

ROWLAND P. ELZEA
1931-1995

Douglas Schoenherr

His many colleagues and friends in the Pre-Raphaelite world will be saddened to learn of the sudden death of Rowland Elzea on 17 December 1995 at his beloved cottage in Kent.

Born in Columbia, Missouri, Rowland earned bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Missouri, followed by painting and graphics studies in New York. To the end of his life, he continued to paint and draw, though he underrated his real talents with characteristic modesty. There is no question that his painting helped him immeasurably as a curator and art historian.

In 1958 he secured employment in the Delaware Art Center, now the Delaware Art Museum, at Wilmington and rather surprisingly stayed there for his entire career--to the great good fortune of that institution. After serving as the Curator of the splendid Pre-Raphaelite Collection, he became Curator of Collections and finally Associate Director and Chief Curator, earning the well-deserved accolade of Chief Curator Emeritus on his retirement in 1993.

During his thirty-five years of service at the museum, he organized more than 300 exhibitions and saw the collections expand from less than 800 works to over 11,000. More than any other single person, Rowland was responsible for establishing the national and international reputation which the Delaware Art Museum enjoys today. In many ways his scholarly expertise developed directly from the collections and concerns of his museum, with the result that he successfully wore many different hats and created enviable reputations in a number of diverse fields.

In Pre-Raphaelite studies he is above all remembered for his fine catalogues of the Samuel and Mary R. Bancroft Collection, which were so popular that they went under Rowland's authorship through no less than three editions. For many of us, his crowning achievement remains the pioneering exhibition which he organized with his wife, Betty, the outstanding Sandys scholar: *The Pre-Raphaelite Era: 1848-1914* (1976), the catalogue being one of the major American contributions to Victorian studies. Susan Casteras, Curator of Paintings at the Yale

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