

# NEWS

## CSU Remembers Dr. Walter C. Leedy, Jr.

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The Cauldron News Editor

Throngs of mourners filed into the Panel Room on the third floor of Fenn Tower on Friday to celebrate the life of Dr. Walter C. Leedy Jr., CSU professor and former chair of the university's Art Department.

Pieces from his collection of over 8,000 Cleveland postcards were projected on a large screen at the front of the room. Images included: Cleveland Stadium and skyline at dusk, Trinity Cathedral, the ticket lobby of Union Station, the Cathedral of St. John and the Cleveland Public Library.

There was standing room only as the sounds of Chopin's *Prelude No. 4, Opus 28, in E minor* filled the room to commence the memorial service.

Leedy, 64, passed away at the Cleveland Clinic on Nov. 8. He had leukemia.

"This very, very large gathering speaks volumes about the affection and respect people had for Walter," said CSU President Michael Schwartz. "[This is] a celebration of a life of dignity, affection, hard work, caring about art and architecture and, most importantly of all, a life of caring about students. He lived that life as well as any of us ever has."

Schwartz spoke of Leedy's tireless efforts to defend freedoms of speech and expression, particularly when he accepted, with "grace, enormous dignity and conviction," the responsibility of safeguarding the People's Art Show, which indiscriminately exhibits all entries submitted. In previous years, critics have claimed that the show contains too many con-

troversial pieces that should not be displayed.

This year's installment of the People's Art Show is currently on display through Dec. 15 in the Cleveland State Art Gallery, a fitting testament to Leedy's unwavering defense of personal and academic freedoms.

Schwartz also said Leedy was a key contributor to the plans for a new visual and performing arts center at CSU, so much so that Leedy was among the very first to see architectural renderings for the project.

"We had email exchanges from time to time," said Schwartz. "I was looking forward to working with him on fundraising for the project, but suddenly he was gone."

Steven Litt, arts and architecture critic for *The Plain Dealer*, said Leedy, who was extremely active with many historical and restoration associations, "illuminated the history of Cleveland," and "rescued facts and images from oblivion and made it so we can understand them."

Litt went on to speak of Leedy's passion for architecture, his drive for defending local buildings in danger of being altered from the architect's original vision and his profound love for the city of Cleveland.

"Walter's work is unfinished," said Litt. "It is up to us to carry on in his place. It is up to us to continue the project to conserve the best of the past as Cleveland struggles to find a path for the future."

Leedy, who just this year established the Walter C. Leedy, Jr. Endowment Fund to benefit the area of Cleveland history in the

CSU Library's Special Collections department, was remembered by Diane Karpinski, a judge in the 8<sup>th</sup> District Court of Appeals, as having a great affinity for Polish culture.

He studied in Poland for a year and traveled there often throughout his life. Leedy spoke fluent Polish and loved Polish cooking, often taking friends to dine at the Seven Sisters restaurant in Slavic Village.

Karpinski said she spoke with Leedy two months ago. He just received new medication that made him feel "frisky."

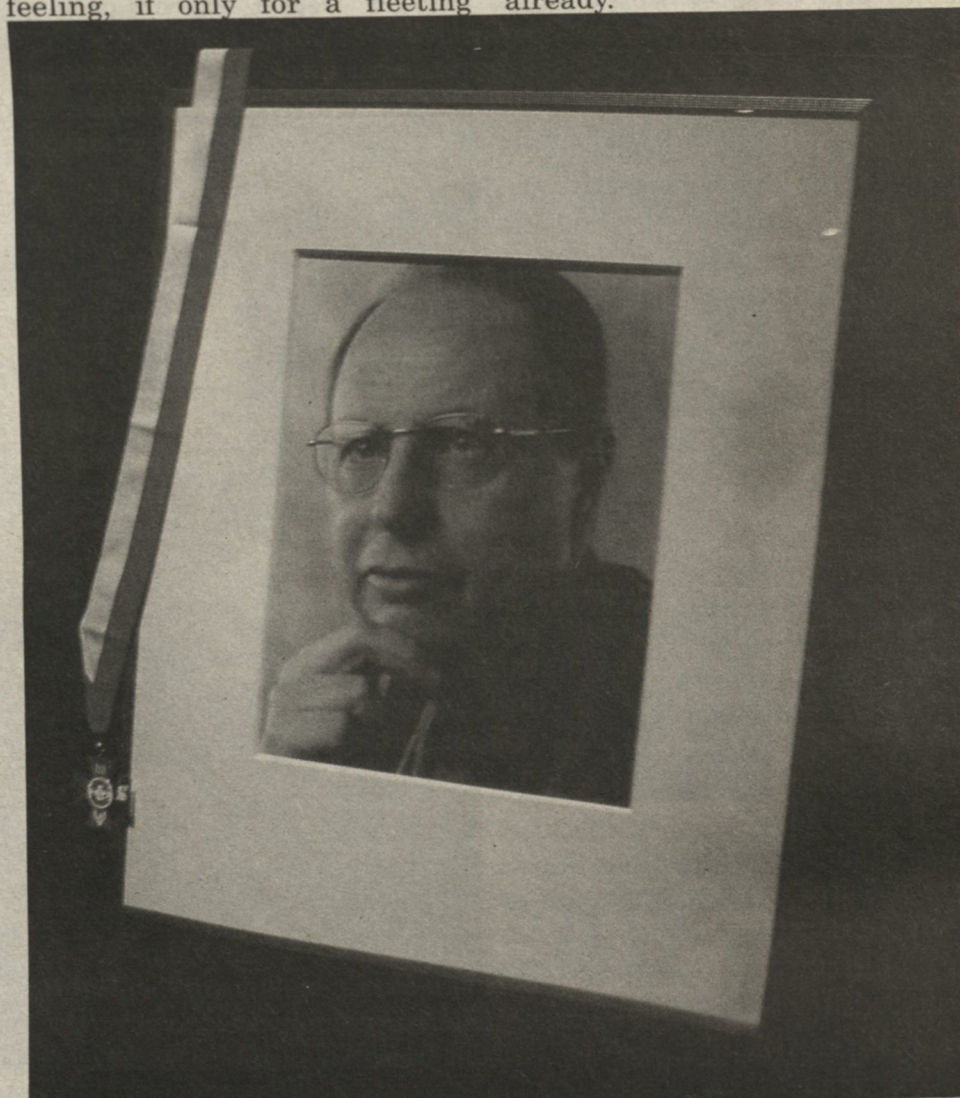
"He thoroughly enjoyed that feeling, if only for a fleeting

moment," said Karpinski.

Leedy joined the CSU faculty as assistant professor of Urban Studies in 1972. He taught art and architectural history and history of the urban environment.

Leedy published three books and multiple journal articles. He was also an international authority on late medieval architecture and a past recipient of the CSU Senior Faculty Research Award.

"Walter knew the community and its resources," said William Barrow, Special Collections librarian in the CSU library. "We valued and admired Walter very much, and we miss him terribly already."



A photo of Leedy was on display at the front of the room at the crowded memorial service. (Photo by Ashley Sager)