

A Remembrance—Neil Goodman

The unexpected passing of James Yood is both profoundly sad and shocking. We at the Examiner and among his many colleagues, grieve for his family. Our first thoughts of sadness and loss are for his wife Lorraine and his daughter Lily.

The Chicago Art community is deeply affected by his death. He was a friend, colleague, mentor, writer and critic. Our memories and thoughts of him at this time are poignant and bittersweet, and I am certain, that I am just one of many who are remembering and reminiscing about Jim today.

Jim was a powerful and influential writer, a charismatic and nurturing teacher, and a looming and empathetic presence in the Chicago Art community. His words sparked generations, and his encouragement and compassion marked the beginning of many of a career, and gave a voice to others who were more established. On all levels, he was a “*mensch*”, meaning someone of noble character, to both admire and emulate. I like legions of others, held Jim in the highest regard. His care and concern were constant, and the generations he nurtured will in turn nurture others.

My long friendship with Jim started when we were young faculty members at Indiana University Northwest in the early 1980's. Jim was hired as a part-time art historian shortly after completing his master's degree at the University of Chicago. I was an assistant professor in the department of fine arts. I lived in Pilsen and Jim lived North. As we both taught on Tuesday's and Thursday's, Jim would take a bus to 24th and Halsted and then catch a ride with me to Gary Indiana. If the landscape was stark and desolate, our conversations were not, and were most often the most memorable part of my day.

After several years, Jim eventually left for a more permanent teaching position, including Northwestern and then finally at the school of the Art Institute, where he was Associate Professor of New Arts Journalism. Concurrent to his teaching, he was also editor of the New Art Examiner as well as a frequent contributor to numerous art magazines, including Art Forum and Glass Art Aperture and Art LTD. Jim extensively published numerous catalog essays, wrote introductions to books, and lectured both nationally and internationally. His career was in all ways exemplary, and his influence profound and lingering. Without hesitation, as a scholar and critic, he was the voice and words of the Chicago Art community and perhaps our most important and influential critic.

As a community, we say “*kaddish*” for Jim. His spirit and presence were a gift to us all, and I like many others, feel grateful to have known him and to have called him my friend. If his life was shorter than what we hoped for, his influence was not. His shadow is long and his presence will linger. He was loved and he will be missed.