

Remembering Lorine Turnout for unveiling of plaque commemorating area poet



A world-acclaimed poet once lived on Milwaukee's Old South Side. Her name was Lorine Neidecker and on Saturday, May 12, a group of residents and members of the Lorine Neidecker Society turned out for an unveiling of a copper plaque at 2042 S. 6th Street, the house where Neidecker once lived.

All about Lorine Niedecker

Jonathan Williams, director of the Jargon Society, once wrote that "Lorine Niedecker is the most absolute poetess since Emily Dickinson." While she made her home on Black Hawk Island in Wisconsin, in 1963 she met and married Albert Millen of the Old South Side, an industrial painter at Ladish Drop Forge, and moved to the neighborhood. During her Milwaukee years she wrote poetry on the neighborhood that mentioned the various landmarks, including the Basilica of St. Josaphat. Her books published after her move to the Old South Side included *T & G: The Collected Poems, 1936–1966*, *North Central*, and *My Life by Water*.

Niedecker was the subject of a 2011 biography, *Lorine Niedecker: A Poet's Life*, by Margot Peters. Ms. Peters addressed the group on Saturday on the high points of Niedecker's life. Others read examples of her poetry, including works that mentioned local sites such as the Basilica of St. Josaphat and St. Stanislaus parish. The event was sponsored by the Friends of Lorine Niedecker with local partners of the Historic Mitchell BID and Urban Anthropology Inc.



Author Margot Peters in front of plaque

Old South Side Settlement Museum news Museum is reorganizing



Volunteers from Urban Anthropology Inc. are working with the Rozga family of the Rozga Funeral Homes to re-organize the Old South Side Settlement Museum. The plans are only in the research and proposal phase because the ownership of the building may change hands in the future. However, if the project moves forward, here are some of the new features being developed.

Miniature representations

Two architectural styles dominate the Old South Side. One is the "Polish flat" where cottages on narrow lots were raised to create semi-basement levels with their own door and the addition of a porch with steps leading up to the original ground level. This type of home became popular when Poles needed extra space for their grown children's families or brought over more relatives from Europe.

The second architectural style are the commercial buildings with parapets—an adornment that is curly or angular extending above the roof. This style—originally Flemish—was brought over from the German sector of Poland by the immigrating Poles.

Currently UrbAn volunteers are researching Polish flats and parapet structures in the area to find representative families that occupied the buildings during key times in the neighborhood's
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More photos of the Lorine Neidecker unveiling



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history. A carpenter has been engaged to create the two buildings at a 1:12 scale. The interiors will be intricately designed and will tell the stories of families in the neighborhood. Below is one room of a Polish flat that has been already developed at the 1:12 scale.



Celebrated residents

The second element in the museum is wall displays of celebrated residents in the history of the Old South Side. These will include Robert J. Modrzejewski--Medal of Honor recipient, Gilda Gray--silent film star, Carlos Sevilla--Latino activist, Tony Kubek--baseball hall of famer, the Kremer family that institutionalized the cream puff at the Wisconsin State Fair, Lorine Neidecker--world acclaimed poet, Filipe Rodriguez--noted musician, and Al Simmons--baseball hall of famer.

Rozga family

The Rozga family will own the museum when it comes to fruition. This is appropriate because of this family's prolific contributions to this neighborhood. The Rozgas settled in the area in the late decades of the 19th century and have run funeral homes and other businesses in the area without interruption for nearly 150 years. They have been constant and generous contributors to the residents and institutions of the Old South Side.



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