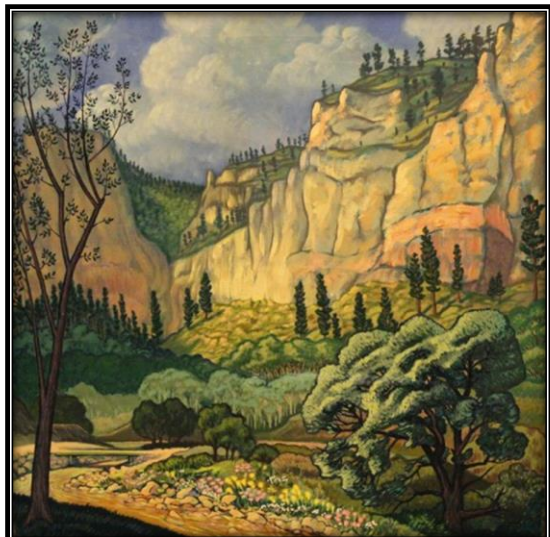


A Life Remembered
Richard Lindsey Fort

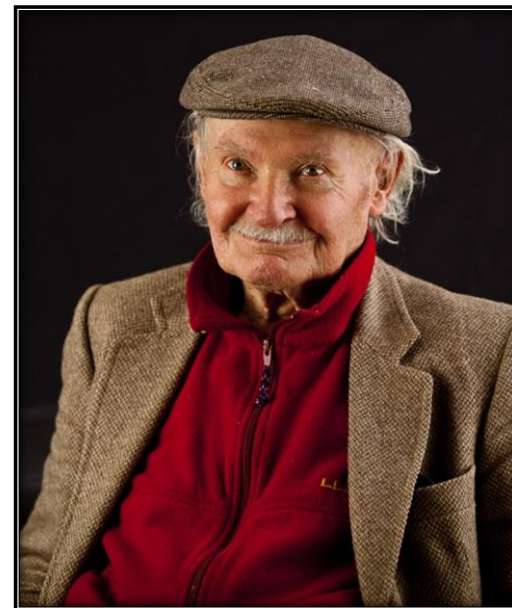


*Born - July 6, 1922,
Mitchell, SD*

*Died – September 13, 2016,
Sturgis, SD*

*Graveside Service—
Friday, September 30, 2016, at 11:00 a.m.
Black Hills National Cemetery
Sturgis, South Dakota*

*Celebration of Life—
Saturday, October 1, 2016, 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.
Spearfish Canyon Lodge near Lead, South Dakota*



A Life Remembered
Richard Lindsey Fort

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Do not stand at my grave and weep; I am not there; I do not sleep.

I am a thousand winds that blow; I am the diamond glint on snow.

I am the sunlight on ripened grain; I am the gentle autumn's rain.

When you awaken in the morning's hush, I am the swift, uplifting rush
of quiet birds in circled flight; I am the soft stars that shine at night.

Do not stand at my grave and cry; I am not there, I did not die.

- Joyce Kilmer

Dick was a prolific painter and composer, but he was best known as a leader of two decades-long projects. He and fellow cross-country skiers worked with the U.S. Forest Service to create the Eagle Cliff Cross Country Ski Area in the Northern Hills. Dick also was a founding member of ACTion for the Environment, formed to protect the Black Hills from damage threatened by open-pit gold mining.

Dick's father, Lyman, was principal of the local high school and his mother, Mildred, taught grade school and was a composer. She taught Dick piano. As a boy, Dick also painted and drew cartoons, and he taught himself to sculpt roadside alabaster. In summers the family camped in the Black Hills. Eventually his parents bought a cabin in Spearfish Canyon, where Dick hiked, climbed and fished for trout.

The Fort family later moved to Sioux Falls. Dick graduated from Washington High School in 1940. Later he attended Grinnell College in Iowa, majoring in English and German.

In 1943, Dick was called up from the Army reserves. He trained in Ohio with a special German-language unit and in London as a cryptanalyst. After D-Day, Dick served with combat units in France, Belgium, Holland, and Germany, intercepting and decoding German radio messages. He earned battle stars for pinpointing enemy positions, some of them during the Battle of the Bulge. He was honorably discharged at Christmas in 1945.

After the war, Dick returned to Grinnell College to finish his degree, and he earned a second degree from the Art Institute of Chicago, supported in part by the GI Bill.

In 1956, Dick began a 28-year teaching career at Wilbur Wright College in Chicago. During a 1960s sabbatical, Dick returned to Europe to visit galleries, museums, cathedrals and other architectural landmarks. He drew on those experiences for his own art and for the courses he taught. In Chicago, Dick often took his sketchbook to the jazz joints of Rush Street. He also drew inspiration from artists ranging from 17th century Baroque painters to 20th century abstract expressionists.

Most summers during his teaching career, Dick returned to the family cabin on Spearfish Creek to paint, compose, hike and fish. He also organized popular Sunday volleyball games in Spearfish Canyon, and his reputation as a maker of chokecherry and dandelion wine grew with each vintage.

In 1984, after he retired from Wright College, Dick moved permanently to the Black Hills to the small community of Englewood, not far from Spearfish Canyon. There, inspired by Buckminster Fuller, Dick built a home of connected geodesic domes, which became a weekend headquarters for his large, eclectic group of friends. Dick organized cross-country ski expeditions in winter and hikes in summer. In his 70s, he took up mountain biking. When gold prices shot up in the early 1980s, sparking a new gold rush in the Black Hills, Dick was among the first to see the risk. And he took action, recruiting and organizing environmentalists and testifying before regulatory agencies, the state Legislature and in court.

Dick also created space in his home for a small music studio equipped with 1970s consumer electronics and two keyboards. There he composed 24 Black Hills-themed symphonies, each in a different key. Those works remain mostly unheard, but a 2014 documentary about Dick's life, "Fort: a Spearfish Canyon Rhapsody," used some of them as a score. A 2014 coffee-table book also preserves some of Dick's art. The impact of his life, however, reaches further. KELO TV reporter Kevin Woster summed it up: "If the human spirit can live on in a landscape, Dick Fort's will surely live on in Spearfish Canyon."

Dick was preceded in death by his parents and his brothers, Donald and Gerald Fort. Survivors include Dick's nephew, Michael Fort (Yvonne), and their children, Jason and Melissa Fort, and Dick's niece, Sandra Larson (Mark) and their children, Chad Larson and Carrie Morris.

Condolences may be sent to the family at www.kinkadefunerals.com