

## **Dr. Mario Prisco**

Mario Prisco, a beloved figure in the history of National Association of Schools of Art and Design, passed away in Alfred, New York, on September 5, 2017. He was 87 years of age. Mario was one of those absolutely necessary people, necessary in so many ways, so necessary in his time. In every situation, he knew what to do, he knew how to do it, and he knew how to help everyone involved keep a sense of perspective and a focus on what was truly important. He did this in large part with a brilliant and gentle wit, quick apprehensions of underlying realities and their humorous dimensions, all of which were combined in amazing explanatory constructions that left colleagues agreeing and laughing at the same time. Time and again, the laughter promoted wise solutions, brought people together quickly and bonded them firmly in service to others and to the fields of art and design.

Day by day, Mario's abilities were applied in art and design institutions. He taught Art at Nason College in Maine from 1955-1967. He worked as leader of the Fine Arts program at the Moore College of Art; later, and to the end of his academic career, as an administrator and teacher at the New York College of Ceramics at Alfred where he was Dean from 1984 to 1989, and 1996-97. He volunteered early for service in NASAD, where his knowledge, skills, and gifts were recognized from his very first contributions. He served the association in many capacities, but primarily as a visiting evaluator and consultant, and as member of the Commission on Accreditation from 1979 to 1984 and Chair from 1984 to 1987. He served as Vice President of the Association from 1987 to 1989. He became a Fellow and Life Member of NASAD in 1990.

In his work for NASAD and for member and applicant institutions, Mario always concentrated first on students and their development. He knew what was required in the professions of art and design, he knew what was necessary to keep students safe and productive, and he sought best efforts and high achievements in all aspects of teaching and learning, and in all aspects of art and design. He was a reasoned and reasonable man, experienced, thoughtful, genuinely humble, equally concerned about students in every specialization, about every size and type of institution, about helping people and institutions through struggles as well as appreciating and applauding outstanding results. He was a man who understood multiple gamuts and the powers and possibilities inherent in them, a man readily attentive to specific composites, their parts, and their internal and external interactions, a man who saw not just needs, but ways to meet needs based on the circumstances and natures of those needs, a man who loved people and their work and wanted them to share his own joy in the privileges of life in the visual world, the privileges of special sight and insight gained through substantive unremitting effort to communicate visually with clarity and force.

His contributions to and through NASAD are too numerous to name, and by now, too numerous to know. Perhaps first among them, however, is his combination of unstinting service to, and unlimited faith in students and his colleagues, with his profound, exemplary commitment to supporting the continuities underlying productive successful work no matter where or when. NASAD expresses its deepest appreciation for Mario Prisco's generosity, and for the many outstanding ways he contributed to the success and continuing work of the Association, and to art and design in higher education.