in 1940 with dual appointments: Ed Scheier as ceramics and pottery instructor and Mary Scheier as an artist-in-residence. The move benefited two decades of students, enriched the local arts community and launched their own careers as internationally renowned studio potters.

The story of Ed and Mary Scheier is a seven-decade love story, beginning with a chance meeting as Works Progress Administration artists in the rural South during the Depression, to their first experiments with pottery at the Tennessee Valley Authority Ceramic Laboratory and their first pottery studio, Hillcrock Pottery, in Glade Spring, Virginia, which led to winning a national ceramic prize.

During their employment at UNH the Scheier's visited Mexico several times and became interested in both the archaeological artifacts they saw and the weavings done by the Zapotec Indians, for whom Ed began to create designs for weaving. Working at their craft and teaching UNH students, the Scheiers set the standard in the American studio pottery movement during the 40s, 50s, and 60s. They retired from UNH in 1960.

The university’s collection of Scheier works includes pots of various shapes and sizes, and large, flat blue plates. In addition to pieces on display in the University Museum exhibit, patrons can view displays of Scheier works on the fourth and fifth floors of the library.
The Scheiers’ work has been exhibited in a number of American museums including the Currier Gallery of Art, the Art Institute of Chicago, the New York Museum of Modern Art, Worcester Art Museum, Walker Art Center, University of Arizona Museum of Art, Boston Museum of Fine Arts and the Addison Gallery.