

Paul and Katy Steinmetz and Their Work

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In *A History of Architects and Their Work at the Marin Art and Garden Center*, I wrote about several notable people and places on the grounds. Since that time, much more information has come to light, expanding the list of those who made a mark on this site. This is the story of a couple who made significant contributions with their hard work and talent.

Their names were Paul and Katy Steinmetz. Paul grew up in Los Angeles and served in World War II as a staff sergeant for the Army Corps of Engineers, in both Europe and the Pacific. Katy was from Chico, a fourth generation Californian. Both earned degrees in landscape architecture from the University of California, Berkeley, with Katy one of the first women to do so. They arrived in Marin in 1946. Married for 47 years, they spent most of them at work and play throughout Marin and the Bay Area.

Over their long careers together, they developed plans for residential, business and school projects. Paul was remembered for his design and construction focus, while Katy specialized in plant identification and habitat. Credits include San Rafael's Davidson and San Pedro schools and The Branson School in Ross. They were often quoted for advice and made presentations to landscape and gardening groups.



Old photos show them with their young daughters at the Art and Garden Fairs of the late forties and early fifties. They not only enjoyed the event as visitors but played active and significant roles in their production. Responsibilities included Publicity Chairman in 1947, landscape designer in 1949 and Show Designer/Landscape architect in 1950.

At the Center, they were also quite active in one of the Founding groups, the Marin Society of Artists. One major project was supervising construction of the Frances Young Gallery for the Center in 1948. Even before this, he was active with the Artists in much of the preparatory work.



Frances Young Gallery, undated, Moya-RHS Photo Archive

Paul would continue to speak for the Artists at the Center and was in good company with fellow artists in the 1964 photo below.



MSA founders gather at gallery, looking at some rental art, seated is Mae Ralston, Paul Steinmetz, Paul Romer, A. (Red) Raymond, 1964, Moya-RHS/IJ Photo Archive

Another notable accomplishment was their Sundial, displayed at the Fair in the photo below. The sundial was a feature in their own garden and the design was featured in the September, 1953 edition of Sunset Magazine. The article provided detailed instructions for anyone wanting to construct their own.



Sundial on display at Fair, Steinmetz Family collection, Photo by George Wheeler

Paul and Katy had four children, Susan, Janis, Polly and Paul. Polly, who teaches Photography at College of Marin, and Janis, of San Rafael, shared many wonderful memories and photos with Moya/RHS and add another wonderful chapter to our stories from the early days at the Marin Art and Garden Center.

Sources:

Polly Steinmetz and Janis Gostlin, daughters of Paul and Katy

Obituary, Paul Steinmetz, Marin IJ, May 18, 1988, A4

Obituary, Katy Steinmetz, 2004

John Robinson, "A Sun Clock for your Garden", Sunset Magazine, September, 1953, 80-84.