

From: Presidents Office <presidents-office@cca.edu>

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Subject: [All Faculty] Remembering Steve Ajay, CCA professor emeritus

Dear Faculty and Staff,

I write with sadness to share news of the passing of Professor Emeritus Stephen Ajay, founding chair of CCA's Writing and Literature program, and a beloved teacher and mentor to generations of CCAC and CCA students. He was 78.

Steve joined the CCAC faculty in 1967 and taught here until 2014—building a 47-year legacy of mentorship, friendship, and inspiration that touched students, faculty colleagues, and staff alike. He was one of the first people who welcomed me to CCAC 24 years ago, and his warmth and compassion were qualities I could always rely on whenever I had an opportunity to meet with him. He brought these same qualities to the classroom, where he relished his role as a writer among artists, often teaching with faculty beyond Humanities and Sciences, in painting or sculpture. He was a guiding spirit to artists and writers alike.

In a note to Steve's friends and colleagues following his passing, professor Emeritus John Laskey, the founding chair of CCA's MFA Writing program and Steve's close friend, wrote, "In a lifetime of poems Steve wrote of the meanings and emotions that visit each of us daily but that we fail to recognize or are unable to express. To read one of his poems is not to forget it." He included Steve's final poem, written a few days before he died. I'm honored to share it here with you.

In the Mirror

Our
vanity
in the face
of infinity

is the
something
to behold

To have known Steve is not to forget him, and those of us who knew him are fortunate indeed. My thoughts and condolences are with all those in our community who knew him as a friend, colleague, and mentor, and especially with his family—his wife Anne; daughter Sybil; daughter Lael, an alum of CCA's Textiles program; and grandson Lucas.

Sincerely,

Steve