

City of Chino ❖ Hall of Fame

presented on May 22, 2019 honoring

Samuel Solomon Maloof

Samuel "Sam" Soloman Maloof was a world-famous woodworker who grew up in Chino, California. Born on January 24, 1916, Sam was the seventh of nine children and the first son. His parents, Slimen Nasif Nadir Maloof and Anisse, immigrated from Lebanon in 1905. Their large family lived on 6th Street.

As a young child, Sammy (as he was called) was creative artistically and excelled at craftsmanship derived from his admiration of his mother's skill making handmade lace and linens. At a young age, he made a broad spatula for his mother to turn bread, carved dollhouses, furniture, cars, and other toys. At Chino High School, under the name Soloman, Sam was recognized by his woodworking instructor as having extraordinary skill. He was athletic; lettering in basketball, football, and baseball. He was a member of the high school yearbook and newspaper, and served as ASB President before graduating in 1934.

After high school, he worked in the art department of Vortex Manufacturing Company in Claremont, where he acquired knowledge and experience working with industrial designer, Harold E. Graham. In October 1941, he was drafted and served in the U.S. Army in Alaska.

In 1945, Sam, taking the family surname of Maloof, returned to California and settled in Ontario. He was hired by world-famous artist Millard Sheets as a graphic designer. This is when he met Alfreda Louise Ward; they were married on June 27, 1948. They had two children, Slimen and Marylouise. Mr. Maloof set up a furniture workshop in his garage, where he built a suite of furniture for his home using salvaged material. Commissioned pieces followed.

Sam Maloof's pieces are exhibited in museums around the world, including The Smithsonian Museum and Boston Museum of Fine Arts. Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan had rocking chairs made by him.

In 1953, the Maloofs relocated to Alta Loma and retained his workshop and studio. With the extension of the 210 Freeway in 2000, they were moved three miles to their current location at 5131 Carnelian Street. The Sam and Alfreda Foundation was created with a museum and glorious gardens. In 1998, Alfreda passed away. In 2001, Sam married Beverly Wingate, who continued to support the foundation, preserving Sam's work.

Sam Maloof died on May 21, 2009, at the age of 93. He did not see himself as an artist, but a woodworker. He was a devoted mentor and teacher who proudly proclaimed Chino as his hometown, bringing Chino important fame.