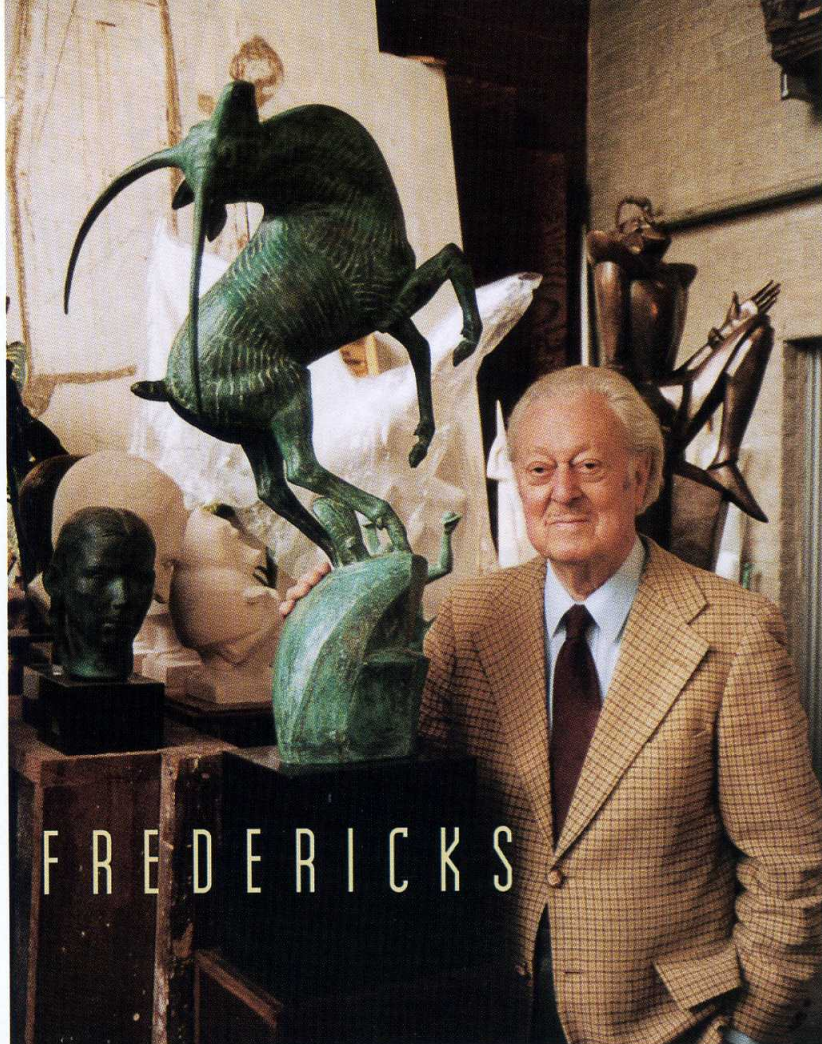


The talented sculptor and
great humanitarian will
live on through his art

A Tribute to

MARSHALL FREDERICKS



Renowned sculptor Marshall M. Fredericks died in his Birmingham, Michigan, home on April 4 at age 90. Internationally acclaimed as a sculptor of stunning sensitivity, strength, and versatility, his art is his legacy.

Fredericks created hundreds of sculptures through the years, many of which are monumental in scale. A number of art critics and collectors cite the large scale, degree of detail, and uplifting spiritual quality of his art as distinguishing features of Fredericks's work.

His art can be found in parks, museums, and public buildings in the United States and abroad. He received numerous national and international awards, honors, and citations from professional and philanthropic organizations. His works are in the private collections of the royal families of Denmark, Norway, the Netherlands, Sweden, Finland, and Japan, and former United States Presidents Dwight Eisenhower, Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard Nixon, Gerald Ford, and Ronald Reagan.

Fredericks wanted to create sculptures that inspire and bring happiness to their viewers. He strove to capture the peaceful side of his subjects along with their power and majesty. His creation of *Christ on the Cross*, the world's largest crucifix, is a glorious testimonial to Christianity. The cross stands 55 feet high and 22 feet wide. The bronze corpus is more than 28 feet high. Since it was dedicated on August 19, 1959, millions of people from around the world have visited the Catholic shrine at Indian River, Michigan. Fredericks said he wanted to portray Christ in a peaceful way so that people would feel happy rather than sad when they saw it. The Vatican granted him permission to omit Christ's wounds and crown of thorns—the first such compromise since the fifteenth century.

By Ebba Belfrage Slomeana

Some of Fredericks's best known creations include the *Spirit of Detroit*, a 26-foot-high bronze statue outside the City-County Building in Detroit, and the *Fountain of Eternal Life*, which is also known as the *Cleveland War Memorial*. It was dedicated in 1964 and, at 47 feet high, is one of the largest sculptural fountains in the world.

The Indian River, Detroit, and Cleveland sculptures were cast in Norway in a small foundry Fredericks developed. They are among the four largest sculptures ever transported across the Atlantic Ocean from Europe; the Statue of Liberty is the other.

Other notable works are the 24-foot-high *Man and the Expanding Universe Fountain* in the main courtyard of the State Department building in Washington D.C. The man is perched on a sphere covered with 1,166 nickel and silver stars in five different magnitudes arranged in the pattern of the principal constellations. *Freedom of the Human Spirit*, the 24-foot-high bronze sculpture that Fredericks created for the New York World's Fair in 1964, was replicated in 1986 for Birmingham, Michigan—the artist's hometown since World War II. The *Night and Day Fountain* in Port Huron, Michigan, was one of Fredericks's favorites. As with *Christ* at Indian River, Fredericks developed the project with his friend, architect Alden B. Dow.

Fredericks is the only sculptor to have two of his works—*Leaping Gazelle* and *The Thinker*—on permanent display in Sweden at Millesgården, the home and studio of another great sculptor, Carl Milles (1875–1955), who was Fredericks's mentor.

Leaping Gazelle at Millesgården is a maquette (a small-scale study) for the *Barbour Memorial Fountain* in Belle Isle Park in Detroit, which was dedicated in 1936. This piece features a life-size bronze gazelle as its central figure. The gazelle is surrounded by four granite carvings of an otter, a hawk, a grouse, and a rabbit.

In July 1990, Queen Margrethe II of Denmark was presented with a *Leaping Gazelle* as a birthday gift from Danish-Americans. Her majesty placed the sculpture at the park at Marselisborg Castle in Århus.

The Thinker, one of Fredericks's lighthearted sculptures, was commissioned by George Booth, who established Cranbrook Academy

from his family on his fiftieth birthday. The sculpture is in the royal family's private garden at Drottningholm Palace, and Queen Silvia has said that the couple look at the statue each morning and smile.

Fredericks boldly accepted the task of enlarging Carl Milles's *God on the Rainbow Fountain*, a 90-foot-high composition of bronze and stainless steel conceived by Milles after World War II, but unbuilt until the 1990s. In a letter accepting the commission, he wrote, "I hope for the strength and the ability to complete this dream of Carl Milles for the glory of Sweden and for one of its greatest sons." The dynamic sculptural/architectural creation, placed at Nacka Strand in Stockholm Harbor, became Fredericks's last monumental artwork abroad. He completed the sculpture at age 87. Fredericks had come full circle. His career began with his study under and assistance to Carl Milles in Sweden and at Cranbrook, and ended with *Himmelsbågen*, as the statue is called in Sweden.

Fredericks is survived by his wife, Rosalind; three daughters, Frances Ferriss, Rosalind Rymal, and Suzanne Fredericks; two sons, Carl and Christopher; and eight grandchildren.

Fredericks was born January 31, 1908, in Rock Island, Illinois. His sea captain grandfather was born in Copenhagen and his grandmother in Oslo. His father was a construction engineer and a builder in Rock Island. When Marshall was 7 years old, his family moved to Florida and two years later, to Cleveland.

Upon graduating from the Cleveland School of Art in 1930, he won the school's only travel fellowship and he immediately went to Stockholm to study with Milles. On Milles's recommendation, Fredericks also studied in Denmark, Germany, France, and Italy.

In 1932 the noted Finnish architect Eliel Saarinen, then president of Cranbrook Academy of Art, hired Fredericks to assist Milles with his work there. Later, he became a co-teacher with Milles, who often was too busy with commissions to have time for teaching. Fredericks was at Cranbrook for about 10 years. During that time, he served as head of the ceramics department at Kingswood School for Girls and as head of the art department at Cranbrook

School for Boys.

In 1942 Fredericks left Cranbrook to serve in the United States Armed Forces in World War II. He was assigned to the Engineers' Corps and later transferred to the Air Corps. He served in the Pacific



One of Fredericks's best known creations, the *Spirit of Detroit* is a 26-foot-high bronze statue outside the City-County Building in Detroit.

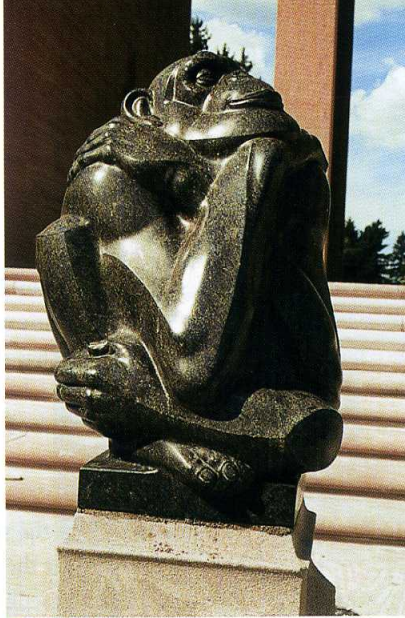
of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, where Fredericks's taught from 1932 to 1941. Booth wanted a *Thinker* for the steps of the art museum at Cranbrook, but he didn't want Rodin's famous sculpture by the same name, so he asked Fredericks to create his own version. The "thinker" is a monkey.

King Carl XVI Gustaf of Sweden received a copy of *The Thinker*

and the Far East and retired as an intelligence officer with the rank of lieutenant colonel. After the war, Fredericks returned to Michigan and opened studios in Royal Oak and Bloomfield Hills, where he was still working the week he died.

Fredericks pursued his deep interest in his heritage with dedication and distinction, serving as the Royal Danish Consul for Michigan for 30 years, and as a longtime member of various Scandinavian-American organizations.

Known also for his humanitarian achievements, Fredericks devoted countless hours helping people with disabilities. He took a lengthy leave from his work in the mid 1960s to found DIADEM (Disabled Americans Denmark Meeting), DIADEM-Return, and DIADEM-Leader. The programs oversaw the exchange of disabled people between Denmark and the United States. In 1969, 50 Danes visited the United States and embarked on an eight-city tour, visiting medical and rehab facilities. DIADEM-Return saw 50 Americans, one from each state, visit Denmark. And in 1974, DIADEM-Leader brought two dozen blind Danes to a Rochester, Michigan, training facility, where they were matched with seeing-eye dogs. For his efforts,



The Thinker

Fredericks received commendations from a number of organizations that serve the needs of the physically or mentally impaired.

"Fredericks's lifelong involvement with disabled people may have helped him cope with his own infirmities during the last years of his life," says Michael Panhorst, director of the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Gallery in University Center, Michigan. "Despite the degenerative effects of multiple ailments [including glaucoma], he rarely complained. When his frustration did show, it was not as anger at his fate, but as regret

that he could not do more."

The Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Gallery stands as a memorial to him and as a tribute to all that he gave in his lifetime. The gallery is part of Saginaw Valley State University. Visit its website at www.svsu.edu/msfg or contact the museum at 517-790-5667. **S&A**

Ebba Belfrage Slomeana, retired editor of Nordic News, is president of the Jenny Lind Club of Michigan. Michael Panhorst, director of the Marshall M. Fredericks Sculpture Gallery, also contributed to this article.

CORPUS CHRISTI ART CONNECTION

Presents

KENT ULLBERG, NA



"Tucker's Moose"

20" x 17" x 7³/₄" Bronze Limited Edition 35

LARS JONSSON



"Longbilled Curlew"

17" x 22" Original Watercolor

Sweden's Finest

3636 S. Alameda, Suite C • Corpus Christi, TX 78411 • (800) 772-1717 • (512) 854-1057