

ANGELO JOHN "JACK" GRANATA, age 86, died March 10, 2009, at DCH Medical Center. Mr. Granata, professor emeritus of art, is survived by his wife Clara (Topsy) Granata, his daughter Diane Thompson Granata, his son Gary Granata, and his grandson Anthony (Beau) Thompson. His family was by his side when he passed away.

Granata came to the UA art department in 1949 and taught sculpture and other courses until he retired in 1988. He served as department chair from 1968 until 1981, and directed the University Art Gallery (now known as the Sarah Moody Gallery of Art) until his retirement. Before coming to Tuscaloosa, he served in the Navy during World War II for three years. After he was honorably discharged, he studied sculpture at the University of Iowa, earning BFA and MFA degrees. He married Clara Louise Woods, known to her family and friends as "Topsy," in 1948.

Jack Granata was a productive and respected sculptor who worked in several media. He exhibited in every UA art department faculty show from 1949 to 2008. He participated in numerous invitational exhibitions, notably the Museum of Modern Art; Forum Gallery in New York; Los Angeles Museum of Art; New Orleans Museum of Art; Museum of Fine Arts, Boston; the St. Louis Museum of Art; Des Moines Museum of Art; the Davenport Museum of Art; and the Birmingham Museum of Art. His works are part of the permanent collections of Georgetown College in Kentucky, the Figge Art Museum and Grinnell College in Iowa, and UA's Sarah Moody Gallery of Art.

As director of the University Art Gallery, Granata established and solidified its policies and procedures. Under his direction, the gallery underwent renovations and improvements, such as a new lighting system in the 1970s. He brought in many traveling exhibitions, including several from the Smithsonian, in order to expose and enrich students' visual education. Granata also initiated the cataloging of the growing Permanent Collection, on which Rita DeWitt, his graduate assistant in the early 1970s, worked. In an interview earlier this year, DeWitt, who earned her BFA in Graphic Design in 1970 and her MFA in photography and printmaking in 1972, described Granata's intuitive and exacting ability in hanging a show, merely "nudging" one object in a group to make everything come together: "He had great three-dimensional sense of how to arrange objects in space," she recalled.

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