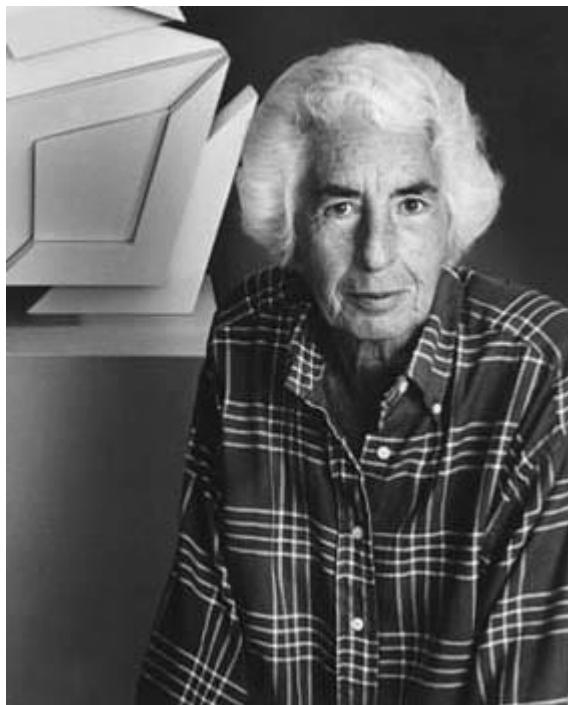


Doris Leeper



- Born in 1929, in Charlotte, North Carolina
- Based in Eldora, Florida 1958-2000
- Studied: Bachelor of Arts, Art History, Duke University, 1951 (initially studied to become a brain surgeon)
- Known for: Sculpture, painting, environmental activism, support of the arts
- Established the Atlantic Center for the Arts, 1977, Ormond Beach, Florida
- Instrumental in establishing the Canaveral National Seashore, 1975
- Florida Ambassador of the Arts and Florida Hall of Fame, 1999

About Doris Leeper

Doris Leeper was an acclaimed sculptor and painter and environmental activist from New Smyrna Beach, Florida. She was instrumental in the creation of the Canaveral National Seashore in 1975, founded the Atlantic Center for the Arts in 1982, and was inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame in 1999.

Born in 1929, in Charlotte, North Carolina, Leeper attended Duke University, originally intending to become a brain surgeon – the origin of her nickname "Doc." She graduated in 1951 with a degree in art history. In 1958, while working as a commercial artist, she moved to Eldora, Florida, a small barrier island community near New Smyrna Beach. By 1961, she had become a full-time artist, specializing in painting and sculpture. Her work is in over 100 collections in the U.S. and abroad.

By the early 1970s, Leeper was a well-known figure in the Florida environmental movement and was instrumental in the creation of the 58,000-acre Canaveral National Seashore, passed in 1975 by an act of Congress. The preserve remains the longest stretch of undeveloped beach on Florida's east coast.

Leeper conceived of the Atlantic Center for the Arts (ACA) in 1977, envisioning it as a Florida artist-in-residence program in which artists of all disciplines could work with current prominent artists in a supportive and creative environment. Officially opening in 1982, ACA is comprised of ten buildings over 70 acres on the shores of Turnbull Bay and has become a world-renowned center for the arts. Leeper's advocacy for artists also led to the creation of the Alliance of Artists' Communities, a consortium of artists' colonies and residency programs across the country.

Leeper was awarded honorary doctorates from Duke and from Stetson University. She was named Florida Ambassador of the Arts and inducted into the Florida Hall of Fame in 1999. She died in April 2000 as the last resident of Eldora. The town claims no permanent residents and visitation is limited and subject to park hours and includes the Doris Leeper Spruce Creek Preserve and the Doris Leeper Trail. The Doris Leeper Endowment and the Doris Leeper Award for Excellence in Art Education were established in her memory.