

## Distinguished Alumni - Mike Simpson



Mike graduated from Urbana High School in 1959, The Ohio State University in 1963, and Wright State University in 1971. He taught art classes and art history at Urbana High School for fifty years, an outstanding accomplishment. During that time, he was also an adjunct instructor at Urbana University and at Clark State Community College in Springfield.

He was a member of the Champaign County Arts Council through which he shared his love of art and architecture, often giving tours of the city with an emphasis on the architecture

His own art reflected his interest in college and professional sports; his paintings were exhibited at the College Football Hall of Fame and in venues throughout the mid-west.

In conjunction with his interest in sports, Mike was the athletic trainer at UHS for thirty years. In with that same interest of sports, he began the planting of memorial trees on the hill for past athletes and students. That led to the inception of the George Scott Ring of Honor, and he became one of the initial inductees.

Mike was a life-long member of the First Presbyterian Church in Urbana and sang in the choir for fifty-eight years.

Local artist Mike Major, who met Simpson in 1974, made the following comment: “We had a lot in common. He was such a wonderful spirit. It was easy to get to know him and work with him, along with his students, and see him try to bring the best out of his students. He was a tremendous influence. I have said there is a ripple effect of his loving touch on hundreds and hundreds of students and others in the community that will go on for decades.”

Sally Johnson, a former member of the Champaign Arts Council board and a member of the Champaign County Historical Society made the following comment: “Mike was always generous in his praise of anything we did together. He was beyond reproach in anything he ever attempted. He seemed simply to be precise and have very high standards in everything that he did.

Mike Simpson was an asset to Urbana schools, his church, and his community. All of those characteristics make him an excellent choice as 2019 Distinguished Alumni.