



# Gordon G. Goetemann

April 24, 1933 – September 29, 2016

Resided in Gloucester, MA

## Obituary

Gordon Goetemann, 83, Educator, Painter, Rocky Neck Art Colony Community Activist, passed away peacefully at home on September 29, 2016.

To all who wander throughout the Rocky Neck Art Colony, the courtyard with yellow-cushioned wooden benches in front of Gordon and Judith Goetemann's art gallery is a warm, welcoming place--a colorful thread in the tight-knit neighborhood, an inviting space for locals, tourists and art patrons from near and far to share low-key banter or debate the meaning of life.

Born and raised in St. Louis, MO., Gordon earned his BFA at Notre Dame and his MFA at the University of Iowa. During the summer of 1953, following his junior year at Notre Dame, he found his way to Gloucester where he studied under Umberto Romano, a formative experience which influenced his future works. It was also where he fell in love, with the dramatic light, the shoreline, the culture of Cape Ann, and with Judy Steele, a fellow Romano student who later became his wife and partner of 58 years. Together they raised 4 children. In 1977, Gordon and Judy opened the doors to their gallery at 37 Rocky Neck Ave, put the yellow cushioned chairs out, and joined one of America's oldest working artist colonies.

Aware that the colony's strength ebbed and flowed, Gordon became active in its steering committee and dedicated himself to making the community strong and able to resist East Gloucester's gentrification pressures.

He helped inspire key players to get involved in the creation of SeArts (Society of the Encouragement of the Arts on Cape Ann), the Rocky Neck Cultural Center and the Artist Residency Program at RNAC, renamed in 2010 in his honor. Thanks to their joint efforts, the Colony's strength is flowing again.

Summers on Rocky Neck were the treat that followed 9 months of hard work teaching, painting until 3 a.m. and shoveling chest-deep snow drifts in St. Joseph, MN, where Gordon taught art history and studio courses at the College of St. Benedict and St. John's University.

He was most fulfilled by his 40 year teaching career, working within a culture steeped in Benedictine values alongside many dear friends and colleagues. Former students would often recall that they had signed up for an easy course titled "painting", then got bowled over by "the toughest class they ever loved". Gordon taught by example, challenging his students to live an "examined life", to question and define their values, often within the context of their religious precepts, then create their artwork based upon what they had learned.

Gordon's studio contained as many papers filled with longhand notes on his philosophical queries as it did tubes of oil paint. He thought long and hard before he'd pick up the paint brush.

Transfiguration of form and spiritual resurrection were common themes of study, examples being his Celestial Islands series and his magna opus on Gustav Mahler's Symphonie II (Resurrection). Though raised in a devout Catholic home, he was, at heart, a humanist, a moralist and a seeker of truth. Knowledge was a tool used to facilitate the examination process. And knowledge was a commodity Gordon rarely lacked -- except when it came to the fate of his hallowed Notre Dame football team's end-of-season scorecard, or the answer to the twelve letter word on 23 across, third and seventh letters being Q... (He loved his puzzles!)

Students who traveled with him to the Louvre, the Uffizi or the Prado would often try to stump him on the names of the most obscure paintings, to no avail. He'd name it, then study the work silently for a long minute and expound on the work's uniqueness, origins and influence on movements to follow. He possessed encyclopedic knowledge and total recall, a pristine mind, even while his body was failing him.

Of his art, he told Art New England in an interview two years ago: "I always see myself as a synthesizer of the past, working to keep it vital in terms of contemporary culture," he explained. "My expertise is in the history of the visual form.

"There is no experience anywhere else that is like it. Love would be the closest comparison...it gives me a reason for living."

Judy Goetemann and the neighbors invite all readers to come visit the galleries on Rocky Neck, have dinner, take in an event at the Cultural Center.

While there, please come have a seat on the yellow cushioned benches and celebrate the spirit of the neighborhood, the Colony, and Gordon.

In addition to his wife, Judith Steele Goetemann, he is survived by his four children, Elizabeth Scholes and husband Garrett of Kittery Point, ME., David Goetemann of Gloucester, Mark Goetemann of Lincoln, Chris Goetemann of Gloucester; grandchildren Ava and William Scholes, Owen Goetemann, Theo and Adelle Goetemann; and his brother Gerald Goetemann of Parkersburg, W.V. Visiting hours will be held Friday, October 7, from 4 to 7 pm at the Greely Funeral Home, 212 Washington Street, Gloucester.

A private family service will follow at the Greely Funeral Home on Saturday morning at 10:00 a.m. A celebration of Gordon's life gathering will take place at the Rocky Neck Cultural Center at a future date.

Contributions may be made in his memory to the Rocky Neck Cultural Center to support the Goetemann Artist Residency Program.

For online condolences, please visit [greelyfuneralhome.com](http://greelyfuneralhome.com).

Obituary above from the web page original post and guest book:

<http://www.greelyfuneralhome.com/obituary/Gordon-G.-Goetemann/Gloucester-MA/1659145>