



## **Viewing Lake County through Art:**

### **A Guide to the University Center's Art Collection**

University Center has long helped students see the world around them in new ways through its educational programs. It also provides a more direct opportunity for seeing Lake County in a new way through its art collection.

University Center is the beneficiary of the State's Art in Architecture program, created in 1977 through Public Act 80-241 "to promote and preserve the arts of Illinois by securing artwork of all media for public buildings constructed with State funds." Administered through the Capital Development Board (CDB), the Art in Architecture program spends one-half of 1% of the construction appropriation for each building to supply art created by Illinois artists for display there.

Through the Art in Architecture program, the University Center of Lake County was able to commission two Illinois artists to provide public art for the University Center's Grayslake facility. Photographer Michael Brown created the art that hangs within the building. In addition, bronze bas relief sculptures by David Seagraves are on display in the University Center's courtyard.

Both Brown and Seagraves depict the natural environment of Lake County as it undergoes change. Brown's work portrays the seasonal changes within Lake County's landscape. Seagraves uses a series of pieces to chart the impact of industrialization and technology on the natural world and on human society.

In addition, through the generous donation of former University Center Governing Board member Suzi Schmidt, the University Center administrative suite is now home to Harold Gregor's "Illinois Flatscape #11," a large scale painting that provides an aerial view of Illinois farm country.

### **A Guide to the Landscapes of Michael Brown**

Antioch artist Michael Brown was commissioned to provide a dozen large scale “kinetic images” of Lake County landscapes. Brown’s work combines original photography with lenticular print making, a technique that combines two images so that the final artwork changes when viewed from different locations. By using two photographs painstakingly shot from exactly the same point during two different seasons,



Illinois Beach State Park—North Unit, 2009

Brown is able to create single landscapes that change from summer to winter or from spring to fall as the viewer moves around the art. These pictures hang throughout the building:

#### **First floor**

##### **Atrium**

Van Patten Woods Forest Preserve, 2009

##### **By 110A**

Edward L. Ryerson Conservation Area, 2009

##### **By classrooms 120-122**

Elawa Farm, 2009

##### **By classroom 131-133**

Illinois Beach State Park, 2009

##### **Conference Center**

McDonald Woods, 2009 (left)

Independence Grove Forest Preserve Nature Garden, 2009 (right)



## **Second floor**

### **By classrooms 211-213**

Raven Glen Forest Preserve—Creek, 2009

### **By 220**

Rollins Savanna Forest Preserve, 2009

### **By classrooms 231-233**

Raven Glen Forest Preserve—Oak Tree, 2009

## **Third floor**

### **By classrooms 311-313**

Illinois Beach State Park—North Unit, 2009

### **Library**

Hastings Lake Forest Preserve, 2009

### **By classrooms 331-33**

Chain O'Lakes State Park, 2009

For more information about the artist, visit <http://michaelbrown.com>.

# **A Guide to the Bronze Bas Relief Sculptures by David Seagraves**

## **In the**

### **University Center of Lake County Courtyard**

Illinois sculptor David S. Seagraves was commissioned to produce the six bronze bas reliefs for the University Center courtyard as part of the State's Art in Architecture program, created in 1977 through Public Act 80-241 "to promote and preserve the arts of Illinois by securing artwork of all media for public buildings constructed with State funds." Administered through the Capital Development Board (CDB), the Art in Architecture program spends one-half of 1% of the construction appropriation for each building to supply art created by Illinois artists for display there. This installation completes the University Center's Art in Architecture acquisitions. Twelve Lake County landscape photographs by Michael Brown hang inside the University Center and are described in a separate guide.

These six bronze bas reliefs trace the evolution in Lake County of the relationship between human beings and the natural world, and how that relationship has been affected by technology. They depict changes in Lake County's land and population from a minimally-developed prairie to the highly-developed, technology-rich environment of today. The series can be sub-divided into two groups of three, the first of which charts the impact of an increasing population on the environment and the second of which displays the leisure activities, the academic and artistic pursuits, and the technological advances that accompany the Industrial and urban development of the region.

The University Center courtyard setting of the collection enhances the theme. Between each of the cement panels which hold the works, visitors can glimpse the restored prairie.



## A Guide to the Bronze Bas Relief Sculptures by David Seagraves (continued)



Panel 1 shows a Native American woman in a direct relationship with Nature. A cougar and a wolf represent animals once present in the region. One young tree is growing and another has been bent into a trail marker.



Panel 2 shows the same tree grown much bigger some years later. It is flourishing. A settler of European descent is plowing the land but still cutting grass by hand. Human beings are beginning to exert greater control over the natural world. A civil war soldier is portrayed in the tree, as is another man holding a portrait of the first settler of European descent. A house is also present in this “family tree.”



## A Guide to the Bronze Bas Relief Sculptures by David Seagraves (continued)



Panel 3 shows the same tree from the opposite side, now starting to wither. But, as the tree declines, the town begins to assert itself. Images of a train, a car, a multi-story building, and a smokestack indicate the increasing industrialization of the region. Farming has advanced in its techniques enough to allow children to go to school.



Panel 4 shows a variety of leisure activities made possible by the free time resulting from industrialization. Several swimmers in period bathing costumes stroll alongside the Waukegan pier. A 1950's cheerleader tumbles. Sailors and a canoeist appear in the middle ground with a commercial vessel in the distance. In the foreground, a soccer player and a runner reflect the sporting interests of contemporary Lake County residents.

## A Guide to the Bronze Bas Relief Sculptures by David Seagraves (continued)



Panel 5 provides images of education and the arts. In the center of the piece, a man makes a forceful point during a university discussion. A music teacher conducts a violin lesson. The curiosity of a young boy is addressed by reading. Embracing graduates mark the end of an academic pursuit. Across the top, a curved panel alludes to the pavilion at Ravinia.



Panel 6 shows the rapid advances of technology. The work of Samuel Insull (whose home is now known as the Cuneo Mansion) is symbolized by the early generator in the foreground from which a pair of industrious hands protrudes. A somewhat menacing bulldozer and a cement truck represent the urbanization of the region. A wind turbine and a cellphone tower show the impact of contemporary technology. The test tubes and keyboard represent science and technology. Finally, the young woman looking up and away and holding a bolt of lightening represents hope for the future. A stylized University Center logo appears on her shirt.

For more information about the artist, visit <http://www.davidseagraves.com/>.



### Harold Gregor's "Illinois Flatscape #11"



Through the generous donation of former University Center Governing Board member Suzi Schmidt, Harold Gregor's "Illinois Flatscape #11" now hangs in the administrative suite of offices on the second floor.

Harold Gregor is a Distinguished Professor of Art (Emeritus) at Illinois State University and a Bloomington, Illinois resident. His "Flatscape" paintings, "combine an aerial perspective with unique color choices to suggest an essential Midwestern landscape," according to his biographical sketch, available <http://www.hgregor.com/pages/about.html>.