

Enamel and copper work her pride and joy



By Loraine McClish
staff writer

SISTER ELLEN Marie Foley, who works in a variety of art media, has just completed a series of copper and enamel hangings she calls her biggest challenge as well as her pride and joy.

"I'm glad it's done. It was the most elaborate, the most detailed, the most picky project I've ever attempted," Foley said as the pieces were being prepared for shipping from the artist's studio in Mercy Center to St. Joseph Hospital in Chicago.

Foley created the work as an exact duplicate of stained glass windows in the hospital's two-story chapel looking out over the Chicago shoreline on Lake Michigan. The windows depict the history of the Daughters of Charity.

Foley worked one year to complete the project using free hand sketches and photographs she took when visiting the chapel.

The work was commissioned for the hospital's renovated first floor lobby and reception area.

"Each and every color was fired many times to achieve the right tone, the right transparency. Then the transparencies were worked over the opaques to get the right variation in color."

"It is really more of a technical achievement than an artistic achievement," she said. "The sun

gives the illumination that shines through stained glass. My challenge was to make that light shine through on the copper and enamel."

"I've always worked against deadlines and I've always done totally original work. This is the first time I've done a copy of anything."

NO MATTER, Foley has had many artistic achievements.

Her work can be seen in Providence Hospital in Southfield and all its satellites, in Mt. Carmel Hospital, in Samaritan Health Center, in the Michigan Catholic Conference Building, Lansing, in Mercy Hospital, Port Huron and St. Joseph, Ia. and in Farmbrook Medical Center, Southfield.

Her next commission comes from St. Lawrence Hospital, Lansing. Foley, who belongs to the Sisters of Mercy, is a member of Farmington Artists Club and lives in McAuley Center within the Mercy Center complex. She teaches art to elementary school students in Immaculate Heart of Mary in Detroit.

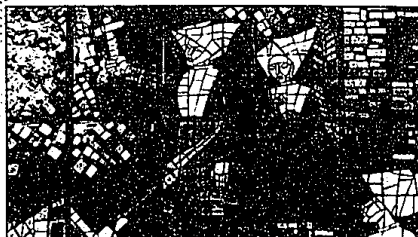
Of her work she said: "I believe that the making and enjoying of art in any of its myriad aspects are among the most humanizing of human activities."

"Art is a gift shared by human beings to understand and articulate what is deepest in all of us - to touch over and over again the creative power of God."

RANDY BORST/staff photographer

Sister Ellen Marie Foley talks about the challenge of duplicating stained glass windows with the media of copper and enamel.

The pieces behind her are three of a series of six which spell out the history of the Daughters of Charity.



This piece shows the martyred Sisters of Arras, beheaded in the French Revolution.

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