



Bill French

Nationally Recognized Professional Photographer

Bill French, 59, a nationally known photographer who was head of the Owens-Corning Fiberglas Corp. photography department for 28 years, died Thursday in his home at 425 Jefferson Ave.

Mr. French, formerly of Perrysburg, established the Owens-Corning photography department in 1954, when he joined the corporation.

Born in Zelienople, Pa., he studied at Muskingum College, New Concord, O., and at the University of Chicago and pursued a variety of occupations before settling in Toledo shortly before World War II.

He had been a stoker on an Ohio River tow boat, a boxing instructor at a Chicago settlement house, and the manager of a restaurant and hotel in New Concord.

First Camera From Pawn Shop

Mr. French's first interest in photography came in 1945, when he was personnel manager for General Mills, Inc., and acquired his first camera at a pawn shop.

Fascinated with the art, Mr. French worked for several area photography firms before establishing his own studio, which he operated until joining Owens-Corning.

He won many honors for his work, which included industrial subjects, cityscapes, landscapes, still lifes, and seascapes. In 1973, more than 50 of his works were displayed in a one-man show in the Toledo Museum of Art. His work also has been shown at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York City, and is represented in many private collections.

A Founder Of Professional Group

An award-winning member of many professional photography organizations, Mr. French was a founding member of the Professional Photographers of Northwest Ohio. He had taught photography at the University of Toledo and at other institutions.

Surviving are his wife, Roberta; sons, Rick and Bill, Jr.; mother, Mrs. Florence Sims; sister, Mrs. Ruth Oester, and stepsons, Richard, Jeffrey, James, and Jonathan Webb, and Dr. James O. Zachman.

Services will be Monday at 3:30 p.m. in St. Paul's Episcopal Church, Maumee. There will be no visitation. The family requests that any tributes be in the form of contributions to the Bill French memorial fund at the church.