

Sculptor completes major commission

Story: CORINNE ABATT
Photos: DICK KELLEY

Those who have seen successful sculptors, such as Glen Michaels, know the profession calls for physical as well as mental agility.

A major commission for a bas relief in the wall of the main lobby of the new Detroit General Hospital and Michaels on his knees most of the summer and working on a high ladder for three weeks in the fall.

Michaels who has no qualms about high ladders or working on his knees because he's been doing the unusual for a good many years, was delighted with the commission.

Foremost was the setting, William

Kessler was the architect for the hospital which is slated to open next spring. Michaels said, "The unusual thing about the building is that Kessler provided spaces truly designed for art."

"Windscape," Michaels' 14 by 17 foot relief is attached to a wall especially built for it, directly behind and above the main reception desk.

MICHAELS WORKED ON the 10 section sculpture in the basement studio of his Birmingham home over the summer, placing each domino shaped tile exactly where he wanted it. The three weeks on the ladder were spent installing it on the steel backed wall and creating from the sections an apparently seamless whole.

"The setting is most enviable for anyone who does wall work," Michaels said. "The receiving desk acts as a base for the work."

When it was secured on the wall to his satisfaction, he stood back and looked and smiled.

"Every device that I've ever used in 40 or so (previous) works is incorporated in this one. It has intervening, fan shapes, the Bargello stitch—the scale is such that every piece seems like a brush stroke."

As if to add to the challenge of the commission, Michaels worked exclusively in shades of gray and white tiles.

"It is the most non-descript tile there is," he said, "Yet, the play of light on one monotonously similar module

changes as the light creates changes as the light hits it at different angles."

IRENE WALT, chairman of the Joint Art Commission for two buildings in the downtown Wayne State University medical complex—Detroit General and the Wayne State Health Care Institute, said on seeing Michaels' piece installed, "It is absolutely much better than we ever dreamed it would be."

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Art commission members who worked with Mrs. Walt are: Olga F. Dworkin of Farmington Hills, Eugene Driker, Lee Hoffman of Bloomfield

Hills, Dr. Harold Gardner, director of the health care institute, Dr. Dewey Mosby of the Detroit Institute of Art, Dr. Richard Bilatis of Wayne State University art faculty and William Kessler, architect.

STILL MRS. WALT was familiar with Michaels' work. She was chairman of an art committee for the Friends of Wayne State University School of Medicine which commissioned a Michaels' piece for Scott Hall just a short walk from the new hospital.

That one, done seven years ago, and still in perfect condition, has a lot of vibrant color running through it.

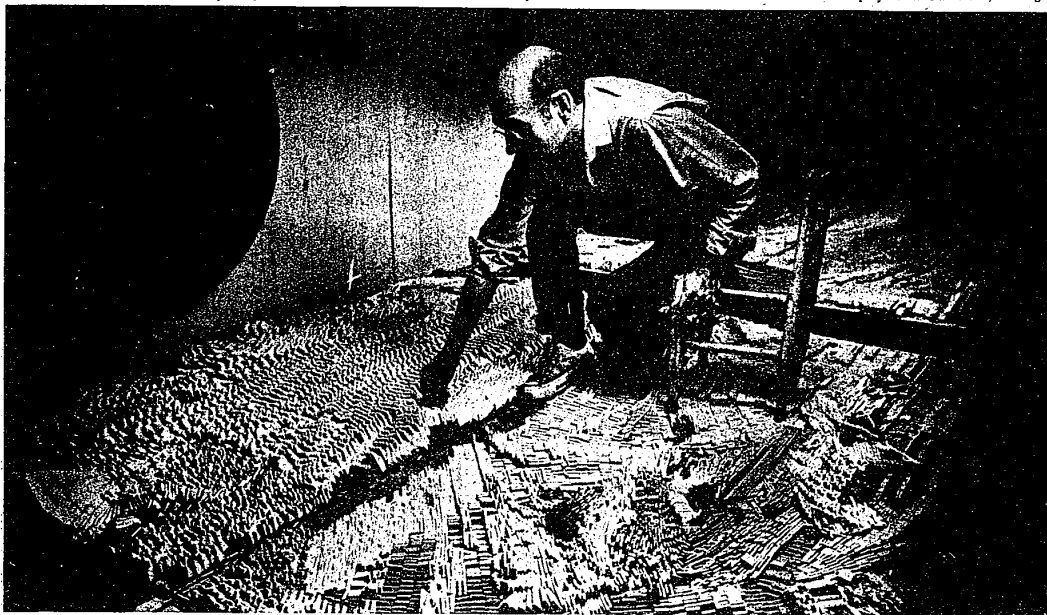
The newest work is in excellent company. In one of the courts, a two-figure

aluminum work by William King of New York City which was recently installed. Titled "Help," the taller of the two figures is 32 feet high.

The sculpture, a tribute to Carl Levin, was financed by donations from friends of Levin to commemorate his eight years as a member of the Detroit Common Council.

In another court, there's a work by Joseph Kinnebrew, Michigan sculptor who did the fish ladder in Grand Rapids.

Inspired by the elements of molecular structure, this aluminum piece is five stories high. This one honors George E. Cullen, former president of Wayne State University. Friends of Cullen provided the funds for this one.



Glen Michaels places the small tiles in precise order as he is shown while working on the 10-foot panels, which were recently installed in the new Detroit General Hospital. Fine strips of chrome plated metal were the only medium used other than the thousands of tiles.

AN UNUSUAL contemporary vinyl sailcloth sculpture by Ann Healy of New York was funded by grants from National Endowment for the Arts, Michigan Council for the Arts and the Wayne State fund.

Michael's wall relief was funded by donations from the alumni of old Receiving Hospital.

Mrs. Walt and a crew of volunteers contacted over 2,000 former physicians who trained at the old hospital, even some who now live and work in Japan and other parts of the world.

Last of the major sculptures now installed and paid for is a painted steel by George Sugarman in the dining court.

With sculptures installed in four courts and the Michaels' piece securely bolted to the lobby wall, Mrs. Walt could look around and say, "I'm terribly pleased. It has been a lot of work. This project has been my entire life for three years."

She stood in the lobby looking at the Michaels' sculpture and remarked as she seemed to be picking up sparks of energy lost during the long days of fund-raising, "I love the way it recedes and falls and moves. The silver and the little bit of black at the top I especially love."

Saying that this is the biggest medical complex one campus in the country, Mrs. Walt added that she thought it appropriate that the art be the finest to be found in the United States. She planned and did a lot of the work on the fund raising, and along with her committee interviewed and passed judgement on prospective artists.

The satisfaction she experiences is two-fold. She accomplished what she set out to do three years ago and she enjoys the profundity of the quality of art she and her committee were able to commission.

THE INSIDE * ANGLE

By LOUISE OKRUTSKY

AS WE WALLOW in that valley between two holidays, I'd want to remind everyone to save those empties for the Jaycees. The Farmington Area Jaycees are collecting empties to bolster the Farmington Community Center's coffers. They're hoping to raise \$10,000 by cashing in empty bottles left over from the holidays. On Jan. 5 they'll be going door-to-door to collect your empties. (That gives everyone plenty of time to recuperate from the contents and sort the bottles.)

Bottle collecting Jaycees will carry I.D. cards so donors will know their bottles are going toward the Center. After they're through collecting the bottles, the Jaycees will truck the glass and cans to the manufacturer. (Local store owners, breathe a sigh of relief, they won't come to you with all those bottles.)

Remember, they want deposit bottles; so raise a glass and keep the container for the Center.

AHHH, THE holidays. When else could you hear one drugstore clerk say to a bearded, Santa-hatted co-worker: "Let me spray your beard, now." (Ah, youth. Someday they'll try to dye-out the white.)

WHAT'S EIGHT FEET TALL weighs two tons and stands outside Wayne State University's School of Medicine. It's Hippocrates. The statue of the medical legend was sculpted by Kostas H. Georgakas in Athens, Greece, from white marble quarried at Mt. Pentelicon near Athens. The recent unveiling of Hippocrates was more of a come back than an arrival. Construction of the University's Health Care Institute and Detroit Receiving Hospital forced placing the statue in storage. On hand to welcome back Hippocrates was Olga Dworkin of Farmington Hills, chairwoman of the university's campus beautification committee. She joined the statue's donors Mr. and Mrs. William Genematos of Grosse Pointe Shores at the ceremony.

THE OAKLAND COUNTY Health Division will offer expectant parent classes beginning Jan. 7. Classes are scheduled for Monday or Wednesday evenings for eight weeks from 7:30-9:30 p.m. at the Oakland County Division of Health, 27725 Greenfield, Southfield. There isn't a charge for the classes but you must pre-register since enrollment is limited. Call 424-7058 to register. Topics covered in the classes include mental health of the family unit, growth and development of the baby before and immediately after birth, labor and delivery, and care and feeding of the infant. Films will illustrate some of the topics. One of the class sessions will be a tour of the local hospitals. The classes are taught by a public health

nurse and are sponsored by the Oakland County Medical Society and various adult education departments.

START THE NEW Year in a giving manner—donate blood to the American Red Cross. There will be a bloodmobile from 2-8 p.m. on Jan. 17 in front of the First Presbyterian Church, 26165 Farmington Road, Farmington. Call 474-6170 for an appointment during blood drive hours.

PICTURES FOR Oakland County Senior Citizen Discount Program I.D.'s will be taken in the area around Farmington in January. From 10 a.m. to noon and 1-3 p.m. on Jan. 3 the pictures will be taken in the Commerce Nutrition Site, Richardson's Community Center, 1485 Oakley Park, Walled Lake, 48088; 624-1266. Pictures will also be taken from 1-4 p.m., Jan. 28, in Lakes Area Multi-Purpose Center, 26350 Novi Road, Old Novi Elementary School, Novi, 48060; 340-3780.

The ID cards enable seniors who are older than 60 to take advantage of discounts offered by local merchants. The discounts range from 4-25 percent. They are offered on items ranging from auto parts to hair care. The program is open to senior residents of Oakland County.

A TWO-TIME winner; that's Ann Simanek of Farmington Hills who has been chosen for the second time to participate in the Michigan Small Colleges Honors Band at Grand Valley State Colleges. A member of the Alma College Killie Band, Ms. Simanek will go to Grand Valley State on Feb. 9. She is a junior at Alma and plays flute in the Alma College Killie Band and the Alma Symphony Orchestra. She is the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Robert E. Simanek of Farmington Hills. Ms. Simanek is a 1977 graduate of Harrison High School.

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