



No: 81

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Name: Luigi Waites

He was honored as a musician, artist, teacher, philosopher, and much more as friends gathered to roast a man who had been a major figure in the Omaha arts community for more than 40 years. The jazz percussionist had performed regionally, nationally and internationally and in 1996 was named Artist of the Year by the Nebraska Arts Council. He began performing at age 12 and performed in night clubs at such a young age, his mother had to escort him. He performed at the Summer Arts Festival for 20 years. Many Omahans took lessons from the long-time musician. A one-time student, City Councilman Marc Kraft said his father thought he was paying Luigi for drum lessons: "What he was really paying for was philosophy lessons. Luigi pushes his kids to achieve and excel." In the caricature are a tin pan, for "cooking up new tunes," a swinging toad to illustrate Waites' 22 years of appearances at Mr. Toad's and young marching musicians representing Waites' many students. Waites' reputation as a jazz historian is depicted with likenesses of Duke Ellington, Ella Fitzgerald and Dizzy Gillespie. Waites is playing drums and vibraphone. Back to Top