

# Words for a Tribute by Gina Rey

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Mario Coyula was a teacher in every sense of the word. That's why his ideas and teachings have stuck for so long with all of us who were lucky enough to have been his students. He was a generous human being who shared his knowledge with everyone. He paid attention with equal interest to a young student just starting out as to a famous academic.

He had the ability to open paths in such an exciting and creative profession and to encourage young people to follow these and to find their own. When he spoke, he could unfurl his vast store of knowledge and culture in a most natural, colloquial way that dazzled nonetheless. His message was inspiring and was like a ray of light that gave new meaning to things and encouraged setting new goals.

He was a cosmopolitan man, open to the world, but at the same time had a deep-rooted Cuban identity and was committed to Cuba's future. Defender of its architecture, its cities – especially Havana and Vedado, his great loves – and its cultural heritage, he waged many tireless battles. His incisive words and his radical but fair critiques were always at the service of the best causes. We won't have him in the future, but we must continue on.

This is what Mayito was like since the day I met him in September 1966 as a first-year architecture student and throughout his long career, which I had the privilege to share for many years.

He has left an abundant legacy that will last for a long time – as long as there is a young person who studies his works and recommends them to others: "You should study Coyula's writings." Or as long as there is a resident of Havana who says: "If Coyula saw what they've done in that place, he'd be against it." And then, surely, he would smile.

Gina Rey  
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