

Larry Sommers, who taught printmaking and was Instructional Technician in the School of Art at the University of Washington in Seattle, died on Thursday, April 2, 2009, after a heart attack and open heart surgery at age 55. He was in Chicago attending the Southern Graphics Council Conference at Columbia College. He was surrounded by friends and family at the time of his death. Born and raised in Michigan, he had lived in Seattle for the past 30 years. He is survived by two grandmothers, Jeanette Collins and Marian Sommers, mother Jean Gordon, sisters Cindy and Kristy, and brothers Roger and Randy, cousins, nieces, nephews, aunts, uncles, many long time Seattle friends, and hundreds of friends in the art and labor union worlds.

Larry earned a BFA in Printmaking at Central Michigan University in 1975, and an MFA in Printmaking at the University of Oregon, Eugene, in 1978. He worked at the University of Washington since 1985 and was master printer to visiting artists. He managed the printmaking, painting, and fibers studios and was advisor to the Student Printmaking Association at the university. Additionally he taught at the Pratt Fine Arts Center and was a consultant to Shev Shoon/ Ballard Works and Artech in Seattle. He was on the executive board of the Book Arts Guild and a founding board member of the Seattle Print Arts, as well as having memberships in the American Print Alliance and the College Art Association.

Larry Sommers owned and operated Inky Dink Press since 1982. Corporate clients included the United Parcel Service and Weyerhaeuser, Inc. Larry had a scholarship at the Anderson Ranch Art Center, CO, in 2008, and residency at Centrum Foundation, WA, in 1992. His expertise in papermaking, paper castings and all aspects of printmaking welcomed collaborations with artists Barry Herem, Tom Jay, Max Karst, Jeffrey Mitchell, and Scott Fife.

Larry was a wonderful and charismatic teacher to many students and he was also known for his irreverent political posters. He was also a proud and active member of the State Employees Union # 925. He curated an exhibit of Seattle printmakers (Ink + Paper) at the G. Gibson Gallery, Seattle, in December, 2005, and his own work was included in several other exhibitions. Larry's personal artwork is included in the collections of the Center for Study of Political Graphics, Los Angeles; Special Collections – Suzzallo Library, University of Washington; Portable Works Collection, Seattle City Light; Irkutsk Museum of Fine Arts, Soviet Union; and the Escuela Nacional de Artes Plasticas, Mexico City.

Please visit 'Friends of Larry Sommers' on Facebook for comments & photos, or the memorial page on Seattle Print Arts web site. Larry was also a puppeteer, great whistler, and a very warm, generous, and funny man. We were never bored. A memorial party is being arranged at a later date in May.

- Contributed by Gail Gibson, Jill Hughes Richey, & Amy Hamblin, Seattle (known as Larry's "common law sisters" while in Chicago at the hospital)