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**GLEASON FAMILY PORTRAIT**

Exhibition Opening | Saturday, August 3, 2019

6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Ginger Elliott Center at Garner House | 840 N Indian Hill Blvd.

Claremont, CA 91711

Exhibition runs through August 23rd



Claremont Heritage is pleased to present GLEASON FAMILY PORTRAIT, an exhibition of art and design by one of Claremont's most prolific and culturally influential families. The three artists represented in the exhibition are only the tip of the iceberg in terms of cultural impact that one family has made on Claremont and beyond. An interesting fact is that this history is relatively unknown, and without the scholarship presented in this exhibition, there would be a gap in our cultural history.

The biographies below for the three artists in the exhibition, Mary Easton Gleason, her sister Honor Easton, and her son Richard Gleason, show an impressive body of work that is represented in this ground-breaking survey. The exhibition will also include a family tree that will expose a family history that was instrumental to the cultural development in Southern California.

Please enjoy this exhibition as an enlightening journey into our rich cultural history and celebrate the Gleason Family and their contribution to Claremont.

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### **Mary Gleason**

Mary Gleason (ne Easton) was born in Pasadena, California on August 30, 1907, the youngest of six children to Louis B. and Honor H. Easton. Mary grew up in Pasadena and Anaheim, before going on to attend UC Berkeley (graduating in 1930), and the Chouinard Art Institute in Los Angeles. In 1936, Mary joined the Scripps College art department after being hired by Millard Sheets, where she taught costume design and weaving until 1943.

Marion "Hoppy" Stewart was a student of Gleason's at Scripps College, later succeeding her as a faculty member and remaining a close friend throughout their lives. Fondly recalling her former teacher, Stewart reminisced, "It should be noted that Mary did all of the floral arrangements for all of the teas and events at Scripps and was extremely talented at that. When I first came here and over the years, she was generous and kind with her time. She agreed to give a summer course in weaving that started me on my career. I was greatly benefited by her presence at Scripps."

Mary met her husband, John Howes Gleason, a history professor at Pomona College, while the two were working for the Claremont Colleges in 1939. In typical Pomona Valley fashion, the couple's first date took place at the Los Angeles County Fair and the two were married the following year. The couple had two children: daughter, Jane and son, Richard. Throughout her life in Claremont, Mary was an active member of the community, teaching Sunday School at the Claremont United Church of Christ, serving as superintendent of local fifth and sixth grade classes, troop leader for the local Girl Scouts, chairman of volunteers in the American Red Cross, a trustee at Mt. San Antonio Gardens, and assisting with art programs in the Pomona public schools.

In the early 1960s, Mary developed an interest in ceramics and began taking night school classes at Citrus College. Mary would continue with this passion and hone her sculpting skills and methods through the 1970s. Gleason also took part in the American Field Service, serving as the Claremont chapter's chairman for two years and as a host mother to a student from South Africa in 1962. Her involvement with AFS led to a sabbatical year spent in Durban, South Africa from 1964 to 1965.

A talented artist, gifted teacher, and pillar of the Claremont community, Mary Gleason passed away in 1992.

### **Honor Easton**

Born in 1906 in Pasadena, CA, Honor Easton was Mary's sister and grew up on their family ranch in Anaheim, CA. Sometime during the 1920s. She married Erle F. Webster (born c. 1899 in TX). Erle Webster was a noted architect, -Honor and business partner, Alyne Whalen, were published Interior Designers, in Los Angeles, CA, c. 1940, with a number of projects in the Pomona Valley. Honor passed away in 1972.

Mary and Honor's father was the building contractor and architectural designer, Louis B. Easton (1865-1921), their mother was Honor Hubbard (born November 26, 1868 in IL and died April 12, 1960 in Los Angeles County, CA. They wed on Christmas Day, December 25, 1893 in McLean, IL.

### **Richard Hubbard Gleason**

Richard Hubbard Gleason was born on June 9, 1945 in Washington D.C. to John and Mary Gleason (John was stationed in the nation's capital while serving in the U.S. Navy during World War II). The Gleason Family returned to Claremont in 1946 and Richard attended the Mary B. Eyre Children's School, Sycamore Elementary School, Foothill Country Day School, before graduating from the Webb Schools in 1963.

Gleason went on to attend Harvard University, studying history and graduated in 1967, before working as a teacher in the AmeriCorps VISTA program in Phillipi, West Virginia. In 1969, Gleason enlisted in the United States Navy serving in the anti-submarine warfare division and was stationed at the Brunswick Naval Air Station. Following his military service, Gleason moved to New York City in 1973 where he attended at the Art Students League of New York, studying under artists Charles Apt and Arthur Stern. During his studies in New York, Gleason developed a distinct painting style utilizing palette knives to apply the paint to the canvas and his paintings were even featured in Arthur Stern's book *How to See Color and Paint It* (1984).

After working for a time teaching ESL at the Spanish American Institute in New York, Gleason returned to Claremont in 1975, working in area public schools while continuing to paint portraits, still-life, and landscapes.

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**For more information about Claremont Heritage please email [info@claremontheritage.org](mailto:info@claremontheritage.org), visit our website at [www.claremontheritage.org](http://www.claremontheritage.org), or call (909) 621-0848.**