

Minerva Climbs Walls; Doesn't Catch Mice

By Sandra Andersen

The only permanent resident at the Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery is Minerva, the large, black-and-white haired cat given to the gallery by Mrs. A. B. Sheldon, donor of the gallery. According to Norman Geske, director of the gallery,

Minerva has lived most of his life in the packing room in the basement, but for the past two or three months he has been allowed in the great hall on the main floor for an hour or so each day.

Director of extension services for the gallery, Dwight Stark, the unofficial cat feed-

er, said that Minerva usually sits on the glass topped desk to the right of the entry-way, and watches the people go by. "Occasionally he likes to chase birds, as long as he gets to stay on the inside of the glass," according to Ted James, a University student who is working at Sheldon this summer.

James said that Minerva does go outside reluctantly if someone goes with him, but prefers to stay indoors. Officer Paul Hulfish, gallery guard, said, "It seems as though as soon as you put the cat outside, it comes right in again through the revolving doors."

Geske said that the idea of a gallery cat originated when he and Mrs. Sheldon were touring the National Gallery of Art in London in the fall of 1962. "While there, we noticed a big, black, long-haired cat asleep on one of the benches," Geske said. "We both admired it."

One day during the summer of 1963, according to Geske, Mrs. Sheldon brought a black kitten in a basket to Lincoln to be Sheldon's gallery cat.

Stark explained that the purpose of the cat in the London Gallery is to catch mice. He said that Minerva supposedly lives at Sheldon on the same pretense. But Stark said there are no mice

at Sheldon. "Maybe after we've been here for 50 years we'll have some," Stark said, "but by then we'll need a new cat."

Minerva has no pedigree, but he said he thinks that he must be largely persian.

After an incident last week, James said he watches the cat more closely. According to Geske, Minerva climbed

one of the carpeted walls clear to the ceiling. "But he's not ordinarily that rambunctious," Geske explained.

The name Minerva was given to the cat by Geske. He said that when the animal sits quietly, it looks more like an owl than a cat. The owl is the symbol for Minerva, the Greek Goddess of wisdom.

I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but still I can do something; and because I cannot do everything I will not refuse to do the something that I can do.

— Edward Everett Haie

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