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Brad Winter

Fort Hays State University

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Dalton/Kellerman Fountain

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The Dalton/Kellerman fountain sits in front of Tomanek Hall. This fountain came together because of a joint effort by middle school students and FHSU faculty and students.

Photo by Kris Hart

Fountain shows meaning of sharing, togetherness

by Brad Winter

The arts and sciences have traditionally been separated in

education. However, both came together in an unusual way in front of Tomanek Hall in 1997, with the Dalton/Kellerman fountain.

The fountain itself is an artwork, but it is comprised of representations of science made by area middle school students.

The fountain project was directed by Placido Hoernicke, assistant dean of professional service, and Gary Coulter, former head of the art department.

It took about a year and a half to complete, and was dedicated on June 14, 1997. The fountain was made possible in part by a grant from the Jean Stouffer estate.

The sculpture in the fountain is a conglomeration of bronze pieces made by over 200 middle school students from around the Hays area.

All middle school students were invited to participate in helping make the pieces for the sculpture.

The students who participated were given a 12" x 12" piece of wax to mold that was later cast in bronze. The students were asked to make their piece reflect what science means to them.

"We left the directions very broad so they could be creative," Hoernicke said. Hoernicke, who graduated from FHSU in 1991, with a master in fine arts in the area of sculpture, thinks that it is nice that both the arts and the sciences are "sharing a fountain."

"Arts and sciences deal with art as separate from science, and as we grow, we find the concepts are intertwined. The idea of creativity is the central point where we share common ground," said Hoernicke.

The fountain is dedicated to Stanlee V. Dalton and James V. Kellerman, both former registrars of FHSU. Dalton joined the university as a biology instructor in 1935 and was registrar from 1938 until his retirement in 1971.

Kellerman joined the university as a business administration instructor in 1967 and became registrar in 1971. He was registrar until his retirement in 1995.

The fountain and sculpture in the center of it were done totally with local help. Hoernicke's part of the project involved "working with the schools," he said.

Volunteers from the FHSU art department helped Coulter cast the student's wax pieces into bronze.

The individual bronze pieces for the sculpture were then welded together primarily by Ed Brown, Hays graduate student. The physical plant handled the instillation of the water works for the fountain.

Brown said that he got involved because he was a student in some of Coulter's art classes.

Since he knew how to weld, he decided to volunteer his services to weld the sculpture in the center of the fountain together. "It was an experience," he said.

The individual bronze pieces of the student's work were welded together into a combination of 1' to 2' cubes to create the sculpture in the fountain.

According to Brown, Hoernicke, Coulter and himself decided how the student's pieces should be welded together. "[President] Ed Hammond even had words in on how it should look as well," Brown said.

The idea for a fountain on campus came from Hammond. Coulter and Hoernicke got involved with the project because they had experience doing a sculpture similar to the Dalton/Kellerman fountain earlier.

We got a grant from the Kansas Department of Education to do leadership workshops with students from culturally diverse backgrounds," said Hoernicke.

"One of the projects involved a sculpture project in which middle school students, ...in the Dodge City area were asked to create a small wax sculpture representing something about themselves."

About 30 students from Dodge City worked on wax pieces that were 2"x 2" and later cast in bronze by FHSU faculty and students.

The pieces were then welded together into a shape of the bell that was about 16" high. The same techniques used on the bell sculpture were also used on the fountain.

Hoernicke and Coulter were given the plot on Tomanek Hall to create a fountain on, and they decided to use the idea of using student's work to create a sculpture in the fountain.

Hoernicke said that he's not aware of another sculpture project with bronze that has employed the work of students like the Dalton/Kellerman fountain did.

The work that the students did on the sculpture in the fountain show many different symbols associated with science.

While some of the same themes are repeated in the fountain, the fountain shows many different interpretations of science.

The subject matter of the pieces "...ranged from animals to atoms," Hoernicke said.

When asked what science means to him, Hoernicke said that science means many different things because "...there are different kinds of sciences."

Hoernicke suggests that educators need to start early and expose kids more to the arts and sciences. "We need to integrate science in other areas of schools," he said.

Coulter had much the same opinion as Hoernicke on what science means to him. "Science has many different directions and options," Coulter said.

Coulter, who is now retired and living in Trinidad Colorado, said that he'd like to see the Dalton/Kellerman fountain added on to, if possible.

He thinks that adding to the existing sculpture in the fountain with more pieces from students would be "an idea worth pursuing."

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