

LEADING LADIES (CONTINUED)

She grew up in Eugene and graduated from the University of Oregon. She later taught at the University for 25 years. Kerns was an important Northwest painter whose abstract art was better known outside of Oregon. She embraced the art-as-spiritual expression of Russian painter and art theorist Wassily Kandinsky and her work is in permanent collections at the Guggenheim Museum as well as the Portland and Washington Art Museums. Kerns donated a house to a local arts group and its sale resulted in the current Maude Kerns Art Center near campus.

Ruth Bascom (1926-2010) is known as the “bicycling mayor,” and her grave marker includes a depiction of her bicycle. She bears major responsibility for Eugene’s magnificent 12-mile Riverbank Trail System that is named for her. Coming from a cold climate, she said she fell in love with Eugene in part because “I knew I could bike around all year long.” Bascom served eight years as city councilor before becoming the first female mayor in 1992. She was a great supporter of both the local arts and the library. Her love of nature led her to donate \$100,000 in honor of her mother to create the Hays Memorial Tree Garden in Alton Baker Park. She died at 84 in her beloved Eugene. Her son said, “It was exactly at sunset, as we watched the sun go down over the Coast Range.”

There are many more distinguished local women resting in the cemetery. You can read about pioneer nurse Catherine Davis in the Fall 2017 Monumental News and will be able to read about Mary Spiller, the first UO woman instructor, in the upcoming Fall 2018 Monumental News. As Abigail Adams said, “Remember the ladies.”