

# Kenneth A. Larson



The American Artist, Poet, Musician, Historian, Historic Preservationist. -- Kenneth Alan Larson

The American Artist. A native of New Britain, CT., Kenneth A. Larson was a graduate of Pratt Institute and an internationally collected artist. The Smithsonian displayed part of a series of drawings known as "The Children", which was exhibited by the New Britain Museum of American Art (Larson remains the youngest artist ever exhibited there).

Among hundreds of other honors accorded him throughout his career, Larson was the recipient of the Senegalese National Cultural Award. His work is represented in the collections of: The White House; The New Britain Museum of American Art; The Wadsworth Atheneum; The City of New Britain, CT, etc. He was also author of *A Walk Around Walnut Hill*, 1975

"New Britain has lost a major artist," said Sarajane Pickett, city planner. "Most of all, he was an advocate for New Britain and loved it with all his heart."

Mr. Larson, who lived at 136 Emily Drive in New Britain before moving to Hartford in August, was owner and president of KALARSON Gallery in New York. He also maintained an office in Hartford with several other artists.

Born in New Britain on Aug. 2, 1947, Mr. Larson had an extensive career as a historian and lecturer throughout the Northeast. He published dozens of books, booklets and a brochure documenting the history of New Britain buildings, parks and other landmarks.

One of the most notable, "A Walk around Walnut Hill," detailed the architectural history and significance of nearly 100 buildings in downtown New Britain near Walnut Hill Park.

"He really felt as though our past was not respected enough, that we ignored rather than celebrated our historic resources," Pickett said. "He thought we were destroying our history."

Mr. Larson began his preservation crusade in the 1960s when New Britain officials, like many others throughout the nation, embarked on "urban renewal" plans, demolishing old buildings.

For 25 years, Mr. Larson dedicated himself to painting and preserving the city's past. Of his more than 250 artworks, at least 100 depict New Britain's history.

He was involved in numerous arts organizations, including the Historic District Study Committee; the New Britain Arts Council, where he served as director; and the New Britain Institute, where he was an honorary director.

At the time of his death, Mr. Larson was an instructor with the adult education program at New Britain High School and a mentor with the gifted and talented program. He also was writing the libretto of an opera.

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Birth: Aug. 2, 1947  
New Britain  
Hartford County  
Connecticut, USA

Death: Nov. 14, 1994  
Hartford  
Hartford County  
Connecticut, USA

Family links:

Parents:

Marion Hortense *Bjorkman* Larson (1924 - 1987)

Kenneth Aaron Larson (1913 - 1966)