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The Art of Beautifying a Campus

Custom-designed sculptures create inspiring site furnishings on the campus of High Point University.

In 2005, Jon Hair, sculptor and owner of the Jon Hair Studio of Fine Art, was standing on the campus of High Point University in North Carolina when he was told by the University's dynamic new president, Dr. Nido Qubein, "I don't want to be able to stand anywhere on this campus and not see a Jon Hair bronze." And so began an extensive and impressive revitalization project using art to beautify the campus.

Dr. Qubein had a vision for this University, which had been experiencing a

decline in enrollment over the past several years preceding his presidency. His vision included not only growing a diverse and distinguished student body, but also making High Point University a destination for anyone visiting that area of North Carolina. Outdoor artwork was just one of the means he planned to use to entice students and visitors alike. To accomplish this part of his plan, he enlisted the talents of nationally known artist, Jon Hair.

Hair was no stranger to the High Point campus. In previous years, he had been

commissioned to create several other bronze sculptures for the University. The first was a panther, which is the mascot of the school. Next came the grand sculpture of Atlas holding the Olympic Globe, which resides near the entrance to the campus. He also created an eagle to keep a watchful eye outside the school's library. The next step in the artful beautification project involved some items that were already part of the landscape there: steel benches.

The idea was to fashion life-size bronze sculptures of well-known historic figures and seat them on the benches along one of the main walkways. Inlaid in cast-stone pavers by each of their respective benches is a quote from that person. The lifelike sculptures depict a diverse array of characters from several centuries of not only U.S.,

but also world history.

Hair started initially with eight bench figures: John Wesley, Thomas Jefferson, Aristotle, Martin Luther King, Amelia Earhart, William Shakespeare, Mark Twain, and Marie Curie. Later came four more: Mahatma Ghandi, George Washington, Rosa Parks, and Galileo. This year he was commissioned by the University to create four more figures to sit on the benches and add their inspiration to the notable assembly already gathered there.

Hair is passionate about his art, and that passion is visually translated into these beautiful and strikingly lifelike bronzes.

Getting to the finished product is a complex process that takes about eight weeks from design to installation on the bench. It's no easy feat to get a 400-lb.,

life-sized piece mounted just right on a bench, but Hair has the process down to a science. He purchased a bench from the same manufacturer of the High Point University's benches because he likes their quality and design. He placed that bench at his foundry, where he uses it for fitting purposes. There, he is able to mount the figure to the bench as a sort of "test run" to ensure that the proportions of the figure are exactly right.

So, a visionary president's desire to make his University a showcase for art and ultimately a place of inspiration and beauty for all who step foot on campus has been realized through the monumental efforts of a gifted artist whose work is his passion. The result is a unique and beautiful environment, which enhances the academic efforts of all who learn, work, and visit there. [BPM](#)

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