Committee approves public art, memorials

By Laurie Stropper

Visitors who read the names on the Arthur G. James Cancer Hospital Donor Wall or who notice the Havener Eye Center Plaque may not realize the planning that went into creating these projects.

“Creating permanent art and memorial projects on this campus can be a perplexing and challenging task for anyone,” says Julie Karonvics, chairperson for the Campus Art and Memorials Committee.

The committee receives proposals for development of permanent art and memorial projects at Ohio State. The committee gathers information about art proposals for the entire University, Karonvics says.

“We are not a funding body, nor are we charged with establishing art and memorial projects. We are, however, very much concerned with the physical manifestation of these projects and how they fit into and add to the campus environment,” Karonvics says.

The Havener Eye Center Plaque on the fifth floor of University Hospitals Clinic actually is a sculptural panel, says Karonvics. The work, in honor of the late William Havener, an ophthalmologist, remains of sculpted images and words that represent him. University Hospitals is conducting tours of the center through June. For more information contact David Crawford, Hospitals Communications, 293-3737.

The James Cancer Hospital honors the donors by placing their names on a wall of donor plaques or donor plaques in a medium.

The committee also reviews proposals for memorials or commemoration of significant people, places or events. Proposals may include class gifts and departmental recognitions.

The art work can be created locally, privately or by the state. Locally funded projects are funded by the specific University organization or department they represent. The Rhodes Hall donor wall, a recent proposal to the committee, is locally funded. This wall, which is similar to the Cancer Hospital donor wall, will list the contributors to both the College of Medicine and University Hospitals.

Funded projects often are paid for through donations from an individual, a family or an organization outside the University. The Chadwick Arboretum Cancer Survivor Park is a privately funded recent proposal. The Cancer Survivor Park, for instance, is funded by midwovenance from the R. A. Black Foundation and includes a large, multiple-piece, freestanding sculpture.

The state-funded projects are from percent for arts, a program legislated by the state that requires 1 percent of the construction money for projects over $1 million to be dedicated for art. This program is administered through the Ohio Arts Council.

For the state projects, the Art and Memorials Committee, representatives of the departments who will be using the new building, architects and Ohio Arts Council members form a selection review committee. Karonvics says that this committee determines the type of art, the best place for it to be located and advertisers to find artists.

“Everyone has a chance to express what they feel is important to Ohio State,” she says.

The Art and Memorials Committee is considering a new idea, sculptures made from large trees on campus that will have to be removed because of death or disease. Instead of removing them immediately, they could be sculpted as temporary art. Karonvics says, “There is a tree just south of the Ohio Union that could be sculpted. She says she’s not sure who would do the sculpting, possibly a class or an individual artist.”

The Campus Art and Memorials Committee is made up of 13 members, including junior and senior faculty drawn from design and the visual arts, a representative of the Wexner Center, administrative and professional staff, normally involved in design, planning and operational aspects of the University and students.

Currently there is a graduate student and an undergraduate student on the committee. Karonvics says having students on the committee adds a new perspective.

By leaving the committee members involved in the arts and facility operations, there is a good balance between visual ideas and practical ideas, she says.

Committee members are selected for the two-year term by the dean of the College of Arts. The committee was established in the 1970s, but did not become active until 1984, when Donald Harris, now dean, Harris realized that the committee was an unappreciated resource, Karonvics says.

Departments contemplating an art or memorial project, or people interested in sculpting the trees, can call Karonvics at 292-4458.
Vandals threaten future of OSU art

Kristina L. Mintz
Lantern staff writer

A recent outbreak of vandalism against campus artwork has the university worried about its ability to attract exhibitions and high profile artists in the future.

"People want artwork to be part of the university landscape, but it is difficult if we have vandals," said Sarah Rogers, program director for the Wexner Center for the Arts.

The Campus Arts and Memorials Committee and the Wexner Center for the Arts have been trying to build public awareness of destructive acts against artwork by sending letters to the media.

"We want to alert people to it," said Jean Hansford, senior campus planner from the Office of Campus Planning. "It is the responsibility of the vandals to stop vandalizing. By bringing it to people's attention, we hope there will be a positive reaction."

Seven acts of vandalism against campus artwork have been reported to police in the past year.

The most recent act of vandalism was on the Maya Lin sculpture "Groundswell" on April 20 at the Wexner Center. Vandals walked on the sculpture, leaving numerous footprints on the exhibit and several mounds of crushed glass.

Ohio State is currently working to expand its collection of permanent art on campus. Funding for art comes mainly from the Ohio Percent for Art Program.

Under this program, any state-appropriated project built on campus that has a budget of $4 million or more must set aside one percent of its budget for works of art.