

Notice
Arts Commission Ad Hoc Interview Committee Meeting



Regarding:
Arts Selection Panel
2:00 p.m.
Tuesday, February 16, 2016
Second Floor Committee Room, Governmental Center
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, MI 49684
Posted: February 11, 2016

If you are planning to attend the meeting and you have a disability requiring any special assistance at the meeting, please notify the City Clerk, immediately.

The City of Traverse City does not discriminate on the basis of disability in the admission or access to, or treatment or employment in, its programs or activities. Penny Hill, Assistant City Manager 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan, 49684, 922-4440, TDD 922-4412, has been designated to coordinate compliance with the non-discrimination requirements contained in Section 35.107 of the Department of Justice Regulations. Information concerning the provisions of the Americans With Disabilities Act, and the rights provided thereunder, are available from the ADA Coordinator.

Katie Zeits, Deputy City Clerk
c/o Traverse City Arts Commission
400 Boardman Avenue
Traverse City, Michigan 49684
(231) 922-4480
<http://www.traversecitymi.gov>

Agenda

1. Consideration of approving the minutes of the January 28, 2016 regular meeting.
2. Consideration of Arts Selection Panel applicant interviews.
3. Public Comment.
4. Adjournment.

CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY

Minutes

Traverse City Arts Commission Ad Hoc Interview Committee Arts Selection Panel

January 28, 2016

A Regular Meeting for the Traverse City Arts Commission Ad Hoc Interview Committee was called to order in the second floor Conference Room, Governmental Center, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, Michigan, at 3:00 p.m.

The following were present, constituting a quorum: Mary Gillett, Christie Minervini, and Jan Warren.

Also present: Katelyn Zeits and Stevie Murray

The following were absent: none.

1. First item being, "Consideration of selecting a secretary for the duration of the committee."

It was moved by Minervini, seconded by Warren that Deputy City Clerk Katelyn Zeits would act as secretary for the duration of the committee.

AIF/MC

2. Next item being, "Consideration of applicant interview process and timeline."

Various discussions occurred regarding the applicant interview process and timeline for set interviews for the Arts Selection Panel. Tentative dates for interview will be February 16, and February 17, 2016.

3. Next item being, "Public Comment."

None.

There being no objection, Chair Mary Gillett declared the meeting adjourned at 4:25 p.m.

Katelyn Zeits, Designated Secretary

All meetings are held in the 2nd Floor Conference Room of the Governmental Center unless otherwise stated.

City of Traverse City
Application to Become Involved



Thank you for your interest in serving on one of Traverse City's boards or committees! Volunteers help to secure our community's beauty and promote its enhancement – Benjamin C. Marentette, City Clerk

Board/Committee you are interested in serving (indicate up to three): _____

TRAVERSE CITY ARTS COMMISSION

Name: TODD A. McMillen

Address: 1223 ANNECAL RD. TC MI 49686
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

E-Mail Address: TFRANCE@AOL

Preferred Phone No.: 231.947.8908 Additional Phone No.: 231.631.0918

Occupation: OWNER - McMILLEN'S (if retired, please provide your career)

Before submitting your application, please be sure to attach a brief letter indicating the following:

- Why are you applying for a city board or committee seat?
- How do you believe your appointment would benefit the city?
- Describe your involvement in the community on a board/committee or in another volunteer capacity.
- Any other helpful information relevant to your application.

While it is not required, a resume is helpful in the recruitment process for City boards and committees.

YES NO Are you in default to the City?
If yes, please note applicants in default to the City are not eligible for consideration.

YES NO Do you or immediate family members currently serve on a City board or committee?
If yes, which board? _____

YES NO Did you attach the required letter outlining the items requested above?

The applicant acknowledges that the City may be required from time to time to release records in its possession. The applicant hereby gives permission to the City to release any records or materials received by the City from the applicant as it may be requested to do so as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.231 et seq.

[Signature]
Signature

MARCH 5, 2015
Date

Please return your application, letter, and optional resume to City Clerk, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49684. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at (231) 922-4480. Again, thank you for your interest!

RECEIVED
MAR 06 2015
CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY
CITY CLERKS OFFICE

March 5, 2015

Dear Committee;

Please consider this my submission as a candidate for the Traverse City Arts Commission recently established by the City Commission and the DDA. I applaud your organized effort to provide public art for our community and I would like to be part of that endeavor.

Following my graduation for MNC (honored as Alumnus of the Year 2008), I attended Kendal School of Design, returned to Traverse City and established McMillen's Custom Framing, now in its 28th year down town. I have served on many non-profit boards including Goodwill and the DTCA.

Art has always been an important part of my life. I have been an active member of the Public Art Committee in the down town, as well as involved in the semi-annual Art Walk which raises money for public art. I sponsor 2 art fairs each summer and have co-chaired "Art in the City" for its two years in existence. At the present time I serve on the Board of the Crooked Tree Arts Council-Traverse City.

Thank you for your consideration. You have my enthusiastic support for the work ahead.

Sincerely,



Todd McMillen

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FEB 20 2015



City of Traverse City
Application to Become Involved

Thank you for your interest in serving on one of Traverse City's boards or committees! Volunteers help to secure our community's beauty and promote its enhancement - Benjamin C. Marentette, City Clerk

Board/Committee you are interested in serving (indicate up to three): Arts Commission

Name: Jeanne Hynes (Sirotkin)

Address: 422 N. Madison St TC MI 49684
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

E-Mail Address: genie49@aol.com

Preferred Phone No.: 231 421-8109 Additional Phone No.: 248 914-0395

Occupation: Writer (former teacher) (if retired, please provide your career)

Before submitting your application, please be sure to attach a brief letter indicating the following:

- Why are you applying for a city board or committee seat?
How do you believe your appointment would benefit the city?
Describe your involvement in the community on a board/committee or in another volunteer capacity.
Any other helpful information relevant to your application.

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YES NO Are you in default to the City?
If yes, please note applicants in default to the City are not eligible for consideration.

YES NO Do you or immediate family members currently serve on a City board or committee?
If yes, which board?

YES NO Did you attach the required letter outlining the items requested above?

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Signature

Feb. 20, 2015
Date

Please return your application, letter, and optional resume to City Clerk, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49684. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at (231) 922-4480. Again, thank you for your interest!

Jeanne Haynes (Sirotkin)
422 N. Madison St.
Traverse City, MI 49684 (231) 421-8109

Traverse City is a community that values the arts. I would like to help public art reflect those values through service on the Art Commission.

Although a newcomer to Traverse City (2011) I've organized block parties, volunteered for the TC Film Fest and participated in the Slabtown Neighborhood Assn. I am a member of the T C Community Garden and the Botanic Garden at Historic Barns Park.

Currently I am the Writer Next Door on the NWS website. My most recent book is a collection of short stories, "Wrestling the Bear" that won the SFA prize in fiction and was published by the Stephen F Austin State University in Texas, 2013.

Formerly I worked as an editor of San Francisco Gallery Magazine (featuring literature and art).

I was a member of Parachute Salon, a collective of writers and arts.

I have worked as a poet and fiction writer collaboratively with both dancers and visual artists.

Previously I worked in the art and music department of SF Public Library and the San Francisco Art Institute

From 1992-2002 I taught at The Roeper School where I founded their high school creative writing program and edited their literary magazine (selection and layout).

I have extensive experience both text editing and creative editing.

As a presenter, I participated in the Picture Lady Program in the Berkley Schools and The Roeper School, bringing art to elementary school children.

I have served on the Berkley School Board Curriculum Committee.

I was the chairperson of Providence Hospital Medical Staff annual dinner dance during husband's two-year tenure as the President of the Medical Staff.

Additionally, I was a member of the board of Children's International Summer Villages for four years, and chaired several large fundraisers.

I've had a varied career in the arts and have a good visual sense that I feel would be an asset to the Commission. I am a team player, able to work collaboratively and to delegate when needed.

City of Traverse City
Application to Become Involved



Thank **you** for your interest in serving on one of Traverse City's boards or committees! Volunteers help to secure our community's beauty and promote its enhancement – Benjamin C. Marentette, City Clerk

Board/Committee you are interested in serving (indicate up to three): _____

ARTS COMMISSION / PUBLIC ART Selection

Name: PAUL W. WELCH

Address: 3816 RIDGEWAY PL, TRAVERSE CITY MI. 49684
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

E-Mail Address: DELPHINE WELCH @ GMAIL . COM

Preferred Phone No.: 231-421-5461 Additional Phone No.: 231-357-6139

Occupation: PROFESSOR EMERITUS (if retired, please provide your career)
ART INSTRUCTOR NMC (Northwestern Mich. College)

Before submitting your application, please be sure to attach a brief letter indicating the following:

- Why are you applying for a city board or committee seat?
- How do you believe your appointment would benefit the city?
- Describe your involvement in the community on a board/committee or in another volunteer capacity.
- Any other helpful information relevant to your application. - BOOK INCLUDED

While it is not required, a resume is helpful in the recruitment process for City boards and committees.

YES NO Are you in default to the City?
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YES NO Do you or immediate family members currently serve on a City board or committee?
If yes, which board? _____

YES NO Did you attach the required letter outlining the items requested above? + BOOK

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Paul W. Welch
Signature

FEB. 28, 2015
Date

GOOGLE - PAUL WELCH - ARTIST
Please return your application, letter, and optional resume to City Clerk, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49684. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at (231) 922-4480. Again, thank you for your interest!

"PUBLIC SPACES ARE PLACES FOR FREE AND CREATIVE EXPRESSION AND THAT EXPRESSION INCLUDES ART."

Paul Welch
3816 Ridgeway Place
Traverse City, MI 49684

Tel. 231-421-5461

March 2, 2015

Arts Commission
Public Art Selection
Traverse City, MI

To Whom It May Concern:

I am applying to serve on a committee to help select quality public art for Traverse City. I want to continue helping the city to be a cultural center—a vibrant city of visual art. I aspire to see artists able to display their works in public places.

It has been established that people move to cities that have a strong cultural orientation and where outdoor art venues are available to the people. I began that process in 2014 by hanging a huge banner of my work on Mike Anton's building on West Front Street.

My entire career has been in Traverse City where I founded and developed the Art Department at Northwestern Michigan College. I was one of the founders of the Traverse City Arts Council, as well as the Dennos Museum Center. I am now Professor Emeritus of Art at the college, and was honored with the title of Fellow of Northwestern Michigan College because of my contributions to the community.

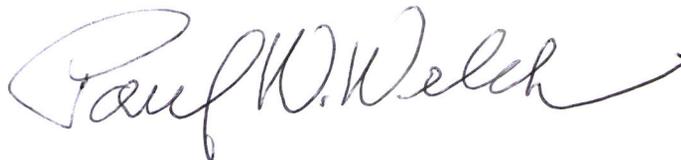
During my thirty-year tenure of teaching all of the art disciplines and chairing the department, I was a practicing artist and stained glass window maker, and my commissions can be seen throughout Traverse City in homes, churches, and Munson Hospital.

Outside of my field, I served a term on the board of the Grand Traverse Regional Land Conservancy, and was a leader in helping to secure lands for the Skegemog Natural Area.

I believe that my appointment would be of great value to the city because my vision of what was needed here always proved to be what was needed, and I contributed to successful endeavors.

Enclosed is my recent book, authored by Heather Shumaker, which is a historical record of my influence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Paul W. Welch". The signature is written in black ink and is positioned to the right of the word "Sincerely,".

the TICKER News

Traverse City News and Events
Sunday, February 1, 2015

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Today's News

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TC Named to Top 20 Cities in Arts Vibrancy

January 31, 2015



A first-ever report by the National Center for Arts Research (NCAR) at Southern Methodist University has ranked the cultural vibrancy of cities across the country - and Traverse City came in at #20 on the list of Top 20 Arts Vibrant Small and Medium Cities.

Along with Des Moines, Traverse City is one of only two Midwest cities on the list, which measures local nonprofit art dollars, state and federal arts funding, and artist "supply" - including independent artists, arts organizations and arts and culture employees - on a per-capita basis in cities with a population under 1,000,000. **MUSEUM, NMC, ART CENTER**

"Traverse City, MI, is home to Interlochen Center for the Arts, Sweet Adelines International, the Traverse Symphony Orchestra and Northwest Michigan Ballet Theatre, among others," states the report. "Each year, thousands of artists and arts patrons come to Interlochen to experience world-class educational and cultural opportunities, which leads to Traverse City ranking in the top 10 for program revenue, total expenses, and total compensation per capita."

Other cities that made the list included Santa Fe, Bozeman, Breckenridge and Santa Barbara.

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Comments

"ARTS VIBRANCY"
NATIONAL CENTER FOR ARTS RESEARCH
2015 FEB. 1

More News



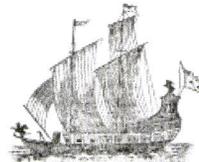
Which Local Advertisers Are Buying The Super Bowl?

Kids Against Hunger.

TC Kiwanis to Ship 20,000 Meals to Feed Hungry



Interlochen Student Named Presidential Scholar Candidate



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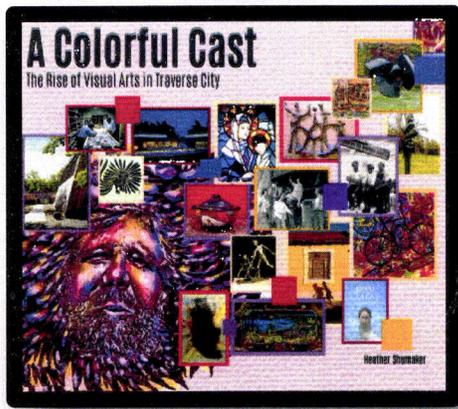
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"ARTS LIBRANCY"

NATIONAL CENTER FOR ARTS

RESEARCH

2018 FEB 1



A Colorful Cast

Celebrate the publication of *A Colorful Cast*, a newly-published retrospective chronicling the rise of visual arts in the Grand Traverse Region and the legacy and rich history of the NMC Art Department.

Conceived by retired NMC art department chairman Paul Welch, stewarded by NMC archivist Ann Swaney, authored by Traverse City writer Heather Shumaker and designed by NMC Visual Communications students, *A Colorful Cast* highlights the men and women who created a wave of visual arts in the Grand Traverse Region and celebrates the role that NMC played in building regional interest in visual arts. The galleries, the studios and the festivals that now draw thousands to our region... all were influenced by the vibrant learning environment of Northwestern Michigan College and the artists who gathered and learned here.

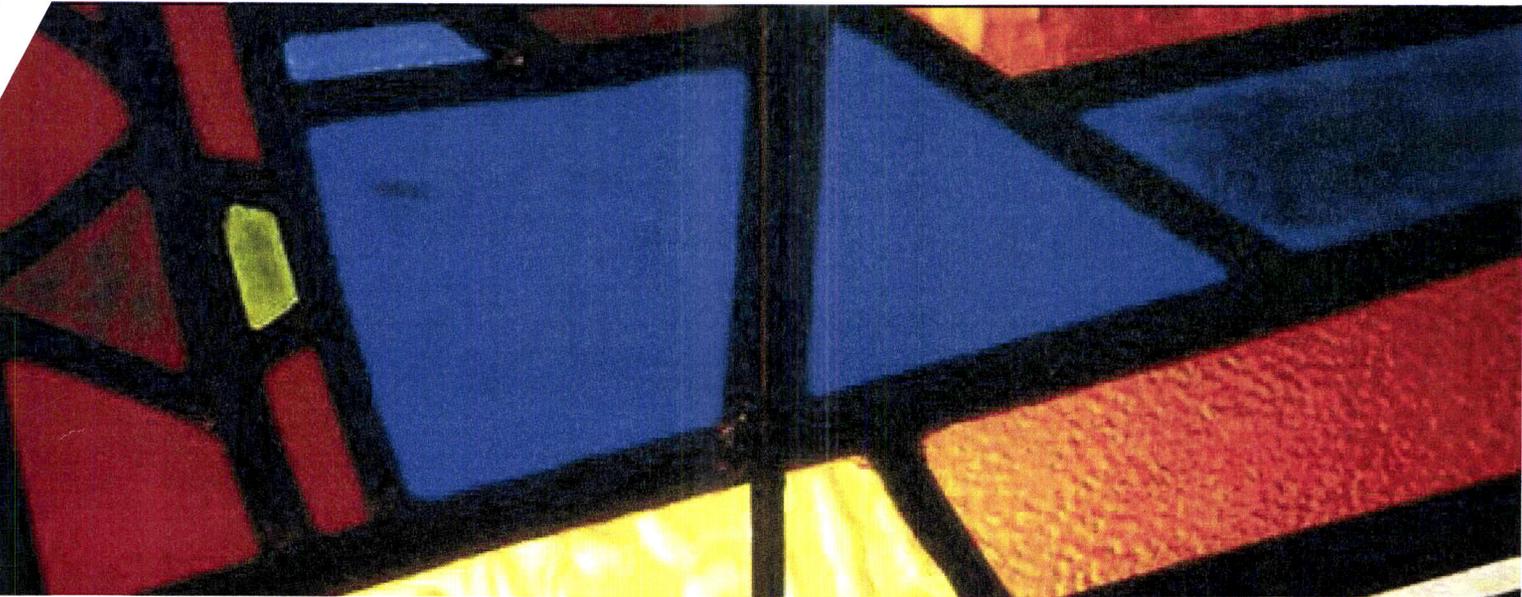


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Michigan
College**

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**All proceeds benefit NMC
Visual Arts Scholarships**



**NORTHWESTERN MICHIGAN COLLEGE
FOUNDATION**



Paul Welch

A Colorful Cast

(The Rise of Visual Arts in Traverse City)

* Heather Shumaker *

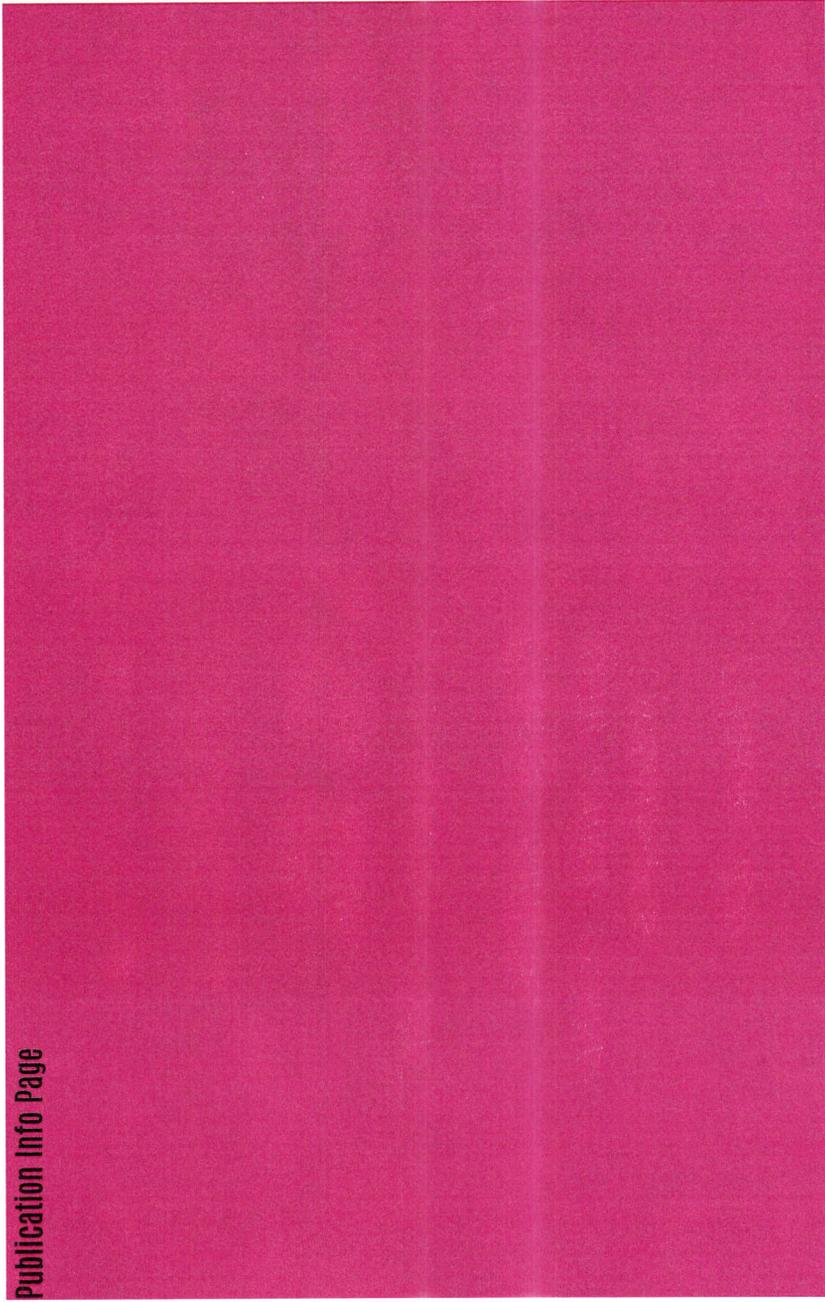
"EARLY DRAFT"
OF THE BOOK
(A COLORFUL CAST)

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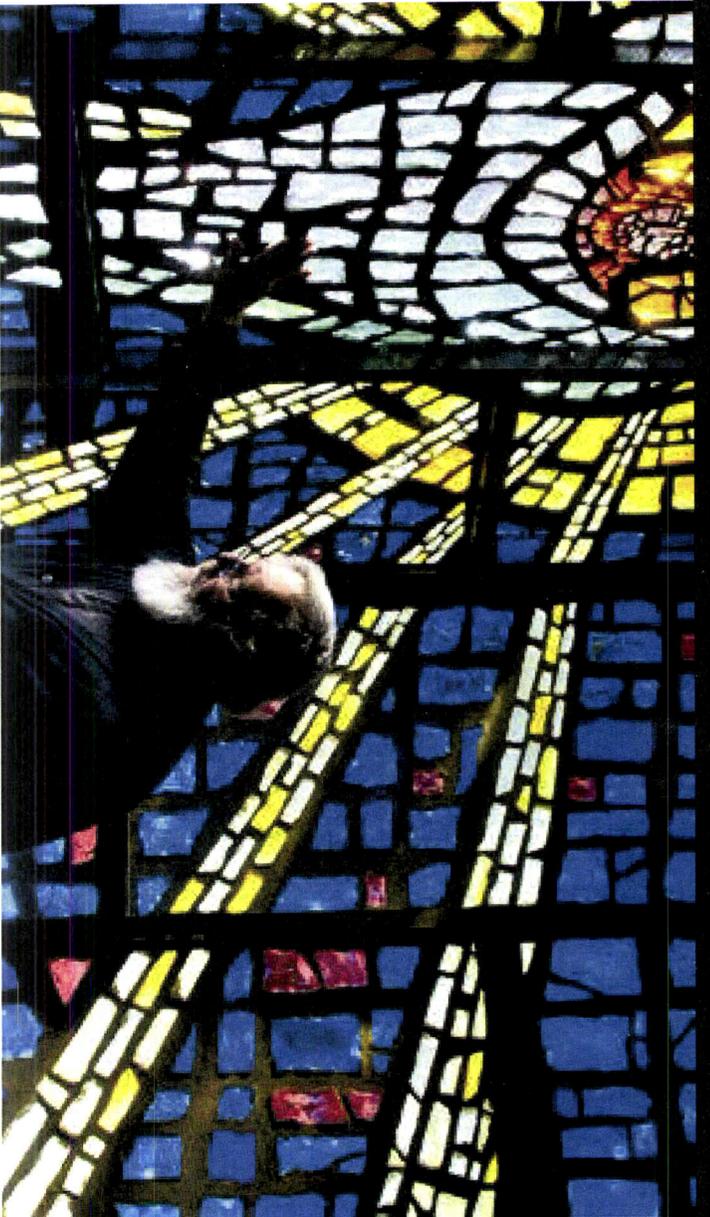
THANK YOU

Paul Welch
2015

231-421-5461



Publication Info Page



*Paul Welch at the 1977 Welch/
Holdeman dalle de verre faceted
windows, St. Francis of Assisi
Catholic Church,
Traverse City, Michigan.*

To Paul,
whose dedication and determination defined the visual arts at
NMG and whose foresight and inspiration sparked the creation of the Dennon
Museum Center for our community.
And to all artists and lovers and supporters of the arts, past,
present, and yet to come.

- Eugene A Jenneman -
Executive Director
Dennon Museum Center

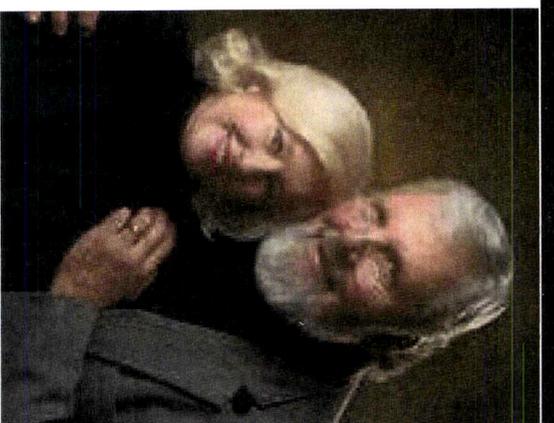


Photo courtesy of Don Rutt.



To My Eight Wonderful Women:
A special tribute to my wife, Delphine, who has
had to put up with me for nearly 60 years; my
daughters, Wendy and Kathy; and my grand-
daughters Kelly, Mari, Leah, Jen and Carlie

- Paul Welch -



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Paul Welch, *Tree of Life*, stained glass drawing for All Faiths Chapel, 1963.



Foreword I

It is now more than fifty years since our family moved to northern Michigan, where my mother met the artist Paul Welch, and began a journey with him that changed a city.

Was it the discovery of a kindred soul in a small town, her growing interest in art, or simply a shared *joie de vivre* that sparked her friendship with Paul? Looking back, it may have been less art and more fun, but whatever the spark, it was their friendship that introduced Paul's passion for art and creativity into the lives of my parents, their friends, and an entire community.

What began as a simple idea—to help create a small teaching collection of artwork for the local college where Paul was a professor—led to some memorable trips my parents took with Paul around the country. They built a collection that outgrew Paul's art department first, and then the college library.

Little did my mother know that the seeds she had planted years earlier with Paul would eventually become my parents' proudest achievement: the Michael and Barbara Dennos Museum Center, dedicated in 1991.

In fact, nothing gave my parents more pleasure than knowing that so many people benefited from the presence of the Dennos

Museum. For years afterward, strangers would stop them on the street and tell them just how wonderful the latest exhibit or concert at the Dennos Museum was—and how important the museum is to Traverse City. Indeed, for many in the area, the Dennos may be the only museum they will ever get the chance to enter and enjoy.

It thrilled my parents to see Paul's project grow to become such a vital part of their community, one that so many of their friends, neighbors, other leaders, and local groups such as Rotary stepped forward to embrace, support, and make it their own.

Like ripples that grow and gather strength to become a river, small ideas, when stirred and circulated, can engage a community and change lives. I hope that Paul's story inspires others to be creative, to share their passions, and to add their own gifts to the life of their community.

Anne Dennos Shuyler

December 3, 2013

Foreword II

When Northwestern Michigan College was established in 1951, it was to provide higher education for northern Michigan residents.

The abundance of natural beauty was a bonus, enabling the college to attract qualified professors for each of its growing departments. In terms of performing arts, the greater Grand Traverse area was already a destination with its Cherry County Playhouse, Traverse Symphony Orchestra and close neighbor, the National Music Camp at Interlochen. However, there was mostly a void in visual arts, but for a few notable exceptions like Maud Hoffmeister and Gwen Frostic.

Enter Paul Welch. In 1961 he was hired to head NMC's small art department. Like most things in life, when passion inflames, a wildfire results. So it did when Paul Welch took reign. Little did NMC realize what an impact his hiring would have in the coming decades, and how this passion-driven professor would lay the kindling for Traverse City to become an art hub, not just in northern Michigan, not just in the Midwest, but internationally.

I had the privilege of attending NMC in

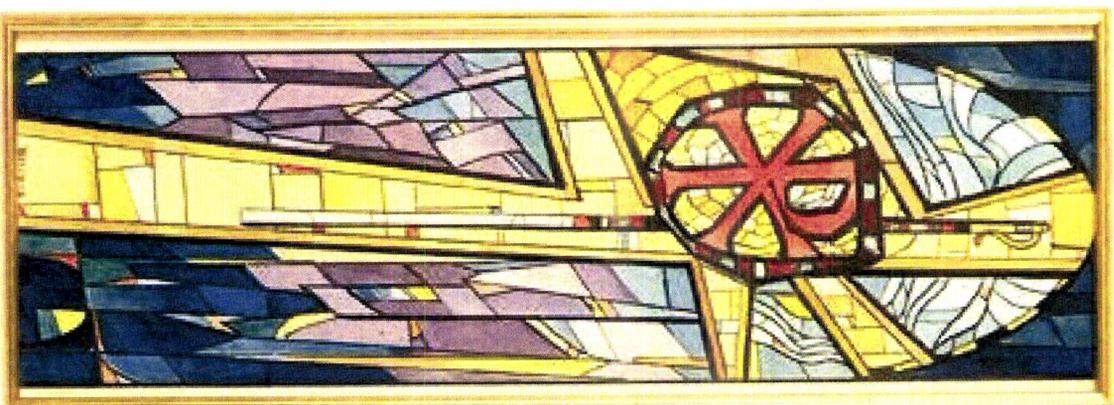
the mid '60s and was a student of art history. One day, Paul Welch approached me and asked if I would be interested in modeling for his sculpture class. It was then and there, with classical music blaring in the background, where I not only saw but experienced the passion Paul instilled in his students. It didn't take long to observe that many truly talented artists were in the making here. Whether they stayed or left, they remained connected to NMC and the art department faculty.

This book is the story of how the visual arts legacy we know today was built. Fundamentally it's a history book, but it has all the ingredients of a great story: drama, humor, tension and most important, a colorful cast of characters. All proceeds will go to scholarships for NMC art students.

So sit back, relax and read, and breathe in the passion for art that runs through every page.

Susie Janis
NMC Class of 1967

Paul Welch, *Chi Rho*, stained glass drawing for All Faiths Chapel, 1963.



Paul Welch, *Descent of the Holy Spirit*, stained glass drawing for All Faiths Chapel, 1963.



Introduction – Inspiration 101

Paul Welch keeps telling me he's getting old. I tell him to hush because if he is older than he was in 1976, when he was my art history instructor at Northwestern Michigan College, well then, so am I. Besides, while technically true, Paul to me remains ageless and ebullient. Catching up with this character is always a delightful blast from the past.

I'd call Paul the second-most influential art history teacher in my life—the first being my father. But I was 18 and trying (un- valiantly) to bury any lessons he'd taught me when I sauntered into Paul's first-hour Art History 101, and settled onto the semi-circle seating in that incredible performance room in NMC's inspirational Fine Arts Building. Paul dimmed the lights and clicked on the projector. The bulb's glow gave way to the first slide and Paul was off on a crazy, whirling, roadrunner-speed sweep of the artistic high points of the millennium. I woke up.

It would be years before I completely understood that Paul was the vital vortex of an epoch of art in northern Michigan. Among other things, he and his colleagues were responsible for the college hiring the world-famous Bauhaus-founder Walter

Gropius firm to design the college's Fine Arts building. Of course, the decibel of passion that brought internationally acclaimed architecture to a (then) sleepy northwoods city reverberated far beyond those walls. Paul and his colleagues went on to inspire a legion of design talents in northern Michigan—among them photographer John Robert Williams, sculptor Robert Purvis, illustrator Glenn Wolff and filmmaker Rich Brauer.

As an editor, it's been a privilege to feature all of their work in the pages of *Traverse* magazine. And I'm even more delighted now to introduce their collective story, the history of the Welch epoch, recorded in lively prose and of course vibrantly illustrated, in this special volume. If you weren't witness to its unfolding within the beautiful, angled wooden walls of the Fine Arts Building — or the proverbial fly on them — reading this will make you believe you were.

Elizabeth (Lissa) Turak Edwards
March 2014

Prologue

If you ever attended the National Cherry Festival's grand closing parade in the 1980s or 1990s, you witnessed the Williams Brothers floats. Stretching for half a mile along Front Street, the zany floats involved up to 400 people and featured props like a giant taco and an eight-foot-wide pink princess telephone.

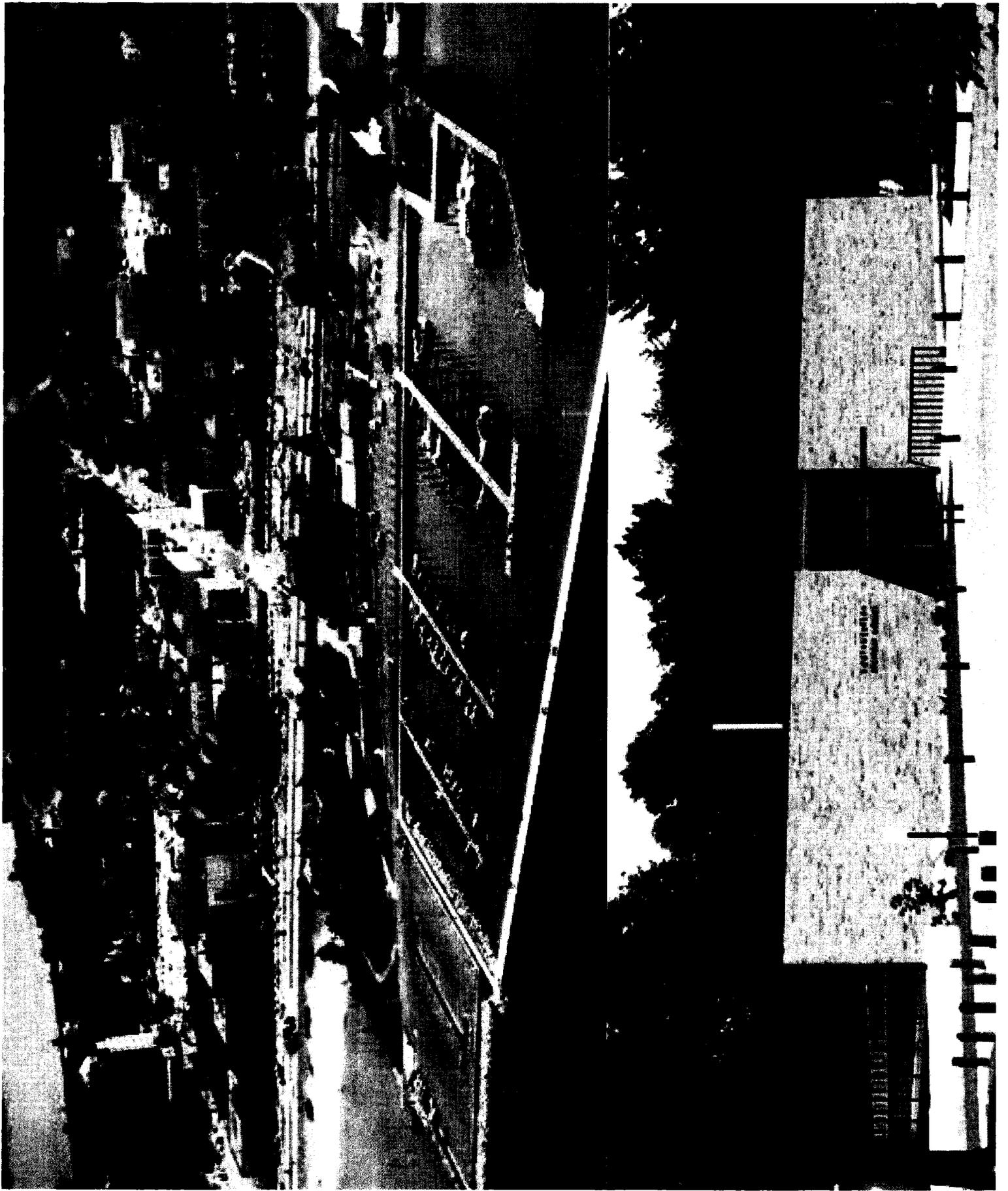
Or perhaps you've strolled or bicycled along the bay at Clinch Park and seen a bronze cast bicycle sculpture showing a parent and child entitled *Time to Let Go*. That's Verna Bartnick's work. Or maybe you're a fan of the Traverse City Film Festival, including the murals painted on the State Theatre lobby walls by Glenn Wolff and others. Maybe you've listened to a Jeff Haas jazz concert or have seen the musk ox guarding the door to a unique gallery of Inuit art at the Dennon Museum.

You can trace that giant taco, bronze bicycle, film festival and musk ox to the same origins: The Fine Arts program on the campus of Northwestern Michigan College. Even before there was a Fine Arts Building, people gathered, taught and inspired each other in a crucible of creativity.

This is the story of how humble beginnings led to a flourishing arts and culture scene in Traverse City. It focuses on a forty-year time span, soon after Northwestern Michigan College first opened its doors. Our story starts in 1958, when a newly minted art teacher named Paul Welch moved to town.

Paul Welch, *Virgin Mother and Christ Child*, stained glass drawing for All Faiths Chapel, 1963.





“The object of art is not to reproduce reality, but to create a reality of the same intensity.”

-Alberto Giacometti



Part I Early Days 1958–1978

1950s Traverse City

Top Left: Traverse City, 1960.
Bottom Left: Northwestern Michigan College's new Administration building, 1958. Photo courtesy of the History Center, Traverse City.

Paul Welch surveyed the art scene in Traverse City. It was 1958 and G. Mennen “Soapy” Williams was Governor. The era of big lumber had ended a mere 50 years before. The bayfront was gradually being freed from a line of cherry canning factories, but the waters of the bay still turned purple every summer.

Paul didn't like what he saw: no art galleries, no arts council, no art museum, and only two art teachers in the Traverse City public schools. He was one of them.

Paul was 22. Clean-shaven, high-energy and 6'3", he carried the bulk of a football player and the booming lungs of an Italian tenor. In fact, he'd been recruited to coach JV football when he arrived to teach art at Traverse City's one-and-only public high school.

Paul Welch drove into town in a two-toned green 1956 Chevy. Fresh from Michigan State University (MSU) with an undergraduate art degree, he was in love with Cubism, German Expressionism, old masters and modern art, especially Picasso

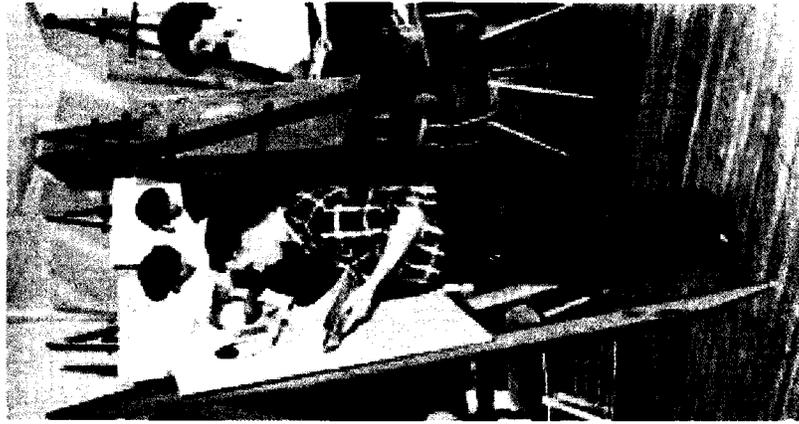
and Marc Chagall's stained glass. He was also in love with his college sweetheart, so much that he sat beside him on the front seat. The back seat and trunk were stacked with boxes of art supplies: paint brushes, drawing pads, oil paints, watercolors and glass cutting tools and soldering irons.

His first students soon discovered that the new teacher was likely to leap into the classroom bellowing “Caravaggio!” and could lift two cheerleaders on a barbell at pep rallies. They also learned that Caravaggio was the great Michelangelo Merisi da Caravaggio, and with Paul's enthusiasm leading them, transformed the art classroom into a space for creation. Paul's goal was simple. He wanted to wake up students and get them to fall in love with art.

“If you ask me what I came to do in this world, I, an artist, will answer you: I am here to live out loud.”

—Emile Zola

He also wanted to wake up Traverse City. Growing up in the Detroit area, Paul was used to visiting the riches of the Detroit Institute of Arts. Where was the art here? He wrote a



An early painting class in the basement of the Administration building, 1958-59 school year.

letter to the Traverse City Record-Eagle expounding on the wonders of Cubism and Pablo Picasso's influence on art in the 20th century. Traverse City wasn't quite ready to hear that. A reader who gave oil painting lessons to children wrote back: "Picasso can't even draw."

"It was a collision between a rather conservative community with the art world," said Kathy Ferguson, Paul's daughter, years later.

Certainly not everyone was enamored with Paul's new ideas about art. The high school principal stopped by the art classroom, eyeing paint splatters and smears of clay. "It's a mess," he said.

Paul made no apology. "You can't bake a good batch of cookies without making some mess in the kitchen," he told him.

After three years teaching high school art, Paul knew the match wasn't quite right. He loved teaching, but longed to go to a deeper level with older students. He'd taught a night class at the college

and that age seemed right. For that career he would need a master's degree, so Paul headed back to MSU with his family, now including another daughter, Wendy. Two years later, he returned to Traverse City. A college professor himself. Twenty-five years old, bursting with energy, and 100 percent focused on art and arts education.

Early Arts in the Grand Traverse Region

The Grand Traverse area may have been

largely unaware of Picasso's Cubism, but the region had inspired art for years. Its legendary beauty attracted artists to the lakes and dunes, and areas like Leelanau County had acquired a quiet reputation as a summer arts mecca, including the idyllic Old Art Building in Leland. In nearby Benzie County, the Oliver Center for Arts formed in Frankfort in 1948, and Gwen Frostic pursued her block printing. Maude Miller Hoffmaster gave oil painting classes from her home studio in Traverse City. Interlochen Center for the Arts began in the 1920s, with a primary focus on music.

The Grand Traverse Bay area had also been home to native people and their arts for millennia. First, ancient paleo communities and Hopewell cultures lived near the shores of the bay. Six hundred years ago, the Odawa and Chippewa, or Anishinaabek people, moved from the east coast and made the Great Lakes their home. By the midtwentieth century, native arts had been devastated by European settlement and U.S. policies, including Indian boarding schools. However, people still practiced traditional arts that included birch bark biting, porcupine quill work, pottery, basket weaving and elaborate beadwork, though a cultural revival of native arts was years off.

Music and performing arts blossomed first. Interlochen expanded to a year round arts academy. Then came the Traverse Symphony Orchestra and Old Town Playhouse, both of which Elnora Milliken helped launch. In 1952, the orchestra presented its first Beethoven concert and a few years later the playhouse staged their first show. Still, the visual arts in Traverse City were largely wanting.

Art in the Basement, Artrain and the First Gallery

Paul Welch was waiting, too. Waiting for his own classroom. He'd been hired part-time by Northwestern Michigan College to teach painting and art history. But like his predecessor, Ralf Parton, the college's first art instructor, Paul was given classes with no classroom to hold them. He and his students floated from room to room whenever a spot was available. Sometimes it was the basement of the library, sometimes an empty classroom. He was a one-person art department with no place to get messy.

In 1961, NMC was just ten years old. It was filled with pioneering spirit and scrappy community enthusiasm, but short on money and facilities. The college had only recently moved out of its first home—vacant rooms at the municipal airport—and now proudly had its own building. Still, there wasn't much classroom space on campus.

Three years later, with a new Science & Math building on campus, Paul shifted from part-time instructor to full-time and gained his own space: the former chemistry lab.

"The chem lab stank," he said. "All those chemicals and beakers and test tubes."

The chem lab-turned-art studio was located in the basement of the campus administration building, and was the size of a living room. Paul moved out the bottles and beakers, but still it was a tight fit for 35 students. He expanded into the maze of steam tunnels that led to the power plant to store art supplies, but Paul realized his art department couldn't truly grow without reaching out to the community.

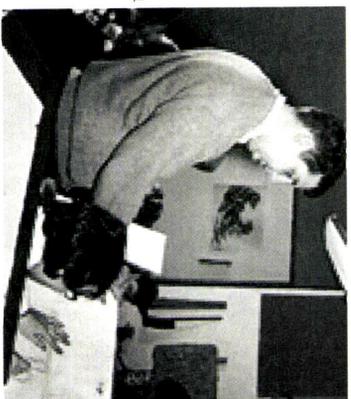
"I knew I wanted a connection with the city, with the people of Traverse City. I couldn't keep sitting by myself in the chem lab. I needed to bring them in."

One of the first to hear his message was Diane Davis, a student who studied painting with him in 1962. She heard him talk about the need for a local gallery. With both the financial means and familiarity with the art world in Chicago, she decided to do something about it. With artwork collected from around the state in her Volkswagen bus, Diane opened "The Gallery" in 1963, in a vacant automobile dealership showroom across from the Park Place.

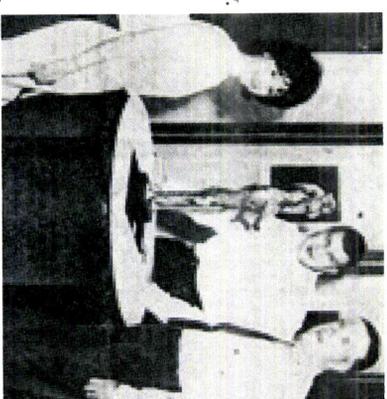
The Gallery was a first step toward creating a museum. It gave painting and sculpture a public presence, involved volunteers, and put the spotlight on visual arts. Governor George Romney attended opening ceremonies. Proceeds from the Gallery's opening sales went to a fund for buying a permanent art collection for the city.

There had been talk for some time in the 1960s about creating an arts council. Not only did Paul want to connect the college art department to the community, but community artists wanted a place to showcase their work and educate children and adults about visual arts. Betty Parsons was the first person to get excited about the idea. Together she and Paul drew in others to promote public appreciation of visual arts, bring artwork to schools, host exhibitions, support local artists, and expose Traverse City to great artwork they'd never seen before.

The first Arts Council board members were a devoted bunch. They met weekly at Betty Parsons' house on Wellington Street starting in October 1968 or met at the Park Place for lunch.



One of Paul Welch's NMC drawing classes, 1963.



Diane Davis, Roger Davis, Governor George Romney at The Gallery, 1963. The first art gallery in Traverse City.



Actor McDonald Carey, Sally Longcore, and Diane Davis at Gallery 420 in 1972.

The first open meeting drew 60 people. By January 1969 the group was incorporated and ready to host their first big show.

The show, called "Project Outreach," actually gave the Arts Council the boost it needed to get started. The Detroit Institute of Arts had arranged to loan works from its collection to 10 cities around Michigan. Traverse City could be one of them, but only if it had an arts council to sponsor it. Betty Parsons, Barb McClellan, Paul Welch and others sprang into action.

What a show it was. Project Outreach began with display of the John Sloan exhibit in the lobby of Empire National Bank. John French Sloan was a famous Ashcan painter, and the exhibit included his piece *McSorley's Bar*. Paul was in charge of unpacking and hanging all the paintings with great help from Betty Parsons and Barb McClellan. Traverse City went on to host five more Project Outreach shows that year, bringing works by Renoir, Mary Cassatt and Toulouse-Lautrec to the Carnegie library on Sixth Street. Arts Council members helped rig the library with security devices since the traveling Detroit collection was worth more than \$100,000 in 1969.

"I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free."
—Michelangelo

With the success of Project Outreach, the Arts Council flourished. Betty Parsons invited friends such as Helen Milliken and Barbara Dennon to join, and both women became deeply involved in the Arts Council.

Early members also included architects Bob Bell and Bob Holdeman, writer Jim Harrison, humanities teacher Walt Oberlin and sculptor and Interlochen teacher Jean Parsons. Barb McClellan was often cited as one of the hardest-working members. Other locals involved included Gene and Patricia Wolff, Barbara Spörck, Patty Bourdo, Joan Russell and Steve Ballance.

Next they created "Art in the Schools." Barb McClellan, Delphine Welch and other volunteers placed prints of great artwork in school classrooms and rotated the pictures from room to room so children could see a range of artwork. The goal was to help children understand that art was part of life and not confined to a scheduled art period.

"The purpose of art is washing the dust of daily life off our souls."
—Picasso

Another main goal for the Arts Council was to showcase local artists' work. In 1970 the Council began to host juried art shows once a year. Early art shows were hung in downtown restaurants, as well as local banks, the library and more early galleries, like Gallery 420. Since they were juried shows, the art shows gained a reputation for quality artwork, and gave awards and prizes.

Gallery 420 opened on Union Street in the early 1970's by Arts Council member Mary Dunham. For a time, the Arts Council leased the nearby basement of the current Old Town Playhouse as a gallery and called the whole building the Old Town Art Center. Theater patrons could view exhibits during intermission. The idea was to expand the Arts Council and



Paul Welch Metalsmithing

make it an umbrella organization for visual and performing arts.

“I merely took the energy it takes to pout and wrote some blues.”

—Duke Ellington

The Arts Council thrived for more than three decades. During the 1980s and 90s the group continued as a vibrant presence, supporting both an executive director and a gallery director, expanding membership and hosting monthly exhibits at the Law Offices on Front Street. Steve Ballance, Bob Holdeman and others took turns as president. Jackie Shinnars served as gallery director, bringing such shows as Russell Chatham and worldwide traveling photographic exhibits. She also worked with Grand Traverse County commissioners to send local art to Russia. After moving to the Opera House in the late 1990s, diminished funds, a structural change and efforts to expand even further faltered, causing the Council to dismantle after a solid 30+ year run.

One piece of this early effort to increase access to visual arts still survives: Artrain, co-founded by Helen Milliken in 1971. Like Project Outreach, Artrain’s original goal was to share fine arts with outlying communities. The traveling art-museum-on-a-train brought art to populations who lived in small towns without museums.

Helen created Artrain while she was First Lady. She maintained close ties to her hometown of Traverse City while her husband, William “Bill” Milliken, served as governor. Thanks to Helen, Traverse City was Artrain’s first stop. The train-museum parked along Grandview



At Gallery 420 in 1972 (left to right) Barbara Spörck, Paul Welch, Howard Crisp, and Patricia Wolff. Record Eagle photo by: Dann Perryck

Parkway and attracted 12,000 visitors during its ten-day visit. Artrain was expected to be a short-term program limited only to Michigan, but after nearly 200,000 people across the state stepped on board its first year, Artrain expanded nationally. “After retiring its train museum in 2007, Artrain is now applying its methodologies to cultural offerings of all kinds: visual and performing arts, science, history and culture.” (<http://www.artrainusa.org/>)

Inspirations and Stained Glass

Paul’s father, Nelson Welch, taught Paul art as a child and regularly took him to art museums. Paul learned drawing, painting and watercolor early on, plus how to clean brushes and mount paper correctly. He also learned airbrush techniques, since his father was a commercial artist.

“That’s where I really got my training,” said Paul.



Helen Millican on the Artrain in the early 1970s. Photo courtesy of Artrain, Inc.

Paul was born in 1934 and grew up in Grosse Pointe and the East Detroit area. His father, Nelson, was a founding member of the Michigan Watercolor Society, and together they visited the Detroit Institute of Arts and the Scarab Club. Besides early art

training and exposure, his family gave him the gift of acceptance. There was no question art was valued in his family.

“No one came up to me and said...you should be an insurance man, said Paul. “I didn’t have that problem.”

His father had grown up as a farmer’s son in Fenton, Michigan. When young Nelson told his father he wanted to be a painter, his father retorted: “Go out and paint the barn.” Nelson made his living as a commercial artist with Creative Services in Detroit. At work he airbrushed cars and beer bottles, but whenever he got the chance he painted watercolors.

“I dream a lot. I do more painting when I’m not painting. It’s in the subconscious.” –Andrew Wyeth

Thanks to his dad’s early lessons, Paul knew more than his high school art teacher, so he opted to play football instead. His high school class voted him both “Class Strong Man” and “Class Artist.” Paul attended his first year at MSU on a football scholarship. He soon dropped football to concentrate on art, and pursued a mix of fine art and commercial art curriculum. At MSU he soaked up artistic technique in welding, lithography and painting and gained courage from his professors. He was also self-taught, experimenting with stained glass at MSU and completing his first glass piece.

For one painting assignment for Murray Jones, Paul produced ten Cubist drawings. Professor Jones grew tremendously excited and showed them to the class. Paul still treasures his teacher’s excitement.

“Encouragement. That encouragement

carried me a long way. This is something important in education.”

“People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within.”

–Elisabeth Ross

As a freshman in 1952, Paul shared a Humanities class with his future wife. “I saw her in a yellow sweater and that was it. I was going to marry her,” said Paul. However, Delphine was not convinced. “I found him the most annoying person I’d ever encountered,” she said. He was loud, constantly questioning the teacher, always talking and interrupting. They got to know each other better on a blind date. By that time, he already knew he wanted to be an artist. They were pinned in sophomore year, then engaged. Paul and Delphine married their senior year in 1956.

The young couple lived in Korean War veteran quarters with their infant daughter. After graduating, Paul landed a job in advertising. He hated the work so much Delphine thought she had married the wrong man. It was clear Paul could not be a commercial artist like his father.

But teaching might be different. He’d taught art classes at MSU and enjoyed it. So the family, which now included 5 month old Kathleen, returned to MSU for a short time so Paul could earn his teaching certificate. They chose Traverse City for Paul’s student

teaching, which led to a position at Traverse City’s high school.

Teaching was the right profession. After he got his MFA and landed at the college level, Paul knew he’d found his career. He was inspired by Aristotle’s view of teaching: “Those who educate children well are more to be honored than those who produce them: For these only gave life, those the art of living well.”

“The greatest moments of my life were teaching,” said Paul.

“There is nothing more truly artistic than to love people.”

–Vincent van Gogh

Paul’s key to teaching was simply to be interested in his students. To care about them and watch them come alive. As Susie Janis remembered, “He made you feel OK with you. The individual you is perfectly fine. All he cared about was what was inside.”

“My main thing was to open up a door,” said Paul. “You could be an artist even if your mother told you you should be a nurse. People say there’s no money in art, but that’s not true, especially today in animation. The importance is opening those doors. You don’t know what that talent is.”

The Welch family settled in a little house on Baldwin Street. The house was too small for their family, including two young daughters, Kathy and Wendy, and a growing St. Bernard puppy. It also lacked a painting studio for Paul. But it was hard to get by on a single teacher’s salary.

Then in 1965, Paul saw the All Faiths Chapel was looking for an artist to design new stained glass windows for their building on the State Hospital grounds. It was a huge project with



Paul Welch, Untitled, 1961 Graduate Art Show. This work is 7 ft. high and was the first stained glass work by a student at Michigan State University.



Paul and his father Nelson Welch, All Faiths Chapel project, 1963.



16 windows, 14 of which were designs of Christian symbolism. At that point, Paul had only done a few simple glass pieces, but he entered the contest, sending in 16 drawings. To his surprise, his design won and he was awarded the commission. The size of the job and its timeline terrified him. He already had a full-time job and no studio space to create the windows. For the next few months, Paul dove into a frenzied, creative time of teaching during the day and working on the All Faiths windows on a vast illuminated table far into the night.

His friends on the Arts Council set him up with free studio space in the Setwell Company building, owned by John Parsons. John's wife, Betty Parsons, was on the Arts Council, and John had a plant that manufactured helicopter blades. There Paul labored over 16 large windows using 80 shades of glass.

This first major stained glass piece led to more commissions. Paul teamed up with Bob Holdeman and for 25 years they

created stained glass works during the summer as the Welch-Holdeman Studio. Bob was keen to try using inch thick glass, called dalls, or faceted glass, so soon they were working with thick glass slabs. Bob had his own turn to panic when they got the job for St. Francis Catholic Church.

“It (seemed) as tall as the Park Place!” said Bob.

The St. Francis project was to be all local artists: Bob and Paul designing and installing the stained glass windows, Verna Bartnick the stations of the cross, Al Vigland the ceramic fonts and Howard Crisp the candles and tabernacle doors. By this time, Paul was no longer living in the little house on Baldwin.

Paul and Delphine had used money from the All Faiths chapel commission to build their house in Huron Hills. Paul asked a local architect, Donald Bouscher, to design the house. It was a modernist, flat-roofed home in the style of Frank Lloyd Wright, with open floor plan (few walls reached the ceiling) and enormous floor-to-ceiling windows in the living room. It was designed with lots of wall space to display artwork and space to entertain. Sometimes that made life tricky for his young daughters trying to get to sleep in the open-walled bedrooms upstairs. But the girls also got to paint murals on the bathroom wall – complete with alligators and alligator purses.

“It was designed to display art and entertain,” said Kathy. “Very little thought was given to the people living here.”

The house became an extension of campus for art students. The Welch's hosted parties and invited everyone over, including neighbors like Mike and Barb Denno, Bill and Susie Janis, and



caption

the designers from the Gropius group when they were in town. Local schools even used the Welch house for field trips, sending buses from the elementary schools so children could see art displayed in a gallery setting and view the architecture.

But still Paul didn't have a studio. The Huron Hills house was fine for painting, but didn't work now that he was working so much in stained glass.

"Glass got everywhere," said his wife, Delphine. "He was tracking bits of glass all over the house. It got in your shoes and everything."

Luckily Bob Holdeman had studio space in the basement and outbuildings at his home on Old Mission Peninsula that could accommodate glass projects. Stained glass work was tough and demanded stamina. Paul and Bob stood for hours bending over the long table. Once they set out a glass piece in Bob's backyard to cure. To their horror, they discovered the glass cured to the contour of the lawn. Glass work gave each man a share of injuries. The glass cut their hands even through gloves, and Paul got glass in his eye and under his thumbnail. Another time, a shard of glass lodged inside Bob's boot. It cut an artery and Paul rushed his partner to the emergency room.

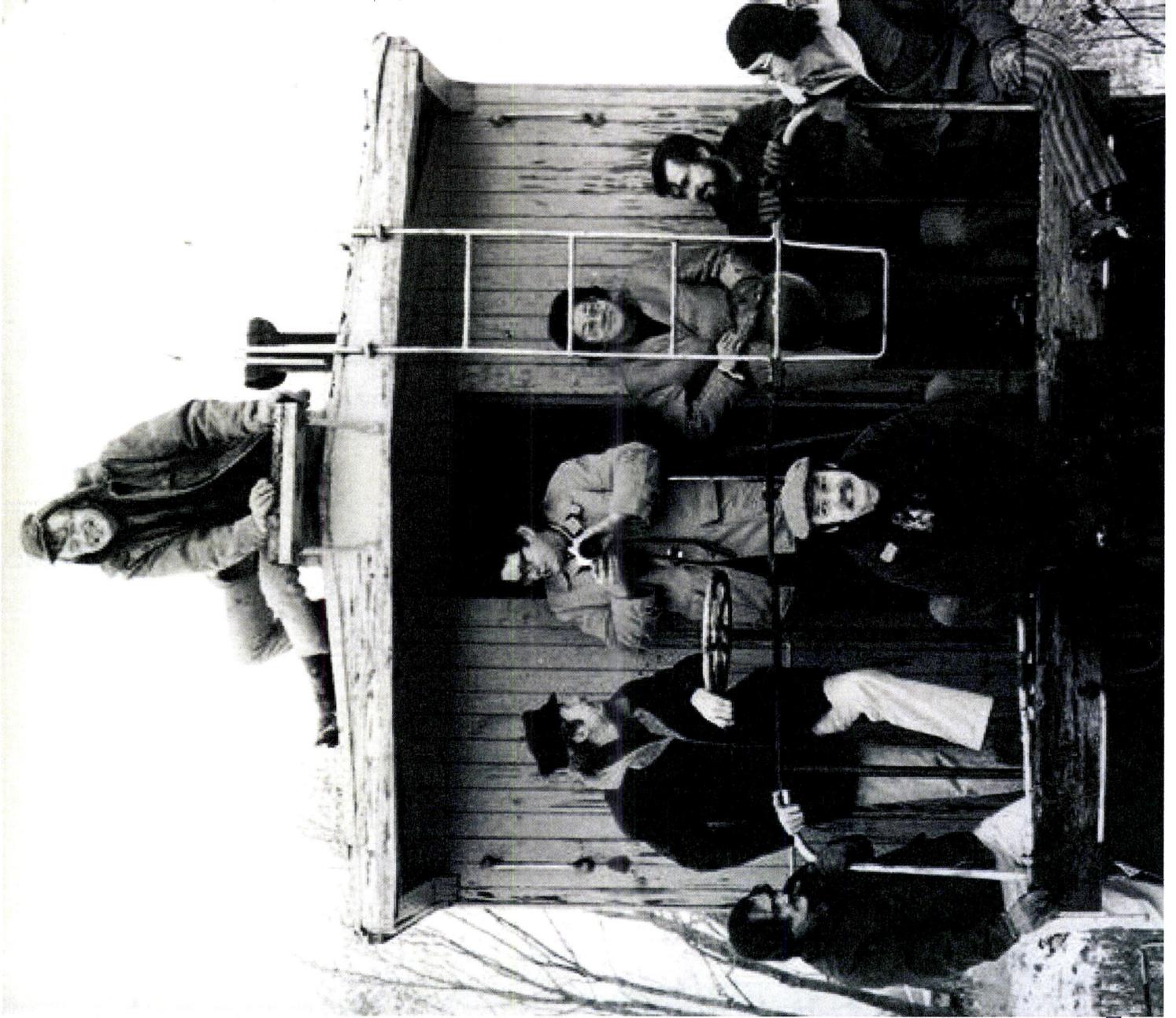


*Welch Huron Hills House, 1966
photo by Michael J Tillotson*



Inset – Paul Welch crafted this stained glass window for his home.

Left: NMC art faculty posing in the
1970s, from left to right: Al Vigland,
Howard Crisp, Steve Balance, Peter
Yu, Jack Ozgovic, Paul Welch, Norm
Averill on top of caboose and Craig
Brigham at base.





Above: Paul Welch and art students in Administration Building, 1963.

Part II Opening New Doors on Campus 1962-1982

Assembling a Fine Arts Team

When Paul became a full-time instructor in 1964, he was a one-man art department with 40 students. Charged with forming a full fine arts program, Paul reached out to talented artists he'd known from graduate school at MSU. "Who do we really need?"

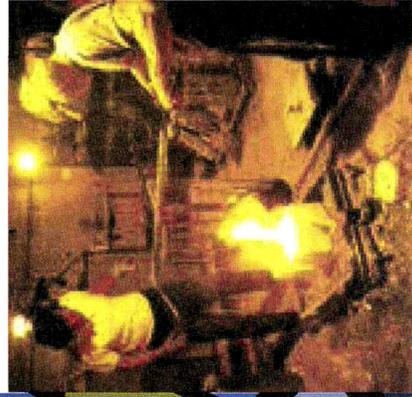
he thought. Art student enrollment was growing rapidly, and a robust arts program needed to offer screen printing and ceramics. In 1966 he hired Norm Averill, a potter who'd been working in California, to head the ceramics department. Next came Jack Ozegeovic, who specialized in printmaking. Jack had recently been working in Gettysburg, PA and was tired of the focus on Civil War cannonballs. Jack and Norm happily packed up and moved back to Michigan. Norm set up shop in the tunnels under the Administration Building, and soon was crafting his own potter's wheels and creating a casting pit. Norm and Paul built a kiln together and prepared their own clay, mixing the clay and water with their feet. Jack brought with him massive lithograph printing presses along with specialized

Bavarian limestone for printmaking. Paul himself taught painting, life drawing, design, art history and art appreciation as well as welding and sculpture.

"I taught art appreciation so people wouldn't think Rembrandt was a toothpaste, Vermeer a floor covering or Van Gogh a vodka," Paul said later.

He knew he needed to assemble a team with a range of talents, and modeled the nascent NIMC Art Department after the art department he had loved at MSU. There he'd been surrounded by inspirational greats such as Murray Jones, Abraham Rattner, Louie Raynor, Cliff McChesney, John de Martely and Charlie Pollock (Jackson Pollock's brother). He knew that the right teachers, well-trained and impassioned, made all the difference.

After Norm and Jack joined the team, Paul continued to hire great teachers, handpicking people who would complement the program with their skills, had a passion for teaching and were masters of their craft. Howard Crisp, a talented metalsmith who studied at the Cranbrook Academy of Arts, added jewelry making to the program and also taught sculpture.



Paul Welch and Karl Spörek casting bronze in the NMC Administration Building basement, late 1960s.

“Art is the proper task of life.”

–Friedrich Nietzsche

Sometimes Paul recruited an artist where he spotted potential. He tapped Steve Ballance to teach photography, though Steve had never taken an art class and was a self-taught photographer. But he knew Steve had the right talent and passion. He was always hanging around the art department taking pictures of Paul and others. Paul gave Steve and a co-teacher \$500 and a disused kitchenette in the gym to use as a darkroom. They bought three cheap enlargers and used the kitchen’s counter space and sink. Soon Steve realized he loved teaching. The photography program expanded from a single evening class to multiple classes and Steve became ensconced as a permanent faculty member after earning an MFA in photography.

In addition to drawing and painting, art history, metalwork and photography there was commercial art. Peter Yu began the program, then Bob Bach took over, followed by Jill Hinds who ran the program for 26 years. Caroline Schaefer-Hills is the current director.

The art department spilled out around the basement. Students in the police academy across the hall took notice. Some of them signed up for art classes, too, like Bart Stupak, whose career would range from state police officer to long-serving U.S. Congressman. On the opposite side of the basement Harry Oliver taught drama. Paul’s art students began auditioning for plays for Harry, and Harry’s theater students tried out painting and ceramics.

Paul soon ditched the sport coat and tie

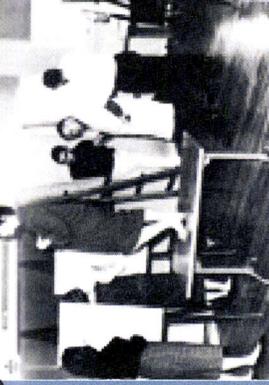
dress most college professors wore in favor of big blousy shirts a la Rembrandt. He wore sneakers and grew a beard.

“He had art all over him,” said his daughter Kathy. “The shirts he wore! Mom sewed them.”

“He didn’t like to dress in a conventional manner,” his wife, Delphine, agreed. The shirts she made had billowing sleeves and deep necklines that dipped down to his chest.

“If you hear a voice within you say ‘you cannot paint,’ then by all means paint, and that voice will be silenced.” –Vincent van Gogh

It was the 1960s. Students flocked to this free-wheeling art department where they could explore and express themselves. “Do you really want to know what’s inside you?” asked Paul. “Art is one way you can find out.”



Ralf Parton Ljfe Drawing Class, Administration Building late 1950s

Opening Minds with Art History

Susie (Kildée) Janis was hanging out with friends in the Administration Building in the 1960s when she heard Paul singing. She was taking classes upstairs, but before she knew it, he was drawing her in, singing to her (“If you knew Susie, like I know Susie...”) and inviting her to model for his life drawing class.

“With my clothes on, I hope!” she answered. “Of course.”

Susie bought a leotard and began modeling for Paul’s painting, drawing and sculpture classes. That led her to sign up for an art history class. She was a St. Francis parochial school student and had never taken an art class.

“It was a new world. He made you live it,

made it so dramatic you couldn't help but fall in love with it – Modigliani, Picasso, Cezanne – he brought it alive. And all those angled cubist faces!” said Susie. “I was used to little Raphael angels, pretty valleys and clouds.”

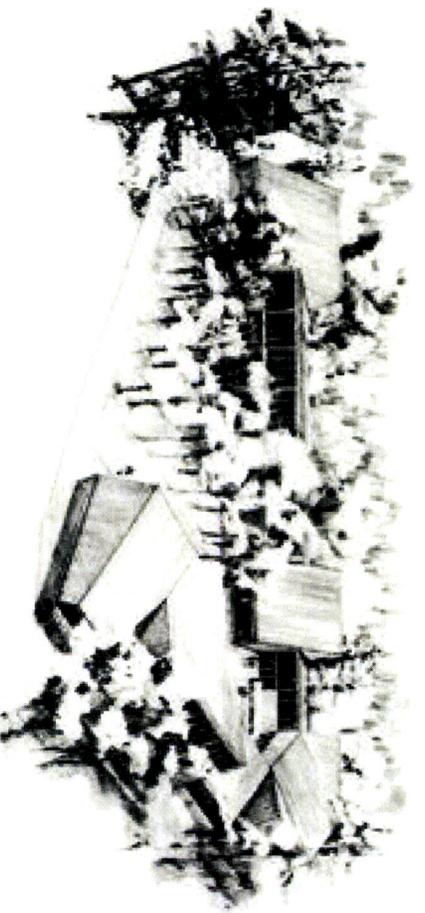
This art history class changed Susie's life. She became an ardent supporter of the arts, and credits the class for making her a more open person. Small-town Traverse City now seemed connected to the world – a world full of paradigm shifts, like Picasso, a world in turmoil about civil rights and the Vietnam war.

“I can hardly make a stick person, but he opened my mind,” said Susie. “It doesn't connect until it's in your soul.”

Others were similarly transformed. Student Greg Nachazel remembers how deeply Paul could make you care about a painting: His enthusiasm permeated the room and everyone soaked it up.

“He was best talking about Picasso,” Greg said. Greg still remembers the day Paul explained the background to Picasso's black and white painting with contorted figures and a tortured horse called *Guernica*. The students learned *Guernica* was the name of a small Basque town in Spain that had been a symbol of resistance in the Spanish civil war. Hitler obliterated the town with a calculated bombing – the first Blitzkrieg – to show other towns what would happen if they, too, tried to resist. “When Paul Welch got *Guernica* up on the wall, you understood,” said Greg.

Paul's art history lectures affected photographer John Robert Williams likewise. He remembers the awe he felt and says the NMC team-taught Humanities class changed his life.



“Banhaus of the North.” Architect's rendering of the proposed Fine Arts Building.

Paul would turn on the slide projector and stand in the aisle, flailing his arms as he talked about the old masters. Then suddenly he would be overcome and drop into silence.

“The first time it happened it gave me tingles up my nose and spine,” said John. “Because for the first time someone was showing me how to connect with art.”

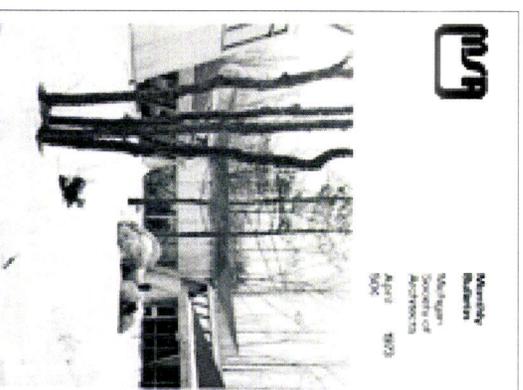
“The noblest pleasure is the joy of understanding.” - Leonardo da Vinci

In these lectures, Paul was transformed himself. He would change from the wacko, goofball character many students knew to become a deeply serious art historian.

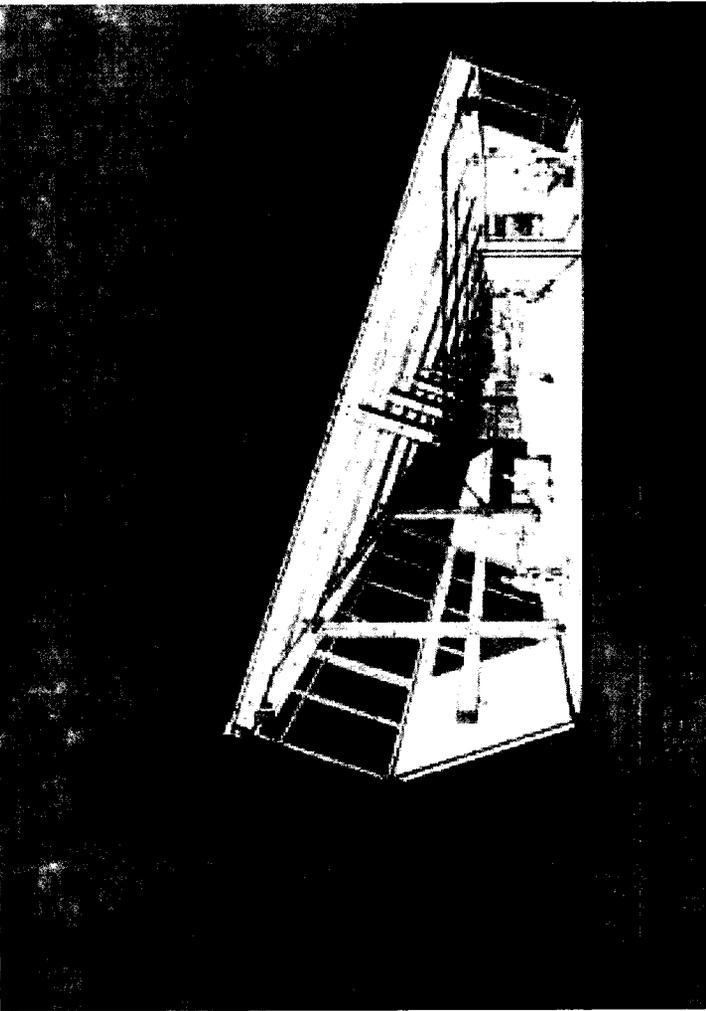
“You found out exactly how much art meant to him,” said John. “It was intense.”

To Paul, teaching students to create art all linked back to art history.

“You have to loosen them up. The way to do that is to show them other great artists' drawings. Once you do that then another door opens.”



NMC Fine Arts Building on cover of the Michigan Society of Architects Monthly Bulletin, April 1963.

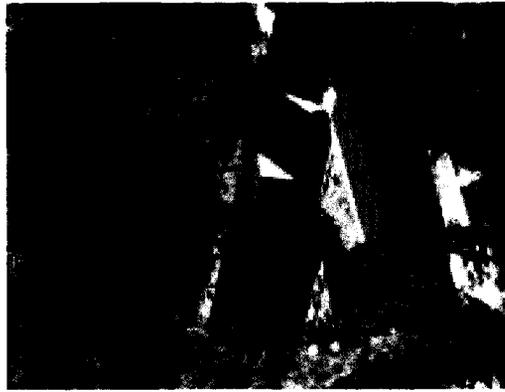


Architect Rendering

Designing a Bauhaus Building

Long before the college's Okerstrom Fine Arts Building was conceived, Paul Welch had students sketching *en plein air* on the very site of the future building. Space in the Administration Building was cramped and he loved getting students outside to develop their observation skills.

He had two favorite sites: the woods south of the gym (future site of the Fine Arts building), and Ginsberg's, a junkyard on the shores of Boardman Lake. The junkyard sat near the present-day site of the Woodmere branch of the Traverse Area District Library. During the '60s and '70s, the junkyard was a mecca of old cars with bushes growing out of them, life emerging through twisted steel



Fine Arts Building Aerial

bodies and bent fenders with moss growing on them. Paul delighted in showing pictures of Tanguy's surrealist work before heading out to Ginsberg's. When the class arrived, they'd shout "Wow! It's like Tanguy!" These *plein air* outings stretched two hours or more. Paul didn't believe in packing up because of schedules.

"They might miss their next class, but you know, when you get people excited you want to keep them excited," he said.

"Computers are useless. They can only give you answers." –Picasso

Still, there was a growing need for an arts building. Norm and Paul concocted a plan to bolster the cause of getting new space. They sent ceramics students with clay dust coating their shoes up to the first floor to talk to staff in the president's office. Whether or not the parade of dusty feet made a real impact, it was obvious that the smoke and noise of metal work and mess of paint and ceramics was not a good long-term fit for the Administration Building. Then there were the nudes. Paul introduced them gradually.

"What people don't realize is that life drawing is the basis for learning how to draw curves," he said.

Paul hung his students' life drawing pictures prominently in the hall above the clay coated floor. Meanwhile, he and Walter Beardslee, head of the college Humanities Division, talked endlessly about creating a new home for all the humanities: music, philosophy, history, literature and visual arts.

About this time, Walt Beardslee spent several summers in Cambridge, Mass., first as a visiting

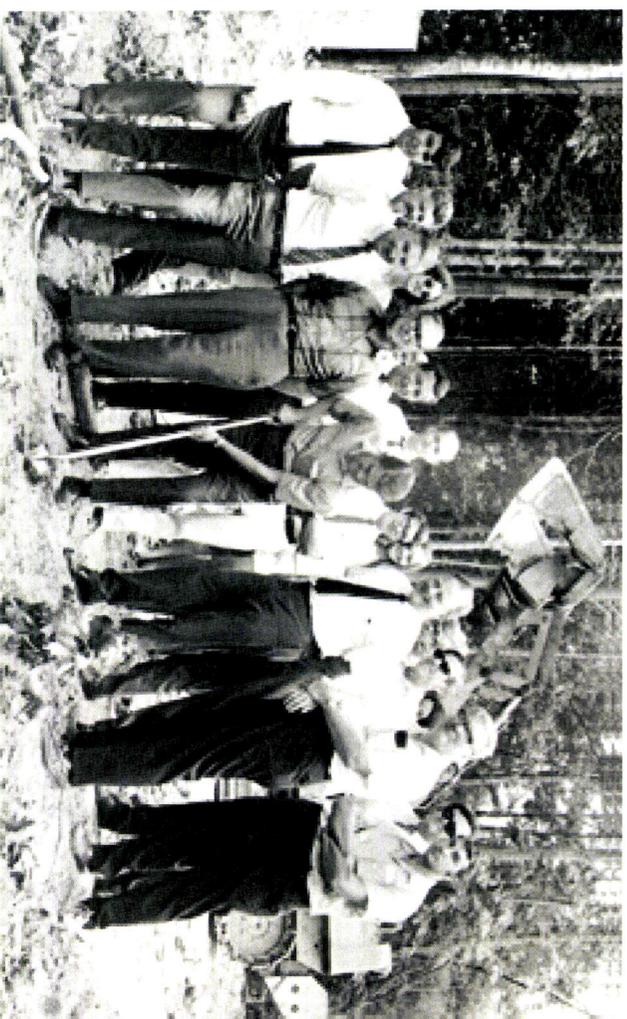
scholar at Harvard and later on sabbatical. It was during his third summer there, 1966, that Walt chanced to encounter Herbert Gallagher, an architect with The Architects' Collaborative, a prestigious firm founded by Bauhaus architectural guru, Walter Gropius.

"Would you be willing to design an art building for our small campus?" he asked.

When Walt returned to Traverse City, all the art faculty members were fascinated by his new connection. And intrigued. What about a new arts building designed by Walter Gropius's group? Why not create an open-floor design in the style of the famed Bauhaus artists? Walter Gropius had become world famous during the 1930s when he created a new sort of collaborative artistic space, and gathered artists from many disciplines to share one building so they could influence each other and feed off each other's creative energy. The original Bauhaus movement in Germany included architects, engineers, musicians, painters, wood and silver craftsmen and more and inspired designs for new art spaces all over the world. Why not here in Traverse City?

"We were of the opinion that Traverse City architecture, especially buildings at the college up to that point, were mediocre at best," said Walt Beardslee. "They'd been built on very limited budgets. We wanted to build something different."

The Board at the college had been planning to expand for some time. In 1968, they asked voters to approve a bond that would allow NMC to fund two new buildings: a gym and a fine arts building. Voters said yes, and the search for the right design began.



Walt Beardslee pressed the case for The Architects Collaborative to design the art building. Such an unusual opportunity, he told the Board. Such a challenge to design, he told the architects. In the end, Walt's forcefulness prevailed and the art department got their heart's desire: their very own building, nestled in the woods, a signature architectural building to inspire creativity and collaboration.

"That's the idea behind the Fine Arts Building," said Walt. "It's a building that's open and there's a mixture of things being taught. We thought: that's a good idea for education."

The new fine arts building had strong support, including board members Shirley Okerstrom and Jim Beckett, and college president Preston Tanis.

"**Preston Tanis was marvelous,**" said Paul Welch.

By the time the Fine Arts building was being

Turning ground for the new Fine Arts Building, 1970. Front row, left to right: Paul Welch, Walter Beardslee, Arlo Moss, Warren Cline, NMC President Jim Davis, Jack MacCrystal, Les Biederman, Jack Ozeovic, and unidentified. Second row, left to right: Capt. Mike Hennicks, Bill Baker Barr, Art Moenkehan, Roy Terdal, Al Shumsky, unidentified girl, and Norm Averill



History Instructor Walter Beardslee, 1967.



Working on the Building. Left to Right: Delphine Welch, Rose McClellan, Jack Ozezovic, Paul Welch, Barb McClellan, and Walter Beardslee, 1971.

designed, Walter Gropius was an old man in his eighties, and the building was primarily designed by Herbert Gallagher. However, Gropius was among the architects who collaborated on the design, and NMC's Fine Arts Building is credited as being the last building he helped design. He died in 1969 before the building was complete.

Walt Beardslee's words proved true. The design was a challenge. The Architects Collaborative's first two plans for the building were rejected. One (brick and glass) too expensive; one (cast-concrete) too impractical. But the third plan delighted everyone on the Board and arts team. It was a design of all wood, a building encased in cedar, like part of the northern woods itself. The scale was

human and workable. The walls and windows slanted and artsy, but most important, the building functioned — it created open, shared space to welcome creative collaboration. The Fine Arts Building's unique look matched the creative spirit to be housed inside.

The new Fine Arts Building opened in 1972, the sixth building on campus. The modernist structure shocked a few in Traverse City, more accustomed to grey block campus buildings of the Eisenhower era, but it made the front page of the Bulletin of the Michigan Society of Architects and continues to garner acclaim. Many consider it the most famous architectural structure in northern Michigan. In addition to bond funding, money from both the 1970 and 1971 college BBQs helped build and landscape the new Fine Arts building. In 2000 the college named the building in honor of Shirley Okerstrom for her lifelong dedication to NMC and support of the arts.

Norm loved the ceramics wing, especially designed in the far corner for him, his kilns and smoke-making. Paul was ecstatic about the **Cubism designed** into its very walls. It was liberating to be above ground, in their very own space, music and humanities nearby in the next wing, surrounded by trees and light with every door opening directly outdoors.

And this was just the beginning. Classrooms and studio space were part of Phase I for the Fine Arts Building. The Gropius group also designed a Phase II which would someday add on to the existing pod structure. Then the vision would be complete with gallery space and an auditorium for performing arts.

Ten years after he was hired by NMC, Paul



Fine Arts building pottery studio 1970s

had assembled a team of five full-time and three part-time arts faculty. Soon after the Fine Arts Building opened its doors, NMC boasted 2,000 students and 1,100 of them were involved in the arts.

Students, Spaghetti and Sculptures

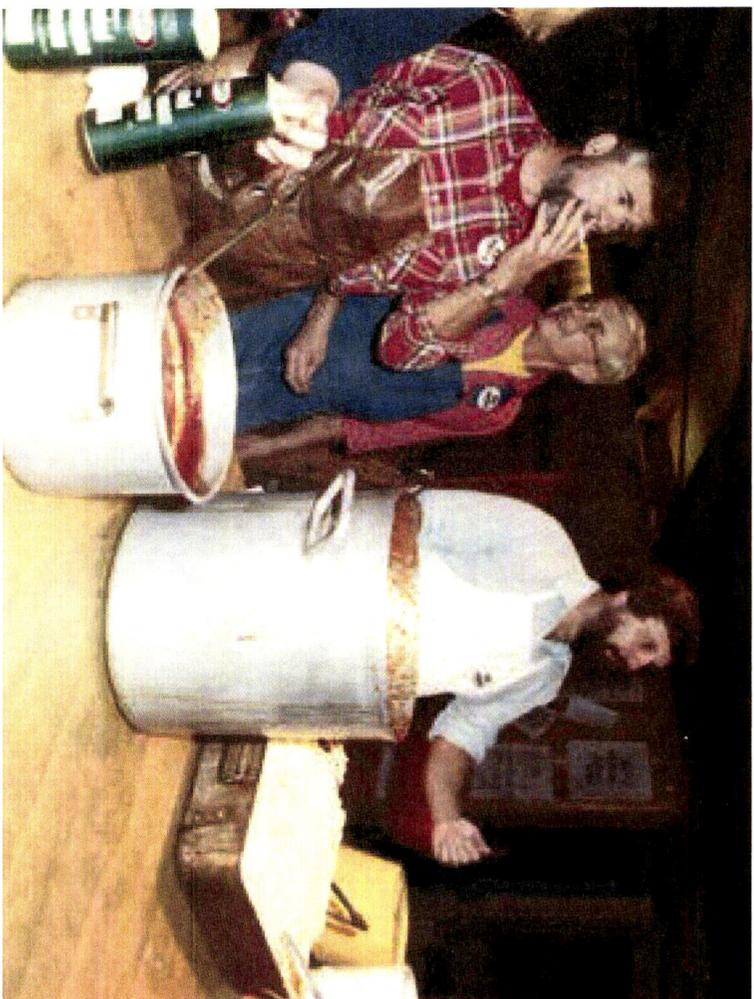
They moved in right away. With no budget to outfit the building, the arts faculty headed to the Army Surplus warehouse in Cadillac. There they found \$10 tables, galvanized steel baking racks they could convert into drying racks for paintings and flat files for printmaking. Giant potato mixers became clay mixers. The faculty even bought khaki army uniforms to use as work clothes.

“It was like a toy store,” remembers Steve Ballance.

Norm built a new kiln in the ceramics wing out of fired brick. At first there was no lighting, so the building looked like a dark barn at night. The open floor plan gave a mix of smells—wood shavings, turpentine, welder’s smoke, and the moist scent of freshly mixed clay.

And then the students came. People just “popped in,” according to Paul. The creative atmosphere attracted and fostered a long list of artists, including Verna Barmick, Lois Beardslee, Paul Britten, Jim Hay, Greg Nachazel, Bob Purvis, Sally Rogers, Karl Spöck, John Robert Williams, Glenn Wolff and more. Some arrived as children. Some as mothers. Some already with full-time jobs.

“It was like Shangri-la. All those cool angles. And the open feel—there wasn’t anything like it around here,” said Glenn Wolff, whose



particular mentor was Jack Ozegetic.

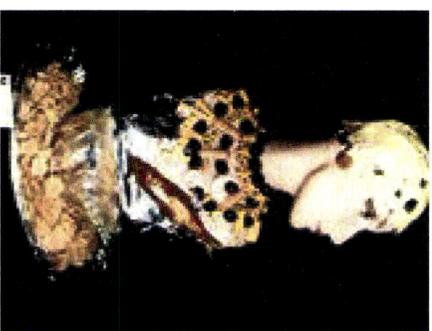
A line of old school presses and heavy limestone blocks for lithographs lined one side of the studio. In Norm Averill’s pre-computer design classes, he had students snipping strips of paper and cardboard to understand space and shape. Ancient crafts and tools came alive in the modern building.

“It was like being set on fire,” said former student and painter Greg Nachazel.

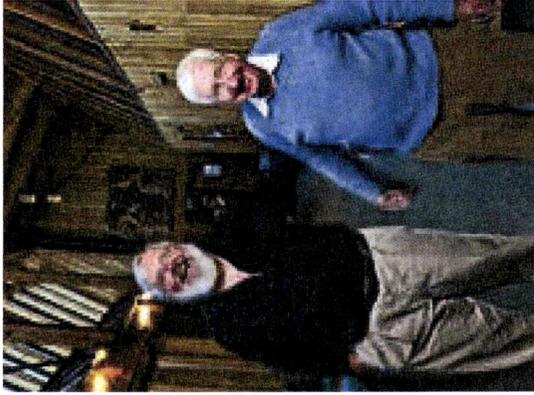
John Robert Williams remembers the first time he walked in:

“Here was Paul walking around the brand-new Fine Arts Building. He had a real swagger to him. Like a big football player. He always had a Swisher Sweet or some other cigar sticking out of his mouth, and he’d be singing at the top of

Cooks Jack Ozegetic, Norm Averill, and Paul Welch at one of the Fine Arts Department’s annual spaghetti dinners during the 1970s.



Edible Art



Retired NMC Faculty Paul Welch and Walter Beardslee celebrating nearly 40 years of the Fine Arts Building, 2010. Photo by Todd Zawistowski, courtesy of Traverse Magazine.



NMC Alumna Verna Bartnick with her St. Francis sculpture at the Traverse City Art and Design Studio, 2014.

his lungs.”

Paul was apt to burst into song, usually booming tenor arias from operas like The Barber of Seville, a mix of Italian “O Solo Mio!” and English, but other days it was “Oh Lord, won’t you buy me a Mercedes-Benz.” The record player was in perpetual motion.

Jack might put on Grateful Dead. Paul would switch it to Italian opera. Other days the building echoed with Little Richard, Janis Joplin, The Fugs, Cream, Mozart, Chopin, Bach, the Beatles or the Mothers of Invention.

“Singing helps,” Paul explained. “You don’t want art structured. You want art open.

You’re doing something that isn’t pre-rehearsed, pre-chewed, pre-skewed.”

When new college president William “Bill” Yankee stopped by in 1973 to meet the fine arts faculty, Paul greeted him in his typical khaki army outfit. Suddenly Norm Averill appeared, a paper tri-cornered hat perched on his head. Then Norm reached up and struck a match, setting things ablaze and walking towards them with his hat on fire.

“He gave us the license to be goofy,” said John. “That’s where the whole creative process comes from, that looseness.”

Students also marveled that Paul was always high – but not on drugs. His energy and creative drive made him naturally high. He thrived on art itself.

“I don’t do drugs. I am drugs.”

–Salvador Dali

Bartnick, a mother of seven, stepped through the doors in the mid-70s. She was an older student, age 36, ready to take an

evening art class as she worked towards an education degree.

“I went there and fell in love with it,” said Verna. “It was like throwing open a whole new door, a whole new life. This is for me. What have I been doing before? I stepped into the field of art.”

She started off taking a painting class from Paul.

“He’s the one who made me fall in love with it. He was a shining light.” Verna watched the younger students flock about him. “How happy they were to be around him! He was like an electric light bulb.”

Over a ten year period, Verna took a range of art classes: metalsmithing from Howard Crisp, pottery from Norm, art appreciation and more. But it was a sculpture class with Paul that hooked her.

“You sure think better in metal than you do in paint!” Paul said when he saw her first efforts. It was true. Verna had found her field. “That’s what turned me on. I liked working with metal. It was sculpture from then on.”

Soon she was taking welding classes, working with hammered copper, welded steel, and bronze casts. She sold her first piece right out of Howard’s art class—a nude with her hair flying back. “Oh, I’m saleable!” she thought. Her family supported her new endeavors and promised she could pursue art seriously someday. “Someday’s here!” she told her husband.

Verna set up her own foundry and studio adjoining the family’s business, Old Mission Tavern, and immediately opened a gallery. Today Verna’s commissioned sculptures like *Lord of the Dance* adorn gardens and buildings around the

country, and include local pieces like the *Tree of Life* for Temple Beth El, *Stations of the Cross* at St. Francis church, and *Time to Let Go* bicycle sculpture along Traverse City's bayfront. Paul's influence still inspires her.

"He showed me not to be afraid. To be daring. Art is a leap of faith in yourself."

"Every artist was first an amateur."

—Ralph Waldo Emerson

Some of Verna's welding classes took place in the Maritime Building on NMC's Tech Center Campus on Grandview Parkway. Steve Ballance set up a darkroom in the basement of the "old freezer building" on that same campus. As a kid, back when it was a working cherry factory, he'd delivered cherries there. Now his darkroom shared space with the welding, maritime, and auto tech students.

Creation didn't stop when the last class ended for the day. Often both students and faculty would be there at night - Jack creating his own art on the presses; Paul bronze casting; Norm busy at the kiln. Students lingered past 11 p.m., working on projects and doing just what the Bauhaus design intended - interacting and feeding off the studio's creative energy.

As a beginning photography student, John Robert Williams remembers long days developing prints in the old freezer building, too. Like his teacher Steve, John had started his path to photography by working as an audio/visual assistant for the college.

"You really ought to take a photo class," Steve told him. John signed up.

There, like many others, he soon found that although the art department faculty allowed a

crazy atmosphere to flourish, their expectations for creative work were also set high. One night John was working late into the night. Around 2 a.m. Steve appeared and peered at a row of John's prints coming off the dryer. He said just one word: "Really?"

John turned to him in frustration: "What the hell do you want?"

"Art!" Steve snapped back.

"That had never dawned on me," said John, who has since made a career of photography for more than 35 years. "I failed my first photography class. I thought it was all about the camera."

"You don't take a photograph, you make it."
—Ansel Adams

Greg Nachazel had a similar wake-up call. Greg had just finished a not-so-good painting for one of Paul's oil painting classes. After he presented it to the class, Paul said nothing. Then Paul walked over to the painting, struck a razor blade through it in two big Xs, flung it to the floor and stomped on it. "It was true, it was a terrible painting," said Greg. "That was a seminal moment for me. It screwed my head back on."

For it wasn't all freewheeling. The arts instructors taught technique and demanded quality. The key was to balance technique with an atmosphere that expanded the creative consciousness.

When Paul taught drawing, he forbid his students from looking at the paper. They struggled to build eye-hand coordination as they kept their eyes glued on the models or still life objects in front of them. He taught skills using charcoal and edge of the paper, exercises in line,

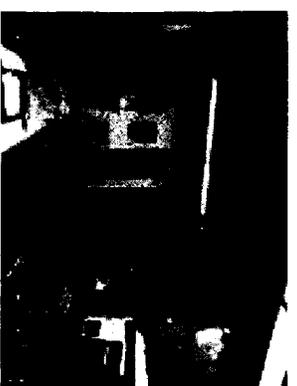
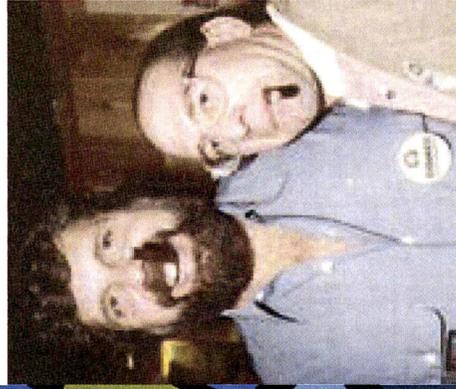


Photo Darkroom in the "Freezer Building" at the old NMC Technical Center on Front Street.



Filmmaker Rich Brauer made a recruiting film as a student at NMC in 1973. Photo above shows him as a student at Traverse City High School in 1972.



*Paul Welch and John Robert Williams,
Early 1980s.*

form, color and shape. Sometimes he asked students to try expressionist drawing, using ink and brush to capture an idea very quickly. Or subconscious drawing, doodling whatever came to their heads. Paul was dismayed that many students entered art class with a stiff approach.

“There was a lot of unlearning,” said Paul. “Picasso said: ‘It took me four years to learn to draw like Raphael, but it took me a lifetime to learn to draw like a child.’”

New students often arrived trying to paint exquisite details, with the notion that a good painting should look like a photograph. Paul helped them escape that level of representational detail. **“They wanted to**

paint freckles on fleas,” he said.

“I decided to start anew, to strip away what I had been taught.”

—Georgia O’Keeffe

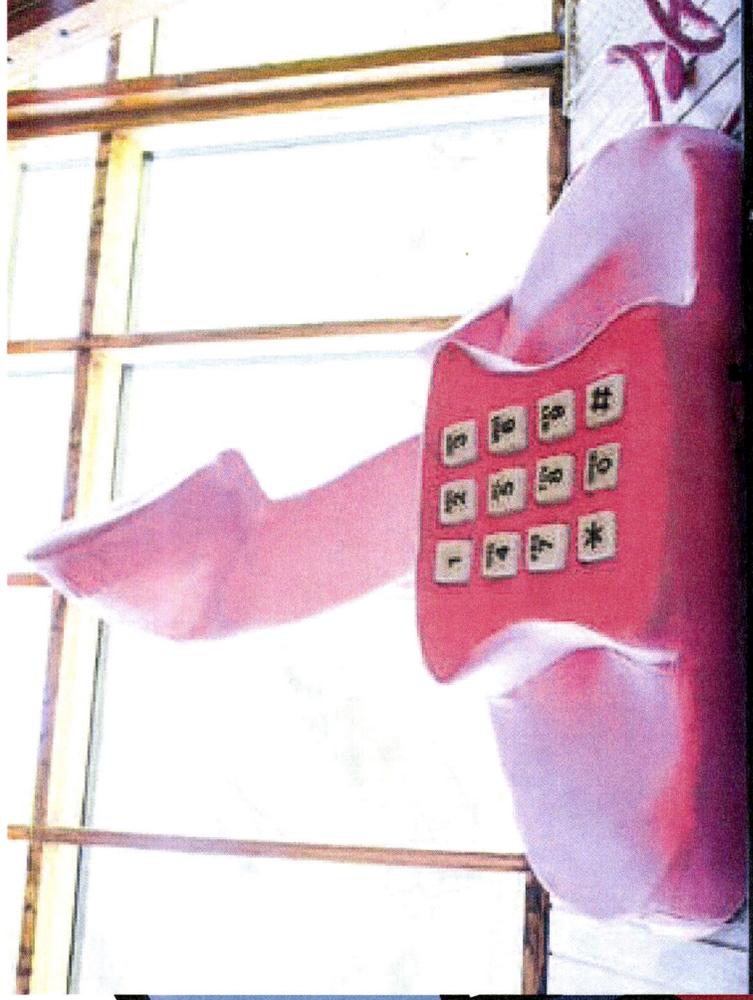
“Paul was fearless about pointing out what works and what doesn’t work,” said Greg.

The art faculty was not afraid of allowing students to experience rejection, believing firmly that people grow from a dose of rejection. Yet overall the atmosphere was one of tremendous encouragement. Paul firmly believed that students were capable. “Art is inherent in all of us. If you can teach someone how to ride a bike, how to write, how to kick a football, you can teach somebody how to draw.”

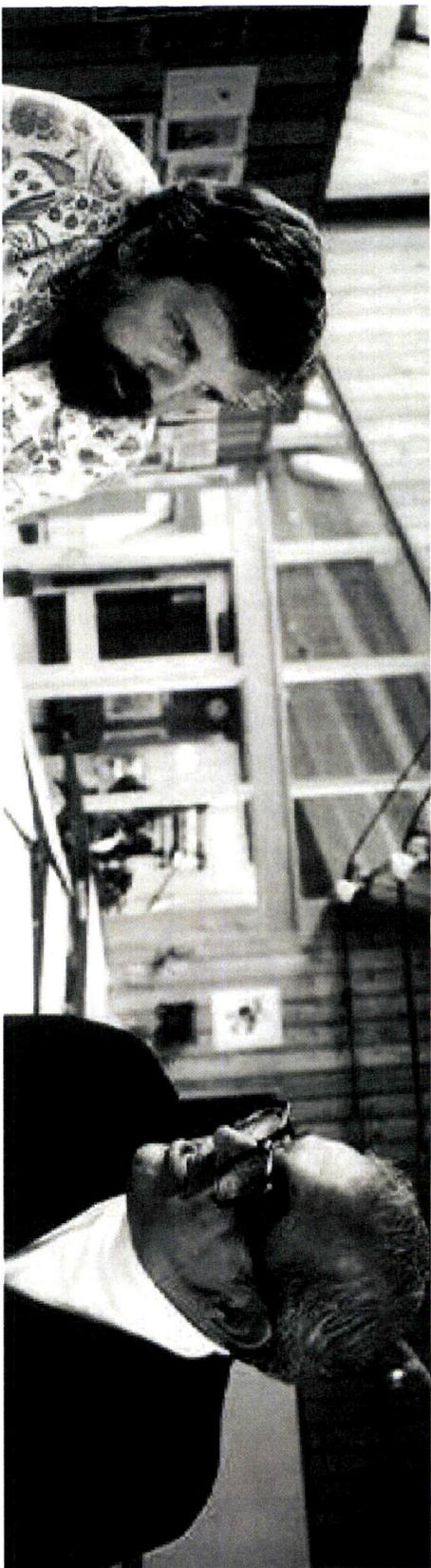
When students felt discouraged, Paul would rally them, paraphrasing Van Gogh’s famous quote: “If you hear a voice that says don’t paint, don’t write, don’t draw, then Paint! Write! Draw! And that voice will be silenced.”

Former student, Greg Nachazel summed it up: “Their mission was to instill in us the highest regard and respect for both the greatest work ever created, and the drive to produce the greatest work we were capable of.” “You were accepted as part of this tribe of creators and you were expected to create,” said John Robert Williams.

During this time, Paul organized huge spaghetti and meatball dinners for the students and faculty. They lined up the long studio tables in the Fine Arts Building and decked them out with red and white checked tablecloths. Students brought desserts, and the whole group watched zany movies. Steve took over as El Cookerino as the events grew bigger, overseeing huge 4-foot pots of noodles boiling on the range at the



John and David Williams’ jumbo Princess Phone for the Cherry Festival Parade, 1970s.



Oleson Center's kitchen.

Students also entered the annual "Edible Art Contest." This was an anything goes, joyful event that produced such creations as Van Gogh cars (out of dough), portraits painted on cakes, seals carved from radishes, a volcano that spit chocolate, and a Cox gas-fired meatloaf car that spectacularly crashed into 200 pounds of mashed potatoes, courtesy of Norm Averill and John Robert Williams.

"It hit at 30 mph and mashed potatoes flew everywhere," said John. He bonded with Paul after the great Meatloaf Mishap, but it was Norm who first spotted John's goofiness and encouraged it.

"Every other adult was always trying to shut me down," said John. "He opened up the door. Be yourself. Open up. Create. Do things."

"Art is the only serious thing in the world. And the artist is the only person who is never serious."

—Oscar Wilde

John took that advice to heart and went on to create memorable performance art with larger-than-life acts that involved up to 400

people in the Williams Brothers floats. They infiltrated the Cherry Royale Parade for 22 years. Decorations from past parades hung from the rafters in the Fine Arts Building for years, including a giant taco and 8-foot wide pink princess telephone. The energy and volunteer brigades from the parades later infused a new arts event that John helped found – the Traverse City Film Festival.

Beyond campus, Paul organized museum trips to Chicago, Toledo, Toronto and Europe. The whole art department drove college vans with 50 students and staff down to Chicago to stay overnight next to the Art Institute of Chicago. In Chicago the attraction was surrealism and famous pieces like Seurat's *A Sunday Afternoon on the Island of La Grand Jatte*. In Toledo it was the El Grecos, and Toronto offered an introduction to contemporary Canadian artists. Paul's family joined the students on summer trips to Europe, co-led with Dr. Gabor Vázsonyi. First a three-week art tour of London, Amsterdam, Frankfurt, Zurich and Paris in 1969 followed by a second trip to Italy and Paris in 1971.

The turbulence of the times also impacted campus art. In 1970 when the Kent State

Paul Welch and Mike Dennis in the new Fine Arts building, 1972.



One of four faces on the Kent State Memorial Plaque created by Paul Welch and his students in 1970. The memorial was dedicated to "the martyrs at Kent State... and our Traverse City friends in Southeast Asia."



Sally Rogers, *Nexus*, 2004. Photo by Jon Alexander.

shootings happened, the NMC campus was in an uproar. Angry students gathered in front of the library. Paul rallied them with a speech.

“What are we going to do? Forget them tomorrow?” he cried. “Let’s make a memorial.”

He asked all students who were hunters to collect their shell casings. Paul made the memorial from melted bullet shell casings. The finished sculpture showed four bronze faces – the last one a skull – boxed in by concrete.

“If you could say it in words there would be no reason to paint.”

–Edward Hopper

The Children

Paul was personally distressed by the lack of art education in Traverse City public schools during the 1960s and 70s. They did a good job with sports and music, but visual arts were lagging.

“Lack of access to visual arts is a form of discrimination,” he wrote in the *Record-Eagle*. “All children should have access to the arts in their education.”

Paul didn’t limit his reach to current NMC students. He actively recruited new art students for NMC, going out to speak to high schools. Paul refused to speak only to art classes – preferring to speak to the whole school with an assembly. His goal was to reach visually-oriented students. These were the kids who often felt stuck in school. They did poorly in English and doodled in their math books. These were the students who were being left out, the kids who desperately needed his message that the world had a place for them, and it was art. Paul brought slides of Dali to

schools and threw in a nude now and then. “I loved to show things I knew they’d never seen.” He’d been a doodler himself and knew how a kid could feel being out of step in a school atmosphere. This was holy work for Paul—his way of combating discrimination.

“It took me four years to paint like Raphael, but a lifetime to paint like a child.”

–Picasso

While Paul went to find children, children also found the Fine Arts Building. The Art Department began offering children’s classes, but some children discovered the NMC arts world another way. Nine-year-old Glenn Wolff first saw the arts program when it was still in the administration building basement, following his mother, who was enrolled in a printmaking class. At home, she guided Glenn through the etching process to make his first intaglio print.

“That was my first introduction to that cast of characters,” said Glenn. “I loved the whole smell of paint and turpentine. It intrigued me.”

“What lies behind us and what lies before us are tiny matters compared to what lies within us.”

–Emerson

Sally Rogers was only five when she first fell under the spell of the art department. The family was on campus for the BBQ, but Sally spent the sunny afternoon down in the basement of the administration building. There Jack’s students were staging a printmaking demonstration, and young Sally watched, entranced, hour after hour. At age twelve she signed up for children’s pottery classes with Karl Spörck and Cathy Look. Soon she was a regular.

“I just spent evenings and weekends there and threw pots like crazy,” she said.



Glenn Wolff working on his mural for the State Theater in 2008.

Her high school days included college classes like ceramics and glaze calculation from Al Vigland. Soon Norm Averill hired her to mix glazes and fire the kilns. She went on to pursue a fine arts degree at NMC before creating a life in the arts, going on to study at the Center for Creative Studies in Detroit and studying fused glass for an MFA at Kent State. Sally's sculptures of wood, stone, glass and metal are now part of private and museum collections around the country.

"There was never any doubt in my mind," said Sally. "Art was for me."

Another child who thrived on the creative college atmosphere was Paul Britten, who lived on Apache Pass right next to the Fine Arts Building. His mother signed him up for children's art classes in 1973. At age nine, he walked in and met his pottery instructor, Karl Spörck, once one of Norm's students and now a teacher himself.

"The rest was history for me," said Paul. "From age 9-14, every waking moment I was not at school I would rush through the woods to the NMC art building. I grew up in that building. I was there all the time. I kind of became a fixture out there."

The building itself and its architecture inspired him. The college students and adult faculty accepted him. Young Paul became part of the furniture, often sneaking in on Sundays when the art building was closed, to pursue his love of pottery.

"I was just a kid, but I never remember ever being told to leave. It was this incredibly creative place...always welcoming."

By age 13 he was already an experienced potter and had sold his first piece at the

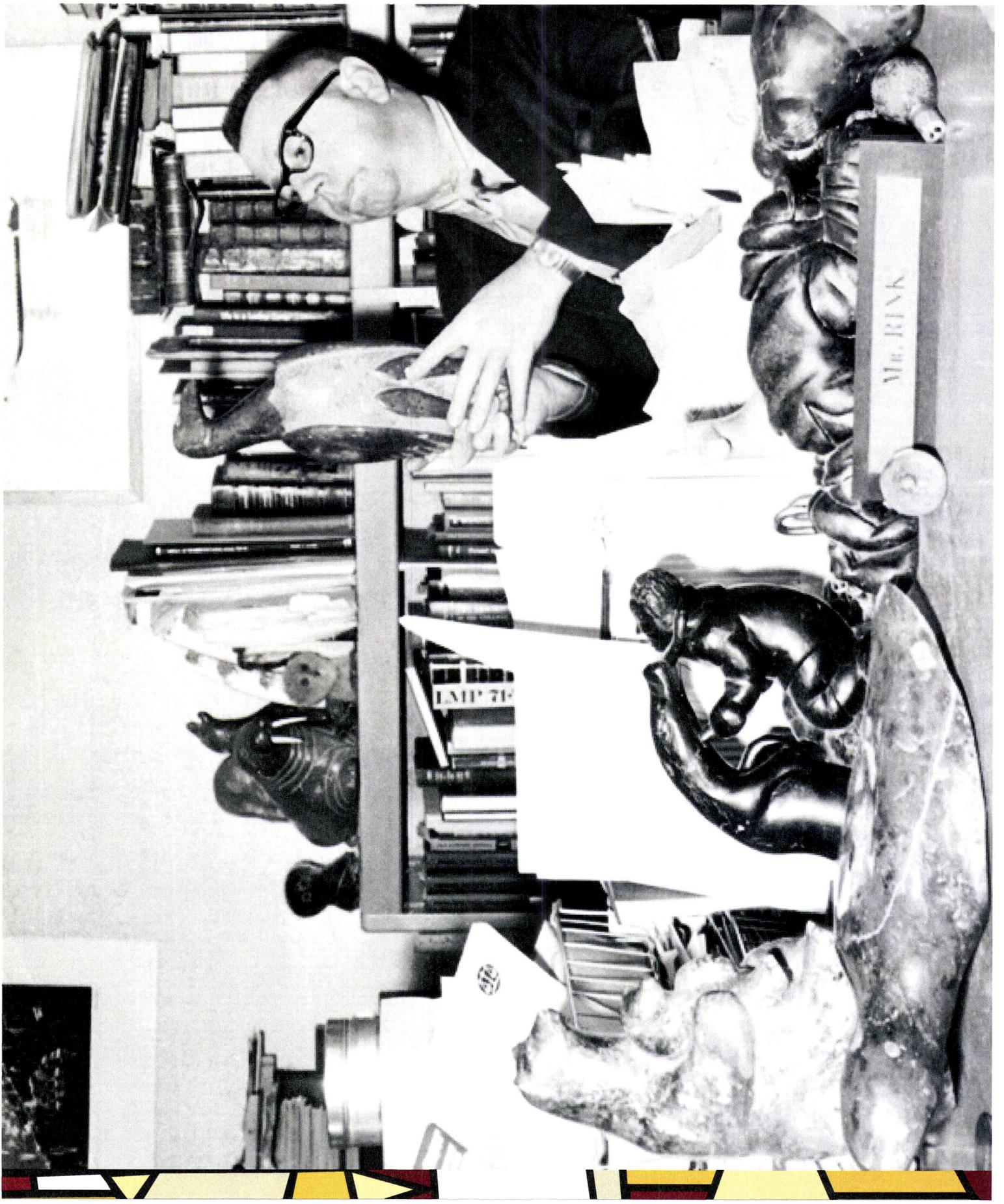
NMC art fair. Karl Spörck gave him a book inscribed, "With confidence you will make great use of your talents." Paul keeps it by his side today, as founder and owner of Britten, Inc., a local graphic design company with nearly 300 employees. To him, the creative, fun-filled culture at Britten is a reflection of the atmosphere he encountered at the NMC Art Department when he was a boy. "It's limitless," he said.



Young Paul Britten at the pottery wheel, Fine Arts Building, mid-to-late 1970s.



Poster for an Art Faculty Exhibition in 1974.

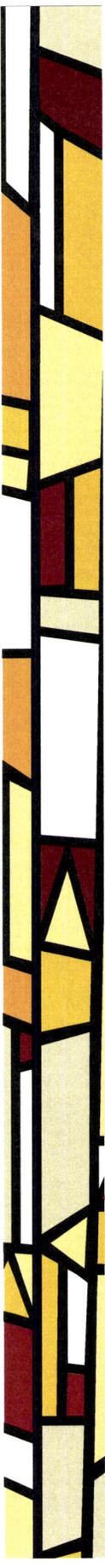


Mr. RINK

EMP 718



“I do not paint a portrait to look like the subject, rather does the person grow to look like his portrait.”
- Salvador Dali



Left: Office of NMC Head Librarian
Bernie Rink with part of the Inuit Art
Collection.



NMC Osterlin Library Art Exhibit,
1960s.

Part III Opening New Doors for Community 1959-1991

Origins of a Museum

From the moment Paul arrived to teach high school art in 1958 he was obsessed with the idea that Traverse City ought to have a museum. “I thought, my God, there’s all these doctors and lawyers and merchants and chiefs, why isn’t there an art museum?”

The Inuit Collection 1959-1986

It began in the basement of the NMC Osterlin Library, with the art collecting passion of librarian Bernard “Bernie” Rink. Bernie stumbled on extraordinary prints being produced for the first time by Inuit communities on Baffin Island near Cape Dorset, Canada. His friend Harden “Arty” De View had an array of prints and also about 15 palm-sized, soapstone sculptures spread out on his desk.

Bernie was immediately smitten and hungered to see more. There was something about the Arctic art—its simplicity and pure, elemental nature. This was ‘primitive’ art at its best—art created by people who were unaffected by what art museums, art critics

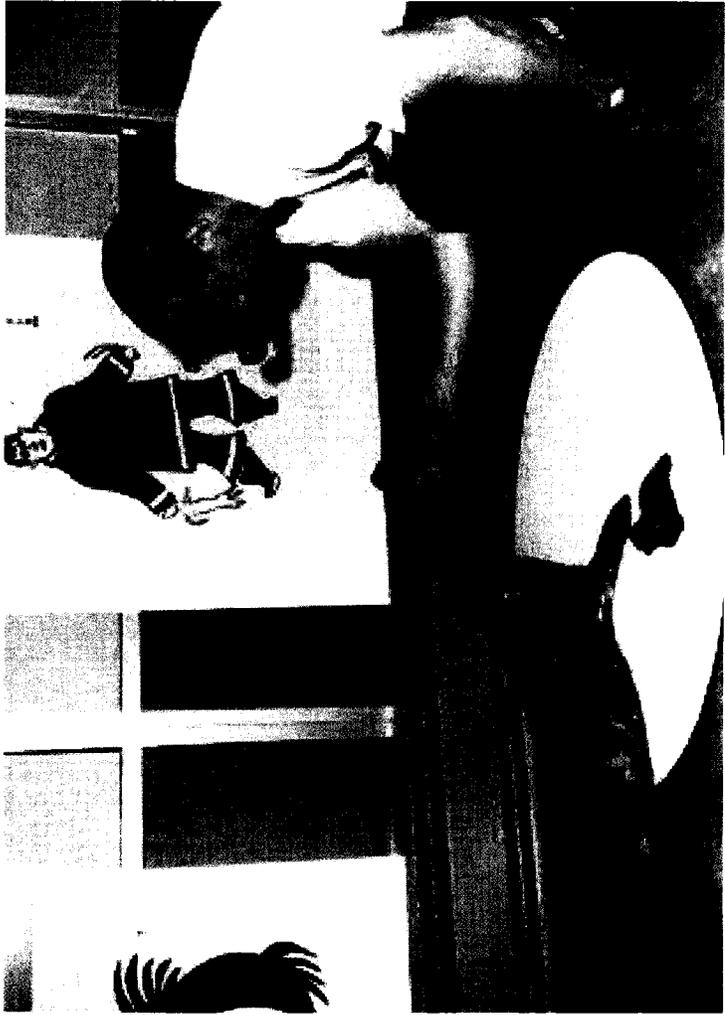
or outside artists thought art was. It stirred his soul.

Bernie soon learned that this art was both ancient and brand new. The Inuit had been carving small soapstones for millennia, crafting images during the long winter months, especially figures of seals to appease the sea goddess Sedna to ensure good hunting. But printmaking was new to them. Canadian artist James Houston had lived among the Inuit as an outreach program of the Canadian government and introduced the technique of printmaking. One night stone carver Osuitok Ipeelee marveled at images on cigarette packages. What great skill the artist must have had, to make each image look so identical. James demonstrated printmaking by rubbing ink on a carved walrus tusk and printing with it. The story goes that Osuitok and other carvers stared at the first print and said, “We can do that.”

Soon they had supplies—ink, rollers and Japanese rice paper—to begin a new arts tradition. Perhaps printmaking could create a new income source for the community since, like many first nations, the Inuit were being uprooted from their traditional way of life and being resettled into towns. The first set of prints came out in 1959. Bold, striking images of seals, owls,



Bea Granlin’s real seal observing Inuit art
display at the NMC Osterlin Library
1960.



Bernie Rink with a borrowed live seal to help showcase the Inuit Art Collection, 1960.

caribou, umiaks and other images of Arctic life. A few of these first prints were sitting on Arty's Traverse City desk.

"What are you doing with all this?" Bernie asked.

Arty told him the pieces were intended to be sold to raise money for the Cherryland Humane Society. Will Munnecke had donated them to him for that purpose. Bernie knew Wilbur Munnecke. He was the General Manager for the Sun Times and Daily News in Chicago, and had a summer place up in Leland. He, Arty and Will had all met through the Leland Great Books Program.

"The trouble is, I don't know what to do with them," explained Arty. "I'll do it, then," said Bernie. "I'll take them out to the college and have an exhibit and sell

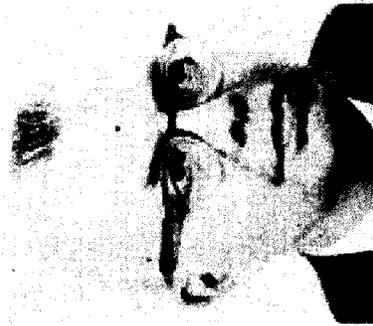
them there as a benefit."

Soon they staged an exhibit on the main floor of the library. The Inuit art all sold. Munnecke was pleased with the successful benefit. He gave Bernie and Arty each a sculpture and donated two prints to the college.

"Can we get some more?" Bernie asked him. This was easily arranged. Will Munnecke sat on the board of Eskimo Art Incorporated, a distribution group headed by Eugene Power. The next year Will gave Bernie a new set of prints, but suggested he go through Gene directly. "Go see Power," he told Bernie.

Gene Power was living in Ann Arbor at the time. A Traverse City man, he owned the Park Place Hotel and Power Island. He was also the sole distributor of Inuit art for the entire United States. This came about due to a hunting trip, when Gene went north to Baffin Island seeking caribou or musk ox. There he met artist James Houston and saw his printmaking work with the Inuit. Gene made Bernie the official northern Michigan outlet for Inuit art and gave him a franchise. Starting in 1961, each year Bernie traveled to Ann Arbor and picked out around 30 sculptures, plus a full set of new prints.

Gradually, the college library transformed into a gallery of Inuit art. Each year, Bernie saved the best pieces for the growing college collection, including the Enchanted Owl print, an early 1960 stonecut print in green and black by Kenojuak, which became the symbol of the future museum. Bernie had display cases built in the lobby, and hung art along the entire eastern wall. His office was frequently covered with soapstone figures of Inuit hunters harpooning seals, owls, whales, umiaks (boats), and other images of arctic life.



Wilbur C. Munnecke.

There were also antler carvings, whale bone carvings, and art made from walrus tusks.

“His office didn’t even look like a library, it looked like a museum!” said Paul. “He had sculptures sitting all over the place.”

Bernie staged the first public show and sale of Inuit art in 1960 in the NMC library. Hundreds came to marvel – partly at the art and partly at the live seal Bernie borrowed from a friend that roamed the floor of the exhibit.

“It turned out a lot of people liked Inuit art,” said Jackie Shinners, fine arts faculty member and longtime curator at the Dennos Museum.

Word got out that the college was interested in buying Inuit art. A fellow who had links directly to the Inuit Cooperative in Toronto showed up one day with an RV. The man’s brother ran a gas station on Frobisher Bay on Baffin Island. This was the time period when many Arctic

communities began to use snowmobiles. The

Inuit rarely had money to buy gas, so they traded carvings for gas for their snowmobiles. The man had access to some amazing pieces. Bernie began to buy art from him as well as from Gene Power, one year spotting the Dancing Bear sculpture carved by Pauta Salla, an iconic figure in today’s museum collection.

Year by year the college collection grew. Bernie bought more art with proceeds from the sales, always saving out the best prints and sculptures each year for the college. When Bernie retired in 1986, he had amassed several hundred sculptures and a similar number of prints. By the time a museum did become a reality, his Inuit art was the largest and most historically complete collection in the U.S.



Canadian printmaker James Houston with

Phil Power and Museum Director Gene

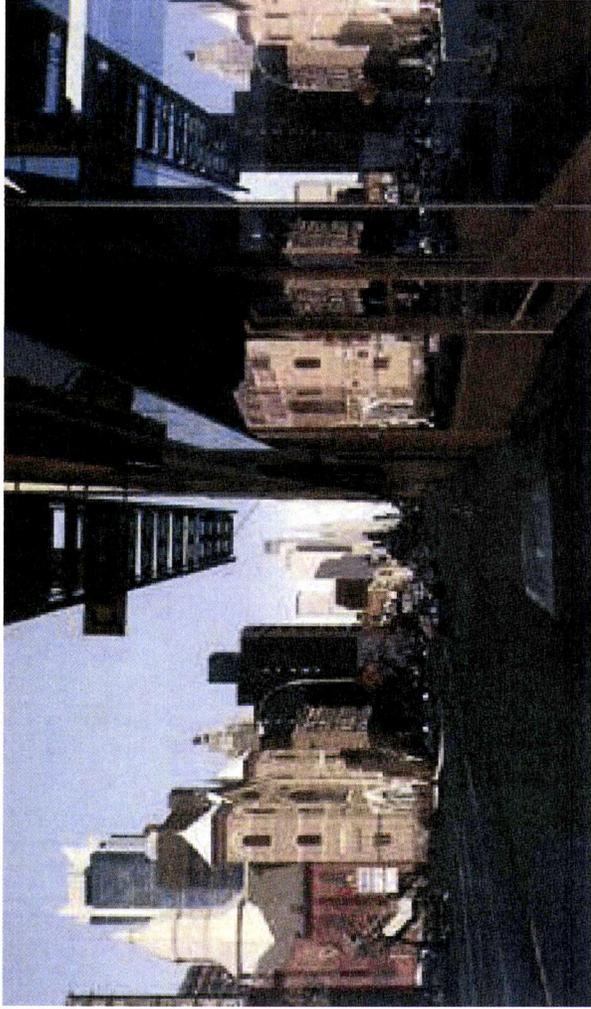
Jenneman at the dedication of the Power

Family Inuit Gallery, 1990.

The Dennos Collection 1969-1979

Paul Welch was busy collecting art, too. It began with connections from the Arts Council, when Barb Dennos and her husband, Mike, joined the group that traveled downstate for Project Outreach in 1969. The Traverse City contingent toured the Detroit Institute of Arts and afterwards visited a private home in Palmer Park. They were amazed by what they saw. The private collection in this woman’s home included a Renaissance drawing and two Bruegels. It was an exciting thought. What if they could start a collection, too?

“I dream my painting and I paint my dream.”
—Vincent van Gogh



Richard Estes, *Holland Hotel*, 1984.
Gift of Michael and Barbara Dennos.

The Dennos family had donated to the arts before, to groups like the symphony and playhouse, but not in a major way. What inspired the Dennos family to get so excited about the visual arts?

“It was Paul Welch,” said Anne Dennos Shuyler, Barb and Mike’s daughter. “My mother met Paul and fell in love with him, as everyone does. It’s impossible not to be enthusiastic about whatever Paul’s enthusiastic about.”

Barb and Mike Dennos also knew Paul and Delphine as neighbors. The Welchses had built a modern home in the Huron Hills neighborhood in 1966, and their neighbors included the Dennos family. Both couples were MSU alumni (Paul could burst into the MSU fight song at the drop of a hat) and Paul and Mike also got to know each other through sports. Mike taught wrestling at the college gym and Paul taught weightlifting.

Barb’s new love of art particularly caught fire. She gravitated to people who were lively and interesting, and Paul’s creative free spirit and speak-your-mind attitude fascinated her. She discovered he loved art, but wasn’t a snob. Both Barb and Mike signed up for Paul’s art history classes. He made loving art just plain fun.

The Dennos family knew all about Paul’s dream of starting a museum for Traverse City. This was the late 1970s. Actual plans for a real museum were still more than a decade off, but Mike approached Paul with an idea that was irresistible.

“Why don’t we start thinking about buying art for the museum?”

The idea was to build a small teaching collection of artwork for the college. Barb’s friendship with Paul fueled the trips. She shared Paul’s hope that students would be encouraged by seeing what good art really looks like.

“Someday,” said Barb, “we’ll be showing these pieces in the basement of the library.”

An enthusiastic group of art lovers—Paul Welch, Steve Ballance, and Barb and Mike Dennos—flew to Chicago on a buying trip to start the teaching collection. Mike gave Paul a budget of \$30,000 and said “let’s go buy some art.”

“I felt like Superman,” said Paul.

Paul was allowed free rein to select the pieces. They visited major galleries in Chicago such as the Stein gallery. Paul chose a Henry Moore print and three or four other major works. The selections included a painting by Paul Jenkins and a little glass piece by Jan Akaroa.

Next they visited New York, this time with a \$60,000 budget. Paul had his heart set on



Sorel Etrog, *Embrace*, 1966-67.
Gift of the Sara Lee Corporation.

obtaining a Richard Estes piece, so they went to see a show of his photo realism. Paul chose an Estes silkscreen for the future museum, a major piece called the Holland Hotel that cost \$20,000 at the time. They also visited a private apartment of a friend of Mike's who'd heard about the art buying trip and promised to donate a piece of sculpture from his own collection. When the group walked in, the first thing they saw in the entry hall was a 7-foot high Henry Moore sculpture. Paul secretly hoped that was the sculpture to be donated, but was still ecstatic with the bronze sculpture by Canadian Sorel Etrog they got to take home.

The New York trip ended with dinner at Asri's, an Italian restaurant in Greenwich Village, where many of the waiters were professional opera singers and invited customers to sing, too. The waiters sang from Don Giovanni. Paul stood up and sang the national anthem.

Back home, they carefully hung their prizes, some displayed in the lower level of Bernie's library as Barb had predicted, and some in the Fine Arts Building, in a security case with a burglar alarm.

The Jorgensen Collection 1983-1984

Although Paul and Delphine loved their house in Huron Hills, they moved away from the neighborhood in 1982 to find a smaller place now that their children had grown. They settled on a condominium at Port Traverse on Munson Avenue. To help pay the bills, Paul took on the role of condo manager for five years.

One spring day in 1983, Paul was summoned to inspect the plumbing. He had been at the

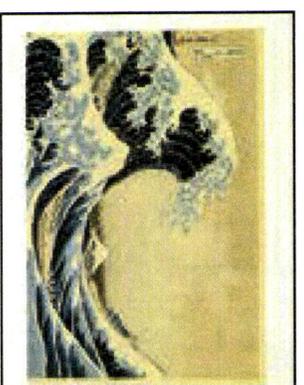
NMC BBQ when he was interrupted with an urgent page: "Mr. Welch, please call Port Traverse. There's a big problem." The problem was bigger than he expected. The pumps weren't working, causing such intense water pressure that condo toilets were blowing off the floor. While on this repair job, Paul met Robert Jorgensen, an attorney from Chicago, who was out admiring the late afternoon view of the bay on the condo deck. Paul sat down and joined him for a martini. Inevitably, the conversation turned to art. Paul mentioned that the college was building a collection for a some-day museum and looking for artwork. This was not unusual, since Paul mentioned it to everyone he met. ("You just never know.") This time he was rewarded.

"I have some artwork," Jorgensen said. "I might be willing to give it to the college."

Before long Jorgensen was back in Chicago compiling a list of his art treasures and consulting with his tax attorney about the details of the intended gift.

Three things caught Paul's eye: Jorgensen had two Rembrandt etchings, a Toulouse-Lautrec and some notable Japanese woodblock prints. "My God!" he remembers thinking. "We're going to have a Rembrandt! Everyone knew Rembrandt wasn't a left halfback from Notre Dame."

The 52 pieces also included prints from etchings by Renoir, Delacroix, Cezanne, Calder, John Singer Sargent, Whistler, Dufy, Bonnard and Goya, and lithographs by Daumier. In 1984 Jorgensen transferred the art to NMC, where it was proudly displayed in the Fine Arts Building. They celebrated with an opening reception of hors d'oeuvres and champagne where Karen Smith (the scheduled performer) and Paul (the



Hokusai *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*, wood block print, 1829.

Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec print, The Declaration, Gift of Robert Jorgensen



Rembrandt H. van Rijn, *Christ and the Woman of Samaria, Among Ruins*. Gift of Robert Jorgensen.

me tell you what we've got going on at the art department..."

Creating the Dennos Museum

Now that there was art – the Inuit collection, the Dennos collection, and the Jorgensen collection, plus the constant stream of artwork being produced by Fine Arts students—it was clear there was a need for gallery space to showcase it all. Phase II of the Fine Arts Building had called for a gallery and performance hall to be built ten years after the Phase I studio and classrooms. The time was near to make it a reality.

Paul went to visit Mike Dennos at his office. Behind Mike was a photo of his father, who had started Chef Pierre Pies. On Paul's mind that day were scholarships for arts students. He hoped Mike could help fund scholarships so no one would have to be barred from the arts.

"Is there anything else?" Mike asked him. Then, to Paul's surprise, he brought up the museum. "Let's work on that. Let's get an architect. Who do we know?"

The architect they both knew well was Bob Holdeman of AAI, Inc. Bob was delighted to be asked to draw up plans for an art museum. He'd long been involved in the Arts Council, even serving as president, and he and Paul were long-term partners in the Welch-Holdeman stained glass studio. What a unique opportunity to design a museum in his adopted hometown, he thought. He started sketching preliminary plans setting the museum in the woods next to the Fine Arts Building.

"My parents decided they made their money



Mike Dennos in his office at Sara Lee, with portrait in the forefront of his father, Christos Dendrinos, as a young immigrant from Greece.

unscheduled performer) sang a duet from the Merry Widow. The Traverse City Record-Eagle wrote a story about the collection, drawing attention to the art museum idea, and calling the donated collection "splendid" and acknowledging the college's role as a "growing cultural center."

"It all began with two martinis," said Paul.

This was not unusual, though. Paul talked to everyone. Wherever he went, he shared his overwhelming love of art and his dream of creating a museum. His daughter, Kathy, remembers this encounter during her sixth grade parent-teacher conference. After listening a few minutes to the classroom teacher, Paul said "Enough about Kathy. Let

in Traverse City and they were going to spend their money in Traverse City,” said Anne Dennon Shuyler.

“One eye sees, the other feels.”

—Paul Klee

At the college, president Phil Runkel backed the project, along with many Board of Trustees members, including Jim Beckett. Shirley Okerstrom became the museum’s fierce advocate. As Board president, she made the museum project her baby, carefully navigating college and city politics and guiding the museum to success. She headed the museum committee, a town-gown group, who worked diligently for many years. As museum director Gene Jenneman said later:

“With all of Paul’s joyful noise, it took someone like Shirley Okerstrom to manage the Board. Shirley was the one who moved it forward...It might have happened sometime, but Shirley was the one who drove it to happen when it did.”

The museum effort became serious in 1983 and the college started raising money. Bob Holdeman’s plans called for a 25,000 square foot space to be built on a pinwheel design. The cost was expected to be \$2.5 million. The Board approached Susie Janis, who was now serving on the NMC Foundation Board.

“We’re going to have a museum,” the Board said. “It’s up to you to raise the money.”

This directive produced mixed feelings for the Foundation board members. Why raise millions to build a museum nobody wants?

Why does this city need a museum? After it’s built, who will support it? Ilse Burke, who later

became college president called the museum project “Traverse City’s stadium.” Just as some colleges draw people in through football, she said, we do it through arts and culture.

Shirley decided to set up a table at the next college BBQ. The committee displayed a fundraising sign in front of the college library and printed small leaflets explaining the museum idea.

“We were slammed. People came out of the woodwork,” Susie said. “We wouldn’t have had enough leaflets if we’d had a printing press there.”

The success at the BBQ helped convince the initially hesitant Foundation Board. It was obvious the people of Traverse City wanted a museum



Governor James Blanchard presenting mock-up check of \$1.3 million to Museum Director Gene Jenneman and NMC President Tim Quinn, 1990.



Susie Janis, George Warden, and Shirley Okerstrom, promoting construction of a now. Former governor, Bill Milliken, helped 1987.



Protesters tie red ribbons around trees at the proposed museum construction site at North Michigan College Sunday afternoon.

Trees at center of protest

In April, 1989, the Traverse City Record-Eagle ran a story about the tree protesters.

spotlight the project with a speech explaining the importance of an art museum to the community. Now it wasn't just Paul talking at Rotary meetings. The community rallied.

Fundraising, under the direction of Foundation Director George Worden, flew into high gear and the Denno's family matched early gifts. The idea was the college would find the money to build the museum and the community would partner to keep the doors open year after year. Rotary Charities donated \$500,000 with a 3:1 match, and later a second gift of \$450,000. The State of Michigan awarded a grant for \$500,000 to name the Milliken Auditorium for the former governor and his wife. Press photos from 1990 showed Governor Jim Blanchard presenting a mock-

up cardboard check of \$1.3 million to President Tim Quinn, who succeeded Phil Runkel. But the delivery of the money ran into trouble. Governor Blanchard was voted out of office and the new governor, John Engler, refused to release the money. It took some good work by Senator Connie Binsfeld of Leelanau County to secure the promised funds.

Paul and others stirred up more interest in the museum by hosting a big exhibit featuring the fiber arts with Judy Chicago's *Birth Project*. They held it in the Oleson Center and attracted great press, crowds and excitement. This was what a museum would be like. Imagine having traveling exhibits come through Traverse City all the time. Again and again Paul said "The art in this building will be worth more than the building itself."

"Surrealism is destructive, but it destroys only what it considers to be shackles limiting our vision."

—Salvador Dali

Of course, prior to that, Shirley Okerstrom and her committee had done their due diligence. They took Bob Holdeman's early plans and visited other museums in the Midwest, including museums in Milwaukee and Miami, Ohio. Here they received two pivotal pieces of advice: 1) Hire your museum director early—before you build the museum, and 2) Change the location.

"You put the museum in the wrong place," they were told. "The museum needs to be seen by the community. It can't be tucked away. If you want community support, you've got to put it out where people will see it."

The new location changed the nature of the

museum. No longer would it be an extension to an academic building on campus, buried in the woods. Now the museum would be a gateway to the college, a true community asset.

The new spot was heavily wooded, like most of the NMC campus. Located prominently on Front Street, suddenly people saw that pines would have to be chopped down to make room for the museum. This caused an uproar. Both city and college activists chained themselves to trees. People protested with sandwich board posters and t-shirts that read "Chainsaw Massacre: coming soon to an environment near you." To many locals, the stately pines on campus were sacred trees. Some faculty members joined the crowds, also fearing that the museum would drain money from their budgets, despite the fact that the museum was set up as an auxiliary to the college and intended to be self-sustaining.

The fight for the trees took six to seven months. Paul was aghast. It wasn't that he wasn't a nature lover. On the contrary, he'd been devoting himself to environmental causes on the side, most recently working with folks in Antrim and Kalkaska Counties to preserve 3,000 acres of wilderness on Lake Skegemog. That was the type of trees worth fighting for. A true ecological system. Why didn't people see that this corner of Front Street wasn't a wilderness worth protecting? At the same time he noticed that no one said a word in protest when bulldozers cleared pines for a new Bob Evans restaurant down the street.

"All my life I fought for the arts and now suddenly all these people were fighting about a few trees," he said.



In a highly charged meeting, Paul spoke before more than 100 angry protestors in favor of the museum. Shirley Okerstrom, Jim Beckett and others on the Board firmly backed him up. Paul was dismayed to recognize colleagues in the crowd against him. "You don't know what it's like to be standing up by yourself..." he said, still shaken by the experience more than 25 years later.

Eventually the college negotiated a deal. NMC agreed to plant trees around campus and set aside a fraction of an acre near the museum as a small natural area. The tree protest came to an end and the museum could move forward, but for many years it remained a thorny issue that divided the community.

Years later, Fred Tank, one of the faculty members who initially disagreed with the tree

Helen and Bill Milliken speak with the taxedo-clad Paul Welch at the Milliken Tribute fundraiser at the Grand Traverse Resort, 1988.



Ed Tannenbaum, *Sound Wall*, Thomas cutting, attended a concert in the museum's auditorium. After the concert, he approached Gene Jenneman, the museum director. "It was worth the trees," he said and smiled.

The auditorium itself was one of the jewels of the plan. It began as a modest recital hall seating 150. The museum director in Miami, Ohio suggested changing that to 250 seats. By the time major fundraising for the auditorium took place, the number had somehow been updated the costs yet.

opening day photo?

In August 1988, the community staged "The Milliken Tribute," a gala fundraising event at the Grand Traverse Resort to honor former Governor Bill Milliken and his wife, Helen. The event drew 1,600 people. Joyce

Braithwaite, a close friend of the Millikens, organized the event, along with local folks such as Jim Herman, Hal Van Sumeren, Susie Janis and Bill Kurtz, of Kurtz Music who provided the sound. The State of Michigan award of \$500,000 was announced that night, with plans to name the auditorium in the Millikens' honor. The event included past, present and future governors: Bill Milliken, Jim Blanchard and John Engler, then Senate Majority Leader. Paul Welch appeared uncharacteristically dressed up, in a tuxedo complete with a white handkerchief stuffed in his lapel pocket.

Gene Jenneman and Opening Day 1988-1991

Eugene "Gene" Jenneman was hired as the first museum director in August 1988—a good three years before the museum opened. The move to hire a director far in advance was called "brilliant" by many people. Gene could give input on the very design, care for the collections and add his professional insight to the process.

Gene arrived in town just two weeks before the Milliken Tribute, and was part of the crowd at the \$100-a-plate fundraising dinner. ("This was before my first paycheck," he joked.) He arrived from Alpena, where he'd worked at the Besser Museum, which had a planetarium. Gene himself came from a science background and was trained to run planetariums, but he fell in love with art and all things museum. On family trips to Traverse City in the 1970s and early 80s, Gene had poked his head in the Con Foster museum of local history and looked around for an art museum. Surely, a vibrant, cultured town like

Traverse City must have a museum.

“Much to my surprise, there wasn’t anything here,” said Gene.

He was about to help change that. The basic museum design was already known, but together Gene and Bob made changes. Gene explained the importance of collection storage for a museum, and Bob added storage space. The early design called for a glass atrium in the center, with walls stretching up to the ceiling. Gene knew that would block the flow of social gatherings and the atrium was removed to allow an open area in the sculpture court.

Under Gene’s direction, the museum added storage space, education space, a receiving area and multi-purpose room. Gene also looked at the new 350-seat performance hall.

“That’s a lot of seats for a lecture hall,” he thought. “If we have 350 seats, we need a stage.” So Bob added a full stage to the plans. The building’s design excited Gene. It allowed synergy between the visual and performing arts, especially since audiences en route to the auditorium had to walk through the art display. What was most wonderful was that Bob Holdeman’s design allowed the art to dominate, not the building itself.

“Bob Holdeman was a brilliant architect,” said Gene. “The building twenty plus years later works every day. You walk through this building and it’s the art that dominates. You notice the art.”

Barb Dennos insisted that the museum be child-friendly. “What can we do for the children?” she would ask. She wanted it to be a welcoming place for families.

That matched Gene’s vision entirely. When

he drove into Traverse City for his new job as Dennos Museum director, he and his wife had two young boys buckled in the back seat. He understood the needs of young parents.

“This museum needs an interactive gallery,” he thought. “A space where parents can bring their kids and the kids will be happy.”

A few years before, he’d visited the High Museum in Atlanta. They were just beginning to experiment with computers and had an interactive gallery space, a piece called Recollections by Ed Tannenbaum. Gene was immediately impressed.

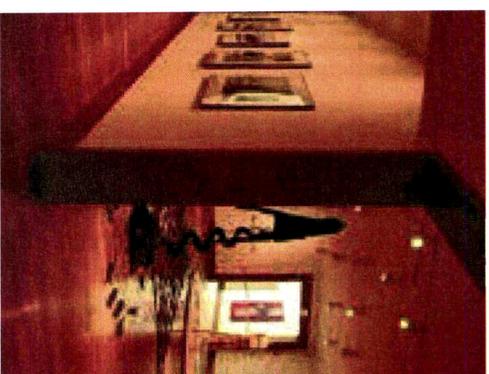
“Art museums are the Do Not Touch spaces,” he explained. “That was a totally foreign concept back then.”

Barb and Gene’s shared vision led to the Discovery Gallery. The museum added an interactive video space by Ed Tannenbaum and The Sound Wall by Ed Weiss, allowing families to explore both art and science. As Barb Dennos dreamed, children would be welcomed in this art museum and get a chance to be introduced to the visual arts in a palatable way.

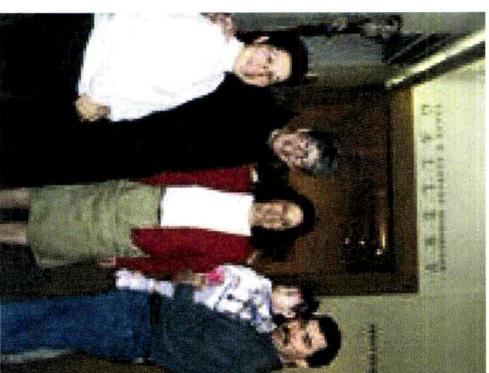
“Creativity takes courage.”

—Henri Matisse

Meanwhile, Gene needed help to sort through all the collections. He turned to the Arts Council, where he found Jackie Shinners and Terry Tarnow. Jackie started at the museum before the building was built, researching and organizing the collections for two years in the basement of the library. She researched the Inuit art and wrote labels for the walls. Terry worked developing plans and ordering for the museum store. Gene puzzled over how to display the Inuit



Interior galleries in the Dennos Museum Center.



Inuit expert Dr. Marion “Mame” Jackson and Dennos Museum Curator Jackie Shinners (center) flanked by Inuit artist Jimmy Manning and his family, 1994.

Dennos grand opening/ribbon cutting

art. Originally, the idea was simply to devote one wall case to it. But the collection was so unique. Surely they could do something more. In one of Bernie's books in the library, Gene discovered the name of Dr. Mame Jackson. She was a professional curator of Inuit art who lived in Detroit. Gene tracked her down, and based on her advice, they decided that the college's Inuit art collection needed its own space. A little museum within the museum. Again, he and Bob redesigned the building to create the Inuit art gallery.

Susie Janis was also focused on the individual galleries. Her job with the Foundation was to find sponsors for each one. Soon she had an excellent line-up: the MacFarlane gallery from Barbara MacFarlane, the Schmuckal gallery, the Zimmerman sculpture court and the Dutmer classroom theater. Some of the names came later, such as the Rutkowski Discovery Room. She even sold the name for the gift shop, which became the Kelly Museum Store, run by Terry Tarnow.

During this time, NMC President Tim Quinn quietly invited Bill Janis to meet with him. He suggested the Janis family give a gift to name the multi-purpose room as a tribute to Susie.

"Your wife's really worked hard and long on the museum," Tim told Bill. "Why don't you buy her a gift as a tribute?"

"That was a surprise for me," said Susie. She was delighted with the new Susanne and William Janis Multi-Purpose Room.

The museum itself was nameless as late as 1990. Mike Dennos was firmly against having the family name emblazoned on it. He

preferred to give gifts anonymously, something many Greeks did. It took two years before he changed his mind. The summer before the museum opened, a Greek cousin visited and told him "You need to put your name on this. You need to let people know that a Greek did this."

What to call the rest of it? Some liked "Dennos Art Museum," but the addition of the William G. and Helen Milliken Auditorium made it clear the building would be more than an art gallery. Board member and campaign chair Bob Goff insisted the name should be the Dennos Museum Center. This summed up the full range of offerings: art galleries, student classrooms, community room and performance auditorium.

The Dennos Museum Center grew to 40,000 square feet, nearly twice its initial size. The enlarged auditorium cost \$1 million, making the total cost \$5.1 million, double the original \$2.1 million expected cost. But as Allison Shumsky wrote in the college history book *Northwestern Michigan College: The Second Twenty Years*, "it far surpassed the Phase II dreams of 1971."

As the opening drew near, the museum staff and volunteers flew into high gear. Susie and others held fundraising lunches in the sculpture court. People flocked to the new space even though it was simply a shell of a building with unfinished walls and no art. Jackie and Terry helped uncrate and inventory the art as it came. Gene set the lights on a lift.

At the last minute, everyone was frantically washing the windows and Susie still had her hair in rollers. They were all exhausted. Still, at

last, the Grand Opening was here.

The ribbon-cutting was held on the morning of July 1991. When Shirley Okerstrom went home that day, she saw an enormous sign outside in her yard with the words, "If you build it, they will come." Her whole family was out front, too, waiting to honor her.

That same evening, the Park Place hotel celebrated the end of a major renovation with a party and most of the museum supporters joined the celebration at the top of the dome. It was a gala affair, with people dressed in 1920s and 30s period costumes and arriving in old-fashioned cars. "This little town was

hopping away," said Susie. "This town came alive. It was heady, like a birth."

Inside the museum, Ed Tannenbaum's video wall Recollections was working and ready to go. The Dancing Bear was on display in the Inuit Gallery and the Enchanted Owl hung on the wall, along with images of Sedna, the mermaid-like sea goddess of the Arctic.

After years of dreaming, the Dennon Museum Center was born, and ready for visitors to "Come Alive Inside."



caption

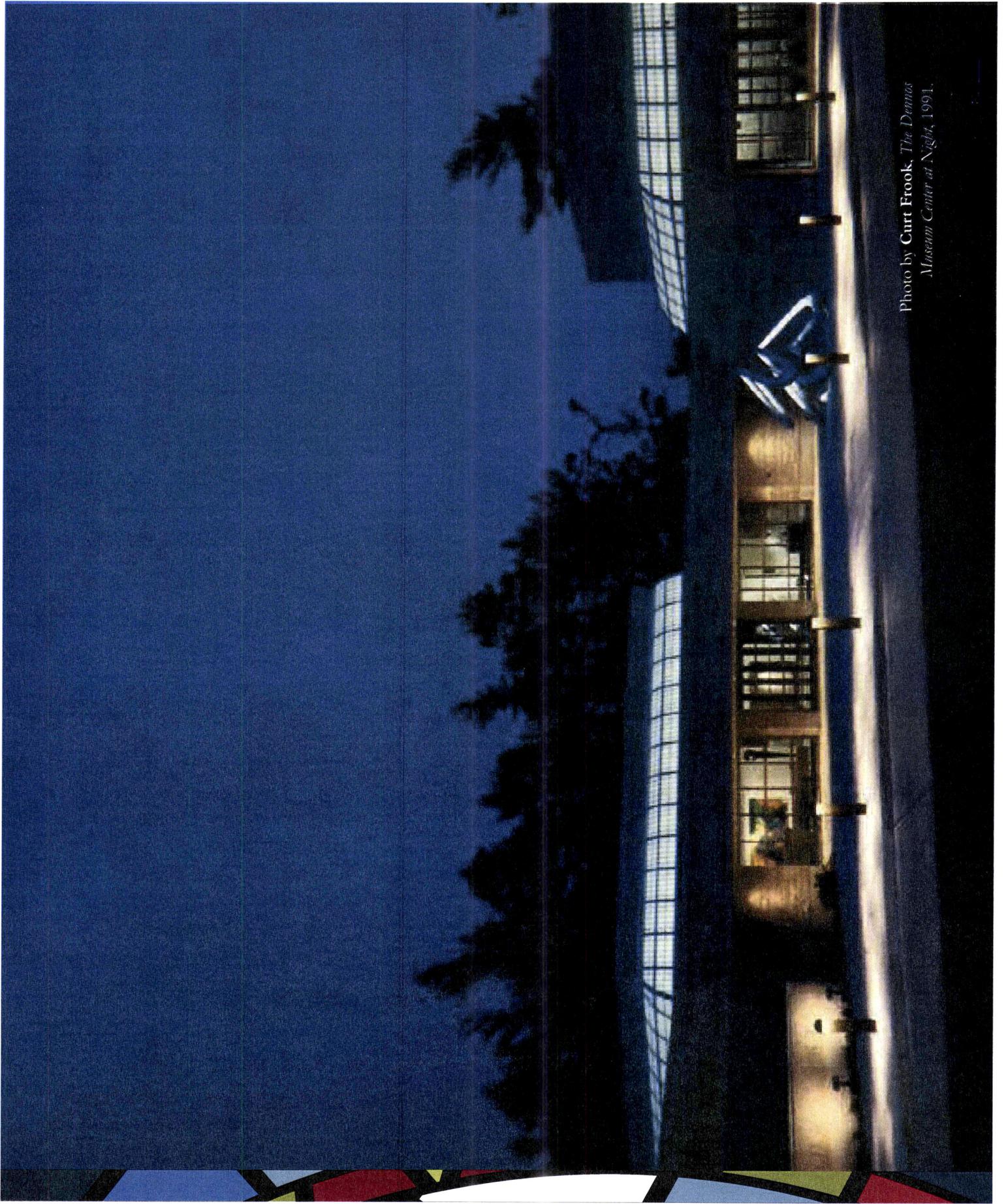


Photo by Curt Froom, *The Dennis
Museum Center at Night*, 1991.

“The first person to say connect the dots was Georges Seurat”
- Paul Welch



Part IV Arts Legacy

1991- New Millennium

Come Alive Inside

When architect Bob Holdeman stepped inside the completed Dennos Museum Center and saw the art moving in, he was in awe. “It was breathtaking,” he said.

For Susie Janis, it was the moment when the children arrived. She was now chair of the 24-person Foundation and had worked full time six to seven years on the project.

“I got emotional the day the first school bus pulled up,” she said. “When the kids came it was the Inuit gallery that caught their imagination... When they left, something had happened.”

Gene Jenneman was finally at home with his own museum. He proved to be relentless in bringing the best art he could find to Traverse City. In 1993, he brought a Vincent van Gogh self-portrait to the Dennos. It was on loan from the Detroit Institute of Arts, and arrived with over-the-top security, including an armed guard 24 hours a day. People flocked to see it.

The museum welcomed 9,000 people in the exhibit’s 9 days. The painting was valued at \$26 million at the time, making



Pauta Saita, *Dancing Bear*, 1985.



Kenoiuak Ashevak, *The Enchanted Owl*, 1960. Gift of Mr. and Mrs. Wilbur C. Munnecke.

Paul’s words come true early on: “The art in this building will be worth more than the building itself.”

In 1992-93, the museum hosted an exhibit of Julian Stanczak, renowned modernist painter whose work in visual perception coined the term Op-Art. Then in 1997, Gene learned that the entire Modern collection from the Detroit Institute of Arts was scheduled to go into storage due to a major renovation. Detroit museum officials planned to share pieces with various museums during the construction.

“Would you like a few pieces?” they asked Gene.

“I want all of it!” he answered. “Bring the whole collection to northern Michigan, to the Dennos, where people never get to see this stuff. Don’t put it downstate where people already have access.”

They agreed. Soon museum curator Jackie Shinners drove down to Detroit and got the rare chance to select representative pieces of the Modern collection to display up north in Traverse City. Gene was ecstatic. They had everything from Picasso to Andy Warhol to Henry Moore, as well as one of Gene’s particular favorites, a thirty foot long black sculpture of stacked blocks

by Louise Nevelson. School groups toured every day.

Outside the museum began to fill with art, too, as the college held contests to host outdoor sculptures. The front entryway sculpture contest was opened to Michigan artists and Hanna Stiebel's silver-colored aluminum sculpture Equilibrium won.

In addition to Inuit art, Bernie had also collected Hungarian woodblock prints from the artist Jozsef Domján and more than 100 pieces of Canadian Woodland Indian art. Many of Domján's original woodblocks were housed with the Metropolitan Museum in New York. When the museum opened, Bernie and his wife Susanne also donated one original soapstone block print which he'd obtained from Gene Power. Now visitors could see how the Inuit printmakers created their art.

Gene still longs for the matching print to the Enchanted Owl, a red and black version, which Will Munnecke gave to one of his employees at Field Enterprises: Ann Landers. "That's the only letter I ever wrote to Ann Landers," quipped Gene. "But she wouldn't part with it. It was one of her prized possessions."

Gene was also charged with building up the performing arts side of the new museum center. Jeff Haas came to him and proposed a jazz series, so Gene offered Jeff office space and helped him develop the program. Soon Seamus Shinnners proposed a folk, blues and world music series. These independent producers were the first to bring music to the building and helped create a thriving performing arts scene. The museum continues

to showcase regional performers and introduce global ones, such as Chinese acrobats, Tuvan throat singers, Japanese storytellers, and Brazilian country musicians as well as diplomats through the International Affairs Forums. The museum now routinely brings in cutting edge global programs. Then again, that's nothing new.

"We've had global culture here since Bernie Rink started it in 1960," said Gene.

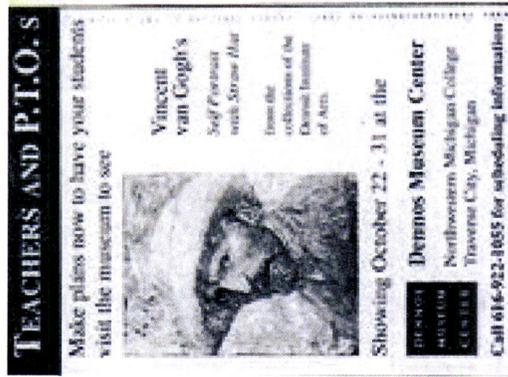
The Inuit art collection remains the centerpiece of the museum's permanent collection, now numbering 1,500 pieces and growing annually. It's no longer the largest Inuit collection in the United States, eclipsed in 2001 by a major donation to the Heard museum in Phoenix, Ariz., but it gives the Dennos an international reputation. Every year museum store manager Terry Tarnow leads Inuit art lovers on a buying trip to Toronto where they select new Inuit carvings and prints from private showrooms and galleries. Terry has also traveled to Baffin Island five times to meet the artists directly and connect the museum to the Arctic.

"I never imagined it would be the place that it is. I imagined it would be good, but it's beyond expectations," said Susie Janis. "What would Traverse City be like without it?"

"Both my parents thought it was the most wonderful thing they had ever done," said Anne Dennos Shuyler.

Her sister, Chris Dennos, volunteers every Friday at the Dennos museum welcoming visitors. She especially loves witnessing the school groups' excitement as they tour the galleries and try out Inuit games and drums.

"Art is an absolutely necessary part of life," she said. "It's about opening our minds."



Vincent van Gogh advertising poster for the Dennos Museum Center exhibit in October, 1993.



Modernist painter Julian Stanczak with his wife Barbara and Dennos Museum Curator Jackie Shinnners circa 1993.

The spark Paul ignited in her mother and father is still spreading. In addition to helping at the Dennos Museum, Chris founded Michael's Place, a grieving center for children using art.

Fine Arts Thriving

In 1992, Paul was honored as a Fellow of Northwestern Michigan College and stood side by side with his former student and old friend Susie Janis, who was being was honored the same year. Paul was recognized for his commitment to the arts and the Dennos Museum, but also for his "flamboyant and enthusiastic personality."

He had retired in 1987 which gave him more time to devote to the museum effort.

"Once he retired it was: We have to have a museum in Traverse City. He lived and breathed it until it happened," said his daughter, Kathy. When he retired, Paul was only 53 and full of zest. He was glad to let go of the administrative side of his job. Paul was the kind of man who kept an overflowing mailbox and liked to clean it out once a year. He also wanted plenty of lifetime left to paint. His father never had the chance to indulge his love of watercolor painting, since poor health plagued him after retirement.

"My father always said he wanted to paint," said Paul. "I wanted to paint. I wanted to find out what I could do."

He and Delphine moved to family land on Skegemog Lake, and Steve Ballance took over as head of the art department. Unlike Paul, Steve was comfortable with the administrative side, having run the physical education department at

the college for five years. Norm Averill and Jack Ozegovic continued on, Jack taking on Bernie's role of Inuit art procurer after Bernie retired in 1985. They chose not to replace Paul directly, but did hire part-time people to teach painting, and art historian and museum curator Jackie Shimmers to teach art history.

Many of the old guard left by the 1990s. Jack Ozegovic retired in Kansas, Al Vignland and Karl Spörck both set up individual pottery studios, though Karl continued to teach on the side. The Art Department shifted with the times, creating new programs like Visual Communications and integrating computers into design work.

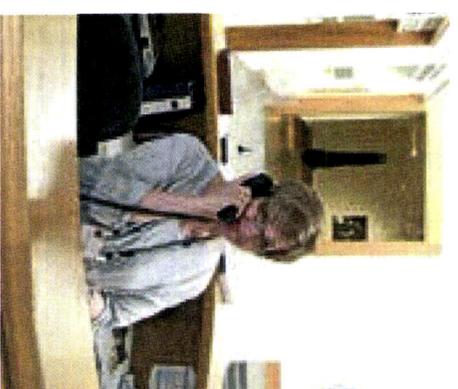
"Can anything be sadder than work left unfinished? Yes, work never begun."
—Christina Rossetti

Artists and creative spirits continue to flock to the area. Certainly fine arts continue to thrive in the Fine Arts Building. Currently Caroline Schaefer-Hills heads a vibrant program that includes Doug Domine, Mike Torre and Alexandra Smith. Along with the present faculty, the fine arts team often invites alumni and former faculty back to teach, including Glenn Wolff, Steve Ballance and Paul Welch.

Recently, Steve has noticed a resurgence in classes like watercolor painting.

"People want to do something with their hands," said Steve. "They're tired of computers and find computers don't give satisfaction. As social media depersonalizes life more, people are returning to look for personhood through the arts."

"The natural beauty here supports the visual arts," said Bob Holdeman. "The geography



Chris Dennos on duty at the Dennos Museum Center's front desk in 2014.



Dennos Museum Center Store Manager/Buyer Terry Tarnow with Inuksuk on Baffin Island, 1997.



Clement Meadmore, *However*, 1999.

inspires. We're living off what we see every day."

Ain't Dead Yet

Paul Welch keeps a ceramic urn by the fireplace at his home. It's a creation of Karl Spöreck's and will one day hold Paul's ashes.

"It's neat to know what you're going to be stuck in," he says. "I sit here at the table and contemplate eternity." He plans to be buried in the urn on family land near Skegemog.

But for now he's busy painting and organizing new exhibits. The *Ain't Dead Yet* show exhibited at Verna Bartnick's Bella Galleria in 2006. The gallery exhibit chronicled 60 years of Paul's art, including watercolors and self-portraits with elements of symbolism, Cubism and German Expressionism. He continues to mentor other artists and organizes exhibits showcasing alumni artists who have gone on to create exceptional work. He's also tickled that his daughter, Wendy Cole, and now some of his grandchildren are following in his creative footsteps. Wendy studied clothing and textile design at Northern Michigan University and has taken up leaded glass in her home studio.

"Every time I paint a portrait I lose a friend."

—John Singer Sargent

Paul's artistic work spans many media and styles, including bronze cast sculpture, glass tiles, oil painting and en plein air watercolor, but one of his great loves is portraiture. He adores portraits by Sargent, van Gogh,

Picasso and Rembrandt. He loves the story about Michelangelo who was criticized because his portrait of Juliano de Medici didn't look like Juliano de Medici. Michelangelo reportedly said "What's the difference in a hundred years?"

"That's what's revealing about portraiture," Paul explained. "The great portrait painters capture the inner person. What's really important about a human being is what's inside."

Paul's painting is praised for his big brush strokes and spontaneity. A recent exhibit at the Denno Museum of his watercolor compared the work to "light filtering through a stained glass window." Indeed, this quote by Elisabeth Ross is one of his favorites: "People are like stained glass windows. They sparkle and shine when the sun is out, but when the darkness sets in their true beauty is revealed only if there is light from within."

"It's the doing. It's the creating. The process itself is exciting," said Paul. "What I love about painting is that I'll work and something else will start to happen. What it is creation."

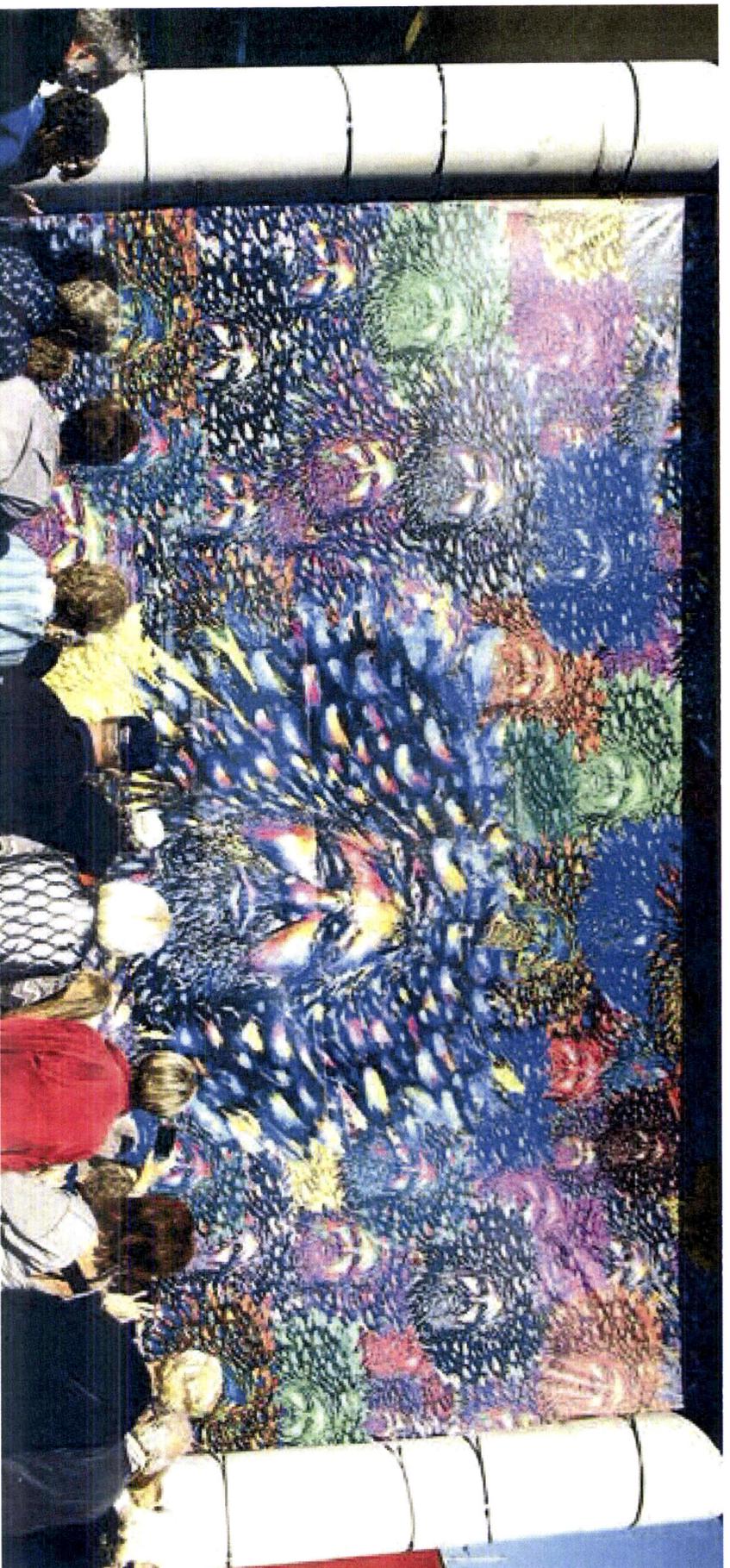
An epitaph he once saw has always haunted him: "Here lies a man who went out of the world without knowing why he came into it." He was determined that would not be him.

In 2013, Paul hatched up a plan to supersize his portrait and enter ArtPrize, Grand Rapids' juried and popular vote-for-your-favorite-piece art show. The result was an enormous silkscreen 24' x 18' banner called *Face to Face*.

His rainbow-colored bearded face merges with a mane of bold brushstrokes and multiple red, blue, orange, purple, brown and green computer generated images of his face creating a collage like giant's quilt. John Robert Williams and Paul's



Susanna Linburg, *Ruby's Arch*, 1999



Paul Welch, Face to Face, Circle print, Art Prize entry, 2013

granddaughter, Kelly Ferguson, guided him through the computer side of the project. Paul Britten and his team at Britten, Inc. offered to create and hang the banner.

"I can see nothing plain: all is mystery. Yet sometimes there is a torch inside my head...that makes all clear, but when the light is gone. I have but images, analogies."

—Yeats

"This image signifies the importance of portraiture throughout the history of art," explains Paul, "And the struggle of all art to define the meaning of self." Then he quotes a poem he wrote to accompany the piece, that

ends in: "The Artist finally finds through, toil and struggle his creative grace, in a worldly planetary space."

"He is a giant who walks among us," says Greg Nachazel.

The day of the big show, Paul gathered 80 friends and fans for a bus tour to Grand Rapids. They met at 7 a.m. at the Meijer parking lot and needed two motor coaches to fit everyone: artist friends like Joe DeLuca, gallery owners Carol Buck and Mark O'Shaughnessy from the Art & Design Studio who helped organize the trip, former students and current students from his art appreciation classes, his family and friends from Central United Methodist church.

Former student Peg Jonkhoff was one of the



caption

ones on the bus. Peg keeps in touch with Paul and makes an annual pilgrimage to the Fine Arts Building during the college BBQ. She's also adjusting to her role as arts patron, having recently commissioned fellow alumna Verna Bartnick to create an original bronze statue of Perry Hannah, Traverse City's founder. "I believe in the importance of public art," she said.

Paul's piece down in Grand Rapids was very public. It draped over the Plante Moran building, two stories tall, easily seen from across the Grand River.

On the way down, Paul entertained the passengers with art quizzes, game-show style.

"Who said 'I paint with my mind, not my hand?' " (Picasso) "Who painted Impressionist lily pads?" He flung out T-shirts as prizes. The Traverse City crowd was decked out in orange t-shirts to commemorate the day when the bus pulled into Grand Rapids.

As they stepped out on the plaza, the morning sun was illuminating Paul's portrait from behind and bestowing a vibrant light - transforming the banner for a moment into an enormous window of stained glass.

"Only put off until tomorrow what you are willing to die having left undone."
-Pablo Picasso



Paul Welch, *Bike Wreck*, Giclee print, 24' x 18', Art Prize entry, 2014.

Epilogue

“You cannot step into the same river twice.” This thought, articulated by the Greek philosopher Heraclitus, comes to mind as I finish my forty-third year teaching art students at Northwestern Michigan College.

When I started, the river was one of paint and mud and ink and charcoal. I added photo chemicals to the river. Later we saw metals and fibers and, eventually, pixels and bytes and wax ink and laser toner join the flow.

Today, pixels and bytes and laser toner and inkjet ink make up the larger part of the river although paint and ink and mud and graphite and charcoal and pastels still contribute to the diversity of the river. Most important, the source of energy that Power the river continues to make the Art Department a place of innovation and excitement.

Paul Welch is the source of that energy. From the time he was hired as the first full-time art teacher, he strove to find people who would add to the diversity and excitement of the art environment. First Norm Averill, to start a pottery program. Then Jack Ozegovic, to bring the varieties of printmaking to the mix. Next, Steve Graham and myself to see if there was interest in the emerging art of photography, and Howard Crisp to add jewelry and metalsmithing as options for visual artists.

The addition of a Commercial Art program (now Visual Communications) allowed students to explore possibilities for earning a living with their visual art skills under the mentorship of Bob Bach and Peter Yu and most especially Jill Hinds Paddock.

Over the years, the succeeding generations of teachers—Di-

ane Hubert, Karl Sporck, Doug Domine, Mike Torre, Jackie Shiners, Caroline Schaefer-Hills, Sheila Stafford, Sue Kopka, Jerry Gates, Nancy Crisp, Sydney Wilson, Joan Richmond and others too numerous to mention—understood what a great opportunity it is to participate in the blossoming of the potential of thousands of visual arts students as they became art creators...a process that continues today. Fittingly enough, two of the latest hires, Glenn Wolff and John Robert Williams, began their careers as students here many years ago.

I can walk around the Fine Arts Building (a work in art itself) and see the current results of this long story: The annual Student Art Show in the lobby; the formal and informal critiques that go on every day in what I call “the last one-room school in Michigan;” the computer lab full of students agonizing over the latest issue of the NMC magazine.

Leaving the building to walk across campus, I can see works by Mike Torre, current ceramics instructor, and Sally Rogers, one of our most successful artists. I can visit the Dennos Museum, which only exists because of the vision Paul had to have a place to show the work that was being produced and to bring exhibitions to inspire the students. Sharing that vision with Mike and Barb Dennos grew into the museum that bears their names.

I can’t begin to predict where the river will carry us from here but I am sure that it will be an exciting trip.

Steve Ballance

April 2014

Acknowledgments

Sincere thanks to all who shared their stories in interviews for this book, including: Steve Ballance, Verna Barrnick, Lois Beardslee, Walter Beardslee, Paul Britten, Kathy Ferguson, Bob Holdeman, Susie Janis, Gene Jenneman, Peg Jonkhoff, Greg Nachazel, Bernie Rink, Sally Rogers, Jackie Shiners, Anne Dennos Shuyler, Delphine Welch, Paul Welch, John Robert Williams and Glenn Wolff. Special thanks to Paul and Delphine Welch for opening their hearts and home to share this story.

Deep thanks to visual art supporters extraordinaire Susie Janis, David Leach, Roland Meulebrouck, Robert and Grace Rudd and Northwestern Michigan College who together provided funding to create this book.

This book would not have been possible without the determination and steady hand of Ann Swaney of the Northwestern Michigan College library archives, who believed in this book and shepherded the project from start to finish. Also to Lou Sanford, whose own book inspired this one.

Thanks go to Steve Ballance, Elizabeth Edwards, Susie Janis and Anne Dennos Shuyler for their time and gracious words. Also thanks to staff at Northwestern Michigan College, particularly Cari Noga for her care in copyediting, as well as Holly Gorton and Stephen Siciliano.

For the beautiful design work and enthusiastic commitment to the project, thanks go to the talented visual communications students at Northwestern Michigan College, Jon Alexander, Molly Gillespie and Kristin Schroeder, as well as their instructor, Caroline Schaefer-Hills. Thank you for making this project your own.

Paul's NMC Fellow tribute: June 7th, 1992

Paul Welch has been appointed a Fellow of Northwestern Michigan College in recognition of his unrelenting advocacy of the importance of art to society throughout his tenure as an instructor and continuing into his retirement years.

Of his expertise and sound judgment in the development of the Northwestern Michigan College art collection. Of his flamboyant and enthusiastic personality which impacts all who come in contact with him; and particularly of his ongoing support and involvement in the establishment of the Dennos Museum Center.

Spruce up this text

List of major museum pieces from early collections
Dennos collection from Chicago and NY buying trips
Jorgensen collection
NMC Faculty instructors in Fine Arts
Norman Averill, ceramics, art appreciation
Bob Bach, commercial art
Steve Ballance, photography, art appreciation
Craig Bringham, life drawing
John Church, metalsmithing
Howard Crisp, metalsmithing, sculpture, jewelry making
Nancy Crisp, art appreciation
Doug Domine, drawing, printing, design
Karen Evans, pottery
Jerry Gates, painting, art appreciation
Roger Gillroy
Steve Graham, photography, design
Jill Hinds, commercial art
Diane Hubert, metalsmithing
Larry Lien, life drawing
Cathy Look, pottery
Ann Carlin Ozegovic
Jack Ozegovic, printmaking, art appreciation
Ralph Parton, drawing and art history
Fred Petroskey, painting
Joan Richmond, typography, painting
Ken Richmond, watercolor
Carolyn Scott Risk, watercolor
Caroline Schaefer-Hills, graphic design
Jackie Shinnars, art history
Karl Spörck, pottery
Bob Sweeney
Mike Torre, art appreciation
Susan Tropoliano
Al Vigland, pottery
Paul Welch, drawing, painting, art history, art appreciation, design, sculpture
Sydney Wilson, fiber arts
Peter Yu, commercial art

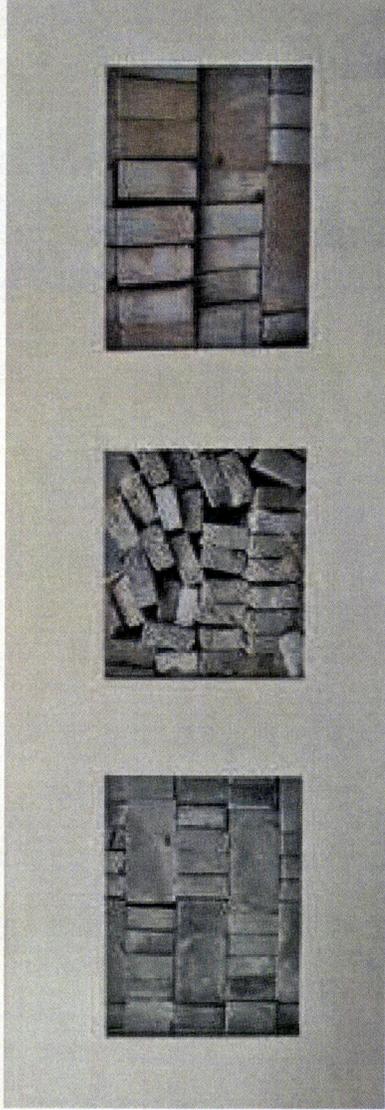
Paul Welch major shows, events, exhibitions and commissions
Art Directors Design Award, 1954
Scarab Club, 1956
Michigan Artists Show, Detroit Institute of Arts, 1956
Kresge Art Center, 1961
Stained Glass Exhibit, War Memorial, Grosse Pointe, 1967

Chicago Art Institute Drawing Show, 1963
Eight Michigan Artists - Kresge Art Center, 1973
Faculty Art Exhibits, Northwestern Michigan College, 1960s-80s
Artists of Renown, 1981-82
CNN Interview with C-Span, 1984
Belstone Gallery, 1990s
Gallery 50, 2006
Airt Dead Yet - Old Mission Gallery, 2006
ArtPrize, Grand Rapids, 2013
Three Decades of Art of NMC, 2014
Commissions
50th

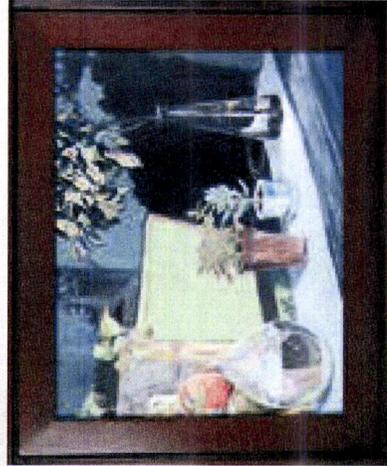
All Faiths Chapel, Traverse City State Hospital, stained glass
National Bank and Trust, welded sculpture
McClellan Industries, welded sculpture
Ogdensburg Methodist Church, stained glass
VASA ski race posters, silk screen
Faith Reformed Church, stained glass
First Presbyterian Church, stained glass
Central United Methodist Church, stained glass
Elk Rapids Presbyterian Church, stained glass
anniversary Traverse Symphony Orchestra, original watercolor
Haslett Community Church, stained glass
St. Francis Catholic Church, stained glass
St. Anthony's Church, Manclona, stained glass
Church of the Holy Spirit, Grand Rapids, stained glass
Frank and Louise Hagerty home, stained glass
Leslie Gielow home, stained glass
Elmer Dieterle home in Orchard Lake, stained glass
Munson Hospital, The Family, in memory of Ellamarie Weitz, direct metal



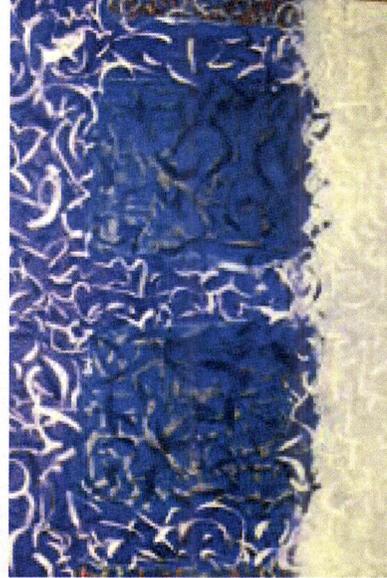
James Adair



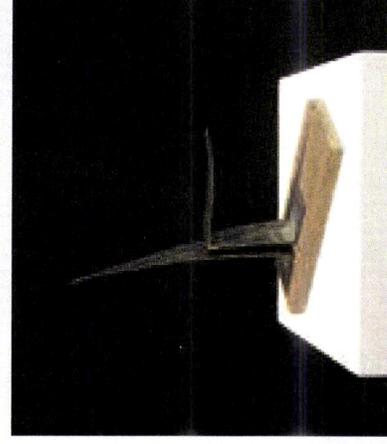
Ann Carlin Ozegovic



Barbara Daigh



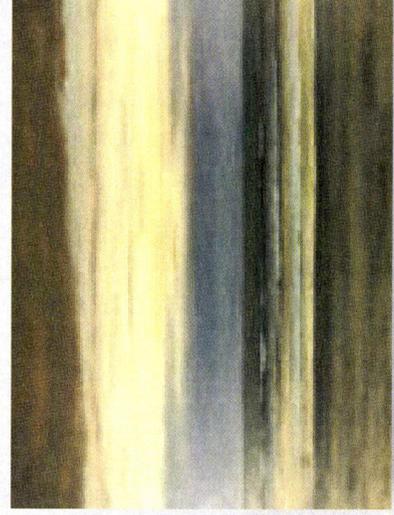
Bill Hoxie



Bob Purvis



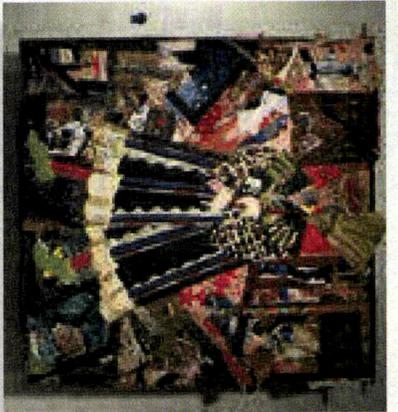
Cherrie Correll



Dan Oberschulte



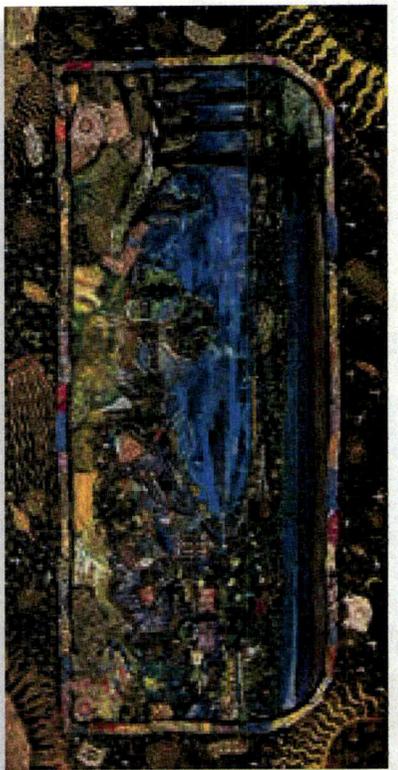
Greg Nachazel



Jim Hay



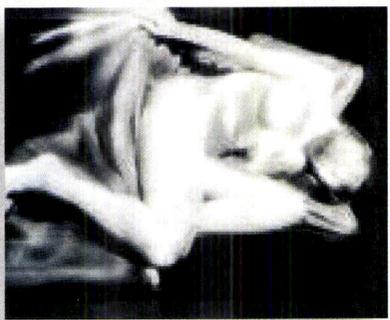
John Russel



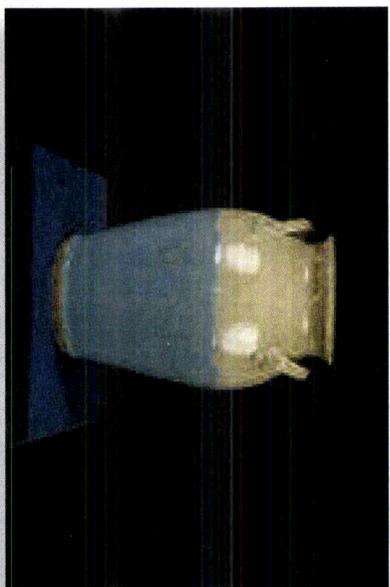
Glenn Wolf



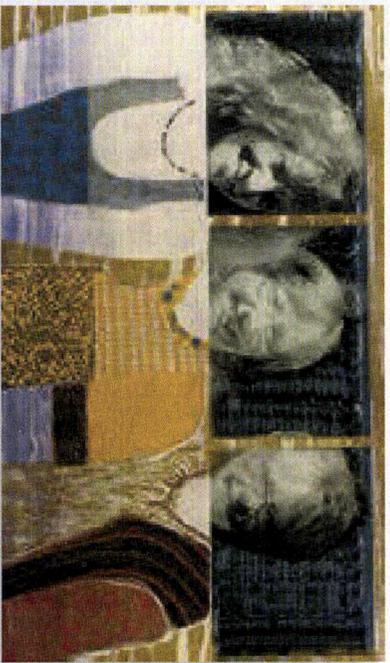
Kathi Ivany



Joe Rice



Karen Evans



Jill Hinds



Jean Larson



Kathleen Murphy



John Robert Williams



Kimberly Arp



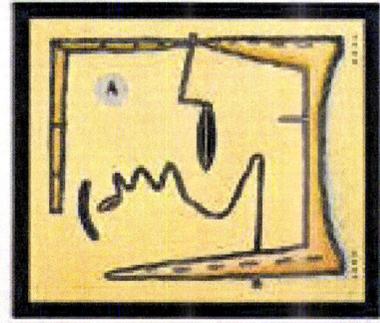
Madonna Walters



Sally Rogers



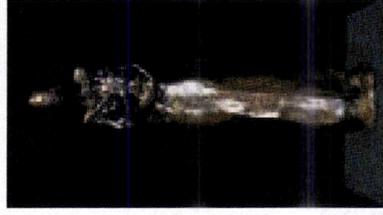
Mary E. Anderson



Nancy Nash



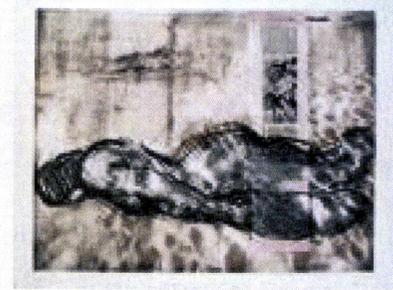
Stephen Graham



Verna Bartnick



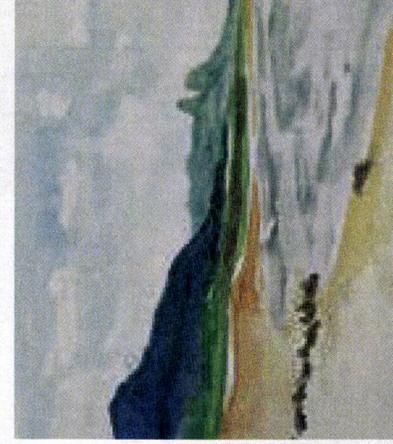
Mary E. Anderson



Sheila Stafford



Steve Ballance



Wendy McWhorter

MAY 5, 2015

City of Traverse City
Application to Become Involved



Thank you for your interest in serving on one of Traverse City's boards or committees! Volunteers help to secure our community's beauty and promote its enhancement – Benjamin C. Marentette, City Clerk

Board/Committee you are interested in serving (indicate up to three): ARTS COMMISSION

Name: MAIR, THOMAS

Address: 612 15TH ST W TRAVERSE CITY MI 49684
(Street) (City) (State) (Zip)

E-Mail Address: TRAVERSEGREEN@TANCO.COM

Preferred Phone No.: 231 392 6121 Additional Phone No.: _____

Occupation: MANAGER (if retired, please provide your career)

Before submitting your application, please be sure to attach a brief letter indicating the following:

- Why are you applying for a city board or committee seat?
- How do you believe your appointment would benefit the city?
- Describe your involvement in the community on a board/committee or in another volunteer capacity.
- Any other helpful information relevant to your application.

While it is not required, a resume is helpful in the recruitment process for City boards and committees.

YES NO Are you in default to the City?
If yes, please note applicants in default to the City are not eligible for consideration.

YES NO Do you or immediate family members currently serve on a City board or committee?
If yes, which board? _____

YES NO Did you attach the required letter outlining the items requested above?

The applicant acknowledges that the City may be required from time to time to release records in its possession. The applicant hereby gives permission to the City to release any records or materials received by the City from the applicant as it may be requested to do so as permitted by the Freedom of Information Act, MCL 15.231 et seq.

Signature: _____

Date: 5.1.15

Please return your application, letter, and optional resume to City Clerk, 400 Boardman Avenue, Traverse City, MI 49684. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our office at (231) 922-4480. Again, thank you for your interest!

RECEIVED
MAY 05 2015
CITY OF TRAVERSE CITY
CITY CLERKS OFFICE

Thomas A. MAIR
612 Fifth St W
Traverse City MI 49684

May 4, 2015

Department of City Clerk
City of Traverse City
400 Boardman Av
Traverse City MI 49684
Attn: Arts Commission

Dear City Clerk Ben Marentette ,

I wish to be seated on the City of Traverse City Arts Commission. I have a life-long background in arts management.

Recently, I started a new discussion group here in Traverse City that is examining the professional opportunities of the arts scene and setting the goal of strengthening the area's performing arts economy. The idea to include leaders in the performing arts.

A government arts commission tasked with overseeing the selection and funding of public art installations is not a new idea. We can learn from communities such as Ann Arbor, Michigan .

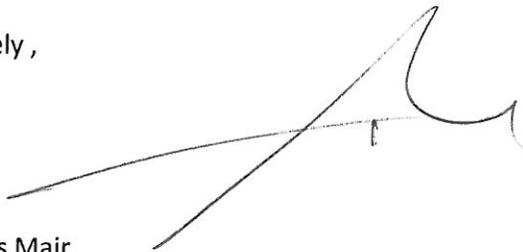
I served two terms for a total of six years on the City of Traverse City Parks & Recreation Commission. I also worked for the US Department of Transportation. I know how to work within government .

While a member of the Parks Commission I studied and voted for the installation of public art. Bartnick's "Time to Let Go" located along the TART Trail is a fine example of art made by a local artist and has a perfect placement .

I hope that the composition of the arts commission includes both artists and arts management people .

Feel free to ask me any questions about my background and about my vision for the arts commission .

Sincerely ,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Thomas Mair', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Thomas Mair
traversemedia@yahoo.com
231 392-6121

**the
artist
development
agency**

TOM MAIR
AGENT/MANAGER

231.709.5329
traversemedia@yahoo.com