

Sheldon to dedicate Lincoln sculpture

BY MELANIE MENSCH

Abraham Lincoln. The name alone spurs traditional images of the 16th president: the lean, lanky gentleman, with a towering height and presence. The dark, bushy beard covering his scarred, thin face. The poised, distinguished look in his eyes as he sat tight-lipped for photographs. The black stovepipe hat.

But before his 1860 presidency and legacy of freedom in a unified nation, Lincoln was a simple boy of the wild American frontier. Struggling for a living and for learning, Lincoln worked the farmland, splitting rails for fences while gaining the knowledge that would one day make him one of the greatest presidents.

It is this image of Lincoln, as a bare-faced, young Abe, that is depicted in a newly acquired sculpture by the Sheldon Memorial Art Museum.

"Young Lincoln," a bronze figure created by Louis Slobodkin, will be dedicated today at 9:30 a.m. at the Justice and Law Enforcement Center, 575 S. 10th Street.

"This is an idealized portrait of Lincoln, holding tools as a rail joiner," said Daniel Siedell, the Sheldon's curator. "The sculpture connects to the city, representing Sheldon as a collection of public sculpture."

Created in 1939 for the World's Fair in New York, the original stands in the courtyard of the Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C.

Slobodkin's son, Lawrence Slobodkin, donated a cast of the original to the Sheldon. Omaha artist Les Bruning recast the bronze figure, which was installed in conjunction with the dedication of the new County-City Government Center on May 5.

"The sculpture is on long-term loan to the city and will sit outside the new building," Siedell said. "It is the ideal place

for it because it represents the unifying efforts between many people."

The Lincoln Arts Council raised \$17,500 through the "Pennies for Lincoln" campaign, in which city businesses, schools and clubs have collected pennies since February.

Margaret Berry, the Lincoln Arts Council executive director, said she continued to see the city's support in the project.

"There were 220 plexi-glass containers out in the community to collect pennies," she said. "I still have people dropping off containers I didn't even know about."

Together, the Lincoln Lancaster County Public Building Commission, the Sheldon Art Gallery and the

Lincoln Arts Council dedicate the sculpture in memory of Slobodkin, who died in 1975. In the 1920s and 1930s, he worked as a sculptor and, later, illustrated children's books.

The sculpture, also known as "The Rail Joiner," strategically faces the "Gettysburg Lincoln" sculpture by Daniel Chester French across the Lincoln Mall. The two figures serve as bookends, encompassing community growth and signifying the legacy of a great man.

"One statue shows the pensive, thoughtful Lincoln of Gettysburg. The other statue shows a young man of action," Siedell said. "Both complement each other and I'm pleased with the Sheldon collection's participation."

Maya Angelou to appear at Lied Center

ANGELOU from page 8

"In her poem, 'Human Family,' Dr. Angelou says, 'We are more alike, my friends, than we are unlike.' I think the most impressive thing about Angelou's poetry is that it is purely honest. It is able to be graceful and elegant while, at the same time, it is poignant and true," Ireland said.

Evidence of the poignancy of Dr. Angelou's truths is found in her writings including books like "I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings" and "Still I Rise."

"I Know Why The Caged Bird Sings" is actually from "Sympathy" written by Sir Lawrence Dunbar, a black male poet in the 1800s, in which he states, "I know why he beats his

wing / I know why the caged bird sings. / Ah, me, when its wings are bruised and is bosom sore. / It beats its bars and would be free."

Dr. Angelou adapts the strong words to communicate her own work with the similar theme of facing oppression.

Oppression of humanity runs abundantly throughout Dr. Angelou's writing.

Perhaps best stated, "You may shoot me with your words, / You may cut me with your eyes, / You may kill me with your hatefulness, / But still, like air, I'll rise."

The lifetime work of Dr. Angelou is intensely inspiring.

Her works celebrate the pride that is to be found within oneself. In "Living Well. Living Good."

Lecture Preview

Maya Angelou

Where: Lied Center, 12th & Q

When: Tonight, @ 7:30 p.m.

Cost: Sold Out

*Note: You can listen to the lecture at Kimball Hall @ 7:30 p.m. (free)

Dr. Angelou says, "Because of the routines we follow, we often forget that life is an ongoing adventure... Life seems to love the liver of it."

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