

**Source:** Elizabeth Seaton, 785-532-7718, lseaton@k-state.edu

**Website:** <http://beach.k-state.edu>

**News tip:** Manhattan, Minneapolis and Valley Falls

**Photo available:** <http://www.k-state.edu/media/images/aug14/peters.jpg>

**Photo outline:** Chet Peters lectures in the 1970s with his sculpture "Pinwheel of Growth and Development."

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### **Beach Museum exhibition honors legacy, talent of longtime student affairs administrator Chet Peters**

MANHATTAN — As Kansas State University's first vice president for student affairs, Chet Peters helped thousands of students with the journey from parental charge to young adult, encouraging them to use college to learn, hone talents, develop meaningful relationships and cement lifelong values.

When not helping college students shape their futures, Peters was doing his own sculpting, leaving a legacy that's showcased in the Marianna Kistler Beach Museum of Art exhibition "Life Forms: Chet Peters."

The exhibition, which opens Sept. 12 and runs through March 22, 2015, at the university's on-campus art museum, features a variety of wood sculptures created by Peters.

"In addition to acting as an advocate for students, Peters was a passionate and prolific sculptor of wood," said Elizabeth Seaton, Beach Museum curator. "Swirling, circular and blocky forms graced his home and those of many friends and patrons. This exhibition of more than 20 works from the collection of the Peters family makes evident Peters' fascination with abstraction and nature, and his sensitivity to the inherent variations in wood."

Peters' son, Steve, remembers his father working on his sculpture in the basement every night, creating dust that moved upstairs. Daughter Karen Hartner says that sculpting wood helped her father relieve the stress of being an administrator.

Peters even integrated his art into his administrative work. He fashioned "sculpture awards" for students and contributed art to be displayed on campus. His work also became a feature of his talks to high school and college students — or what he referred to as "sculptured speech."

Among the works in the Beach Museum's exhibition is "Pinwheel of Growth and Development," a kinetic sculpture from 1972 that Peters would use as a prop to discuss his philosophies about individual development. Another exhibition sculpture, "Communication," focuses on the Peters' message that the greatest life fulfillment comes to those who engage with — or open their eyes to — the world around them.

Some of Peters sculptures are displayed around campus, including at the Chester E. Peters Recreation Complex. The facility was named in his honor in 1985, just before he retired. The walnut sculpture "Achievement" is an individual with uplifted arms signaling victory. The recreational services' office is home for the Peters' sculpture "Participation is Winning." The outside of the sculpture represents constant improvement through participation.

Along with the recreation complex and artwork, Peters is also remembered on campus with the Chester E. Peters Lectures in Student Development Series, which honors his contributions to students and the student personnel profession; and with the Chester E. Peters Scholarship for Student Development, which is awarded each year to a member of the university's Blue Key senior leadership honorary for positive contributions to the development of other students.

A native of **Minneapolis** and a graduate of **Valley Falls** High School, Peters came to Kansas State University as a business student in 1940, went on to letter in football and track, and was a member of several honorary societies. He graduated cum laude in 1947 with a bachelor's degree after temporarily serving overseas in World War II, advancing from private to captain. He completed his master's degree from the university in economics and agricultural economics in 1950. He then received his doctorate in economics, agricultural economics and administration from the University of Wisconsin in 1953.

Peters began his career at Kansas State University in 1953 as the assistant dean of the College of Arts & Sciences. He established the first Career Planning and Placement Center on campus. Along with his administrative duties, Peters was known for his work with on-campus organizations, including student government, Blue Key, Athletic Council, Housing Council, Council on Student Affairs, Student Loan Committee, scholarship committees and the Intramural Council. Peters died in 1995.

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