

Item 3.2

Vale Barry Stern

File No: S051491

Minute by the Lord Mayor

To Council:

I wish to inform Council of the passing of Barry Stern, philanthropist, mentor and art dealer, on 1 July 2024 at the age of 92.

Born in Sydney on September 27, 1932, to Aleck and Dot Stern, Barry completed his schooling at Sydney Boys High School and as a boarder at Newington College.

After starting his first gallery in 1958, he opened the Museum of Modern Art at 217A George Street, Sydney in April 1959, which moved to Kings Cross later that year. In 1961 he moved the gallery once more to Glenmore Road, Paddington, where it was launched as the Barry Stern Galleries by Vivien Leigh, who was then touring Australia with the Old Vic Theatre Company. Barry moved it again, across the road to 19 Glenmore Road, converting three 1840s houses into nine different exhibition spaces. It continues as the Maunsell Wickes Gallery, owned by Dominic Maunsell and Graham Wickes.

When Barry was planning the move to Glenmore Road, his father warned him that he would have difficulty selling paintings there, based on Paddington's reputation as a working-class suburb. He was to be proved wrong.

Another art dealer, Rudy Koman, had already opened a gallery two years earlier on Jersey Road at the other edge of Paddington. Other galleries soon followed, including those established by Frank Watters and Rex Irwin, who Barry had employed and mentored.

Paddington itself was changing. Young professionals who wanted an alternative to life in the suburbs, began moving in, attracted by its terrace houses and its proximity to the city centre.

This created an environment in which Barry and his fellow gallerists flourished.

As an art dealer, Barry pioneered the secondary market, buying art from private individuals and other galleries, then promoting them through his own gallery. This gave purchasers of artworks the assurance they could eventually sell them, which in turn encouraged more people to buy art, including works by younger and emerging artists.

Dominic Maunsell, who joined Barry Stern Galleries in 1985 after graduating in fine arts has summarised his impact on Sydney's and Australia's cultural life:

“When Barry started, Australian art was not in favour. But Barry encouraged young painters, sculptors and potters. He became their mentor, guide, marketer and banker. He opened the door for up-and-coming painters and gave them a chance to appeal to younger people.”

Barry Stern retired from the gallery in 1992 and moved to Tangier in Morocco, and then to Thailand 10 years later. He is survived by his nephews Peter and David and his niece, Kerre.

Recommendation

It is resolved that:

- (A) all persons attending this meeting of Council observe one minute's silence to commemorate the life of Barry Stern and his contribution to Australian art and artists and Sydney's and Australia's cultural life;
- (B) Council express its condolences to Barry Stern's nephews Peter and David and his niece, Kerre, and his many friends in Sydney's arts community; and
- (C) the Lord Mayor convey Council's condolences to Peter, David and Kerre.

COUNCILLOR CLOVER MOORE AO

Lord Mayor