

# Obituary

## DANIEL CATTON RICH

Daniel Catton Rich was born in South Bend, Indiana, April 16, 1904, the son of Daniel and Martha (Catton) Rich. He became an outstanding art museum administrator and a connoisseur of art with a wide range of interests. He seemed most drawn to European painting and contemporary American painting but prints, photography, sculpture, and oriental arts all claimed his attention. He was an ideal museum man and his associates were always discovering new fields in which he had experience and had gained knowledge. For example, when it became necessary to select for museum ownership the best pieces in a houseful of early American furniture, Dan Rich had helpful advice to offer, saying his knowledge of the field went back to his college days when he earned a little extra income appraising furniture. Whether writing or lecturing or assembling art works for an exhibition, he had the ability to transmit to others his understanding of and enthusiasm for the arts.

He came to Worcester as director of the Art Museum in 1958 after a notable career at The Art Institute of Chicago. He had graduated in 1926 with a Ph.D. degree from the University of Chicago, where he had been elected to Phi Beta Kappa, and the following year he had taken postgraduate courses at Harvard. He then joined the staff of the Art Institute as editor of its bulletin, eventually becoming curator of painting and sculpture, director of fine arts, and, ultimately, director from 1945 to 1958. During the earlier years he had some time for writing and the following works appeared: *Seurat and the Evolution of 'La Grande Jatte'* (1935), *Henri Rousseau* (1942), *Georgia O'Keeffe, 1915-41* (1943), and

*Degas* (1952). He also edited and compiled the *Catalogue of the Charles H. and Mary F. S. Worcester Collection* (1938).

The administration of the big Art Institute, ever growing larger, came to occupy all Mr. Rich's time and he had none for study of the arts. He was happy to move to a smaller but 'very distinguished museum' where he would attempt to fill gaps in the permanent collection, increase the 'educational effectiveness' of the institution, and arrange 'loan exhibitions of great works of art' so planned as to attract enthusiastic popular response as well as critical acclaim. His program was a great success. The exhibitions 'Picasso, His Later Works' in 1962, 'Sculpture by Houdon' in 1964, and the sensational 'New American Realism' of 1965 all proved fascinating to people of the Worcester area (and from far beyond). Additions to the museum's collection were equally exciting. Most notable were Rembrandt's *St. Bartholomew* (acquired in 1958), a majestic eleven-headed Kannon (Japanese, 9th century, 1959), and, in 1963, *Mr. John Freake and Mrs. Freake and Baby Mary*, a pair of early Boston portraits which had been the cornerstone of the exhibition 'Seventeenth-Century Painting in New England' on which the American Antiquarian Society had collaborated with the Worcester Art Museum in 1934.

Mr. Rich was a visiting lecturer at Harvard in 1960-61. In 1966 he was appointed to the state Board of Higher Education and in 1969 was elected vice chairman. He was a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences and in 1956 he received from Phi Beta Kappa its Distinguished Service Award. He held an honorary degree in fine arts from Coe College, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, and honorary degrees of doctor of letters from Clark University and Anna Maria College. He was decorated by the French, Dutch, and Italian governments.

Mr. Rich was elected to membership in the American Antiquarian Society in April 1965. He had received many honors

but this was one which gave him special satisfaction. He wrote to Mr. Shipton: 'As you realize, I am not a scholar in the American field and probably do not deserve to be with you. But my admiration for the Society is so great that I am proud to accept.' In 1970 he agreed to serve on the Society's National Advisory Committee. He left Worcester that same year but demonstrated his continued interest in the Society with annual contributions and attendance at the October 1974 meeting. His attendance at meetings before leaving Worcester was good considering that he frequently travelled outside the country. When present he was an attentive listener to the papers, occasionally taking notes so that he could discuss them with his wife.

On September 23, 1927, Mr. Rich had married Bertha Ten Eyck James. She was a sensitive and dedicated poet and a writer of literary criticism. Her death on May 14, 1968, deeply saddened her husband in his last years in Worcester. He retired from the directorship of the Worcester Art Museum in 1970 with the title of Director Emeritus and went to live in New York. ('Actually, that's where the action is in the art world,' he told the press.) He was a trustee of the Solomon R. Guggenheim Foundation, which operates the Guggenheim Museum and much of his interest was centered there. He completed work on *The Flow of Art* (Atheneum, 1975), selecting essays and criticisms of Henry McBride, and providing an introduction. Another task of this period he greatly enjoyed was selecting from the collection of the National Academy of Design in New York the pictures to be included in the exhibition 'One Hundred and Fifty Years of American Art', which was shown in the autumn of 1975.

On October 15, 1976, Dan Rich died in New York of cancer. He was stricken while he still had much he wished to accomplish and the keen mind and enthusiasm to do it. His former and more recent associates and his many friends are deeply aware how much the art world has lost in his death.

Mr. Rich is survived by three sons: Michael James Rich of Northbrook, Illinois, Stephen Ten Eyck Rich of Paris, Anthony Catton Rich of New York City, and by one daughter, Penelope (Mrs. Rodney Jarchow) of Indianapolis. He also leaves seven grandchildren.

Louisa Dresser Campbell

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