

## LEGACY CIRCLE PROFILE

### MARIAN MOULE



Photograph by Harry Drinkwater

Jim Moule was taking in the LACMA exhibition *California Design, 1930–1965: “Living in a Modern Way”* when a video near the end of the exhibition caught his eye; it was a

promotional video made in 1956 for the Pasadena Art Museum’s second annual California design exhibition. The short commercial profiled three designers featured in the exhibition—Sam Maloof, La Gardo Tackett, and Jim’s mother, Marian Moule. “It brought back so many memories,” he said. “It was an emotional experience.”

The LACMA exhibition was one of two Pacific Standard Time shows to feature Marion Moule, who passed away in 2011 at the age of ninety-nine. The other, *Common Ground: Ceramics in Southern California, 1945–1975*, in which she figured much more prominently, was at the American Museum of Ceramic Art in Pomona. Moule had been a student of three seminal ceramics artists of the day, Richard Petterson, Marguerite Wildenhain, and Peter Voukos. In Voukos’s class at the Los Angeles County Art Institute, she was the lone female student (and the oldest) among the “boys,” who included Ken Price, Billy Al Bengston, and Paul Soldner. Moule exhibited her work all around Southern California in the 1950s and ’60s; she also accepted notable commissions and developed a commercial practice for a short period.

In 1970, due in part to her age, Moule’s output as an artist tapered off. Her love and support of the arts, however, did not. At LACMA, Moule was a longtime member and would bring her two sons often. In the mid-1980s, she increased her annual support by becoming a President’s Circle member; later she directed her support to acquisitions by contributing to the Collectors Committee from 1996 to 2007.

Love for the arts was a common trait in Marian Moule’s family. Her grandfather, Edward G. Crawford, was a master patternmaker, and once notably won a national competition for the design of the United States Post Office boxes. Her father, James M. Crawford, was a graduate of the Art Institute of Chicago and aspired to a career as a commercial artist. “It’s a little hard to get started as an artist if you’re married and have to put meat on the table, so he got a part-time job as a draftsman for a small automobile company,” said Jim. “Well, one thing led to another and he became chief engineer of Chevrolet and vice president for engineering at General Motors.” Despite his changed career path, James Crawford’s passion for art did not dissipate. Upon retirement he moved to Southern California, returned to painting, and became the chairman of the board of directors at the La Jolla Art Center in 1955.

Marian Moule honored her father in her most generous gift to LACMA, establishing a charitable gift annuity in 2004 as part of LACMA’s *Transformation* campaign.

“The charitable gift annuity was a wonderful gesture from Marian,” said Diana Veach, Associate Vice President of Gift Planning at LACMA. “It provided a steady stream of income to Marian, while at the same time adding essential funds to the museum’s endowment.”

Moule’s longtime support, from her earliest days of membership to her increased support of the collection and generous planned gift, has impacted LACMA’s ability to provide exhibitions and programs over the years, and will continue to do so for generations to come. “She thought the arts were important,” her son said. “They wouldn’t exist without public charitable support. It’s as simple as that.”