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## LETTERS

### Chouinard and CalArts

**E**RRORS in Don Mann's Aug. 5 letter should be corrected to reflect actual events occurring during the creation of CalArts and its absorption of the Chouinard Art Institute and the Los Angeles Music Conservatory. Mann attributes a large part of the responsibility for these events to Bob Haldeman, who resigned from the board in 1970 and had nothing to do with events Mann describes, which occurred in 1972. Similarly, he incorrectly refers to Harrison Price as an accountant and owner of the accounting firm Price Waterhouse. Mr. Price is, however, a trustee of CalArts, which he has generously served for 40 years. Edward Reep and Bill Moore were never board members.

The merging of CalArts and Chouinard was indeed painful. Walt Disney was gone, and the board of trustees had installed a new administration under the presidency of Robert Corrigan. This new administration absorbed some faculty and some programs from Chouinard and the conservatory, but many programs were modified or abandoned in favor of the new directions. The board delegated the business of defining the new academic structure to the administration, which had been brought in to do that job. At times, several trustees took issue with some of these choices.

Nevertheless, CalArts was positively influenced by merging with its two antecedent schools. The bottom line is that mergers are not easy. In this case, however, the quality of the result honors both Chouinard and the conservatory.

STEVEN D. LAVINE  
*President, California Institute of the Arts  
Valencia*

**M**ANN indicates that the "New York academics" Cathleen Cross Ohanesian was referring to in her prior letter were H.R. Haldeman and Harrison Price. She was in fact referring to Robert Corrigan and provost Herbert Blau, who resigned in the wake of the chaos surrounding the Chouinard/CalArts transition.

The existing relationship between Chouinard and CalArts is clearly a complex one.

Since buying Nelbert Chouinard's home and co-founding the Chouinard Foundation with Robert Perine, I see that the passion this discussion inspires has at its roots the loss of an important art-education system, one that amply succeeded before its awkward end.

To completely blame Corrigan and Blau for the demise of Chouinard would be shortsighted. The ultimate responsibility lay in the hands of Nelbert Chouinard and Walt Disney themselves: hers for allowing the financial condition of her school to deteriorate to the point of needing Disney and his for not preparing an orderly transition of Chouinard affairs in the event of his sudden and untimely death, which unfortunately occurred. The "what if" theories will likely continue, but what we have is "what is"--a rich yet nearly forgotten legacy that if explored could only serve to strengthen the foundation upon which rests the ongoing process of art-making in Los Angeles and beyond.

DAVE TOURJE  
*Chouinard Foundation  
South Pasadena*