

Sidney Chafetz

CHAFETZ Sidney Chafetz, renowned artist and professor emeritus of art at The Ohio State University, died January 12, 2013, at his home in Columbus, Ohio. He was 90. Chafetz was passionately interested in politics, justice, education, and literature and almost equally fond of puns, jokes, and bawdy humor. To him, being an artist meant "using satire to stab at pomposity, whether in my own field of academe or in our political world" and "honoring the great poets and writers who speak to the human condition." These beliefs permeated his art. He produced memorable images chronicling political foibles and outrages from the 1950s through the first decade of the 21st century; "academic satires" of life on a large Midwestern college campus; countless portraits of authors and poets as varied as Sholem Aleichem and Amy Lowell; and moving prints celebrating his immigrant ancestors and heritage as a Jewish American. Chafetz also believed his art should challenge viewers never to forget "the evil mere mortals can do when they abuse power." His Perpetrators series depicting individuals who bore responsibility for the Holocaust captured this belief. Born on March 27, 1922, in Providence, Rhode Island, Chafetz enrolled at the Rhode Island School of Design in 1940. He was drafted into the U.S. Army two years later, and served until 1945. As a soldier in the famed 99th Infantry Division, he was injured in the Battle of the Bulge. After recovering, Chafetz returned to the Rhode Island School of Design, graduating in 1947. He then went back to Europe and continued his professional training at L'Ecole Americaine des Beaux-Arts in Fontainebleau, France; the Académie Julian in Paris; and with artists Fernand Léger and Stanley W. Hayter. He exhibited extensively from 1947 onward, with his work regularly represented in major print exhibitions worldwide, and in solo shows in Paris, New York, and other cities in the United States and abroad. After arriving to teach at The Ohio State University in 1948, Chafetz was instrumental in establishing and nurturing the printmaking program in the Department of Art. He retired from the university as professor emeritus in 1982 so he could concentrate on his own work. Chafetz remained active as a working and exhibiting artist throughout his life, with ideas for new projects percolating even in his last days. His deep appreciation for literature sparked his longtime involvement with Ohio State's Logan Elm Press. His relationship with Logan Elm began with the press's first broadsheet publication in 1978. His honors and awards included two Fulbright Fellowships, a Louis Comfort Tiffany Award, a MacDowell Fellowship, and a Ford Foundation grant. His prints are held in private and corporate collections worldwide, and in such museums as the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Cleveland Museum of Art, the Library of Congress, the Museum of Modern Art, the Morgan Library, the New York Public Library, the Philadelphia Museum of Art, and the Columbus Museum of Art, a major repository of his work. He was elected to the National Academy of Design in 1981 and received the Ohio Arts Council's Governor's Award in 1991. His work is represented by Sherrie Gallery in Columbus. Chafetz was preceded in death by his son Jonathan and his beloved wife, Adrienne Bosworth Chafetz. Survivors include sons, Dan Chafetz (Tucson, Ariz.), Adam Chafetz (Columbus), and Seth Chafetz (Detroit, Mich.); stepdaughters, Karen Elzey and her husband, Chris (Washington, D.C.); and Dana Marshall and her husband, Wes (Fredericksburg, Va.); grandson, Kenny Chafetz and his companion, Allie Klunk (Columbus); and great-granddaughter, Lucy Chafetz (Columbus). He is also survived by his brother, Lester Chafetz, and sister-in-law, Jan (Leawood, Kan.), along with countless friends and lifelong students who knew him as encouraging, demanding, erudite, and witty. Funeral services will be held at 12 Noon on Tuesday, January 15th at THE EPSTEIN MEMORIAL CHAPEL, 3232 E. Main St. with Rabbi Sharon Mars officiating. Burial will follow at New Agudas Achim Cemetery. In lieu of flowers, donations are requested to the Adrienne and Sid Chafetz Printmaking Residency Fellowship Fund (contributions may be sent to Chafetz Fellowship Fund, 1165 Kinnear Road, Room 101A, Columbus, Ohio 43212; checks should be made out to The Ohio State University, with the notation Chafetz Fellowship Fund, #482383). Online guestbook at www.epsteinmemorial.com

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