

Pretoria bust has city ties

Sculptor also created figures at downtown site

By MARION GARMEL
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A life-size bust of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. unveiled Monday at the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria, South Africa, has an Indianapolis connection, of course.

The bust was sculpted by Zenos Frudakis, the Philadelphia sculptor who created "Reaching" and "Flying," the trio of 7-foot tall nude bronze dancers that decorate the outside of the Capital Center office towers at Illinois and Ohio streets.

BRUSH STROKES

"Reaching," a pair of male and female dancers twisting toward one another, is mounted outside the entrance to the center on Illinois Street. "Flying," a single male dancer, is in a grassy courtyard behind the buildings on the Ohio Street side.

Frudakis, who grew up in Gary, was commissioned to create the bust for the U.S. Embassy based on a model he submitted as one of three finalists selected by the National Endowment for the Arts in a 1984 competition for a bust of King for the U.S. Capitol in Washington.

The winner of that competition was Boston sculptor John Wilson. But two castings from Frudakis' model are owned by the Philadelphia Martin Luther King Association and former Pennsylvania Gov. George M. Leader.

Different busts of King by Frudakis are owned by the LBJ Museum in Austin, Texas, and Bishop Desmond Tutu of South Africa, who was presented his bust by SANE in 1986.

"He has done a number of different sized busts," said Frudakis' wife by phone from their Pennsylvania home Tuesday. "But the bust for Pretoria was very special."

She said the sculptor, who attended the unveiling in South Africa, had spent a year on the bust. "He has long been fascinated with and moved by the life of Dr. King," she said.

In Pretoria, Ambassador Edward Perkins, the first black U.S. ambassador to South Africa, said that the slain black American's non-violent civil right movement held some lessons for South Africa.

As quoted by the Associated Press, he



Photo courtesy Zenos Frudakis

Zenos Frudakis' portrait bust of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

said he did not "tend to equate" South Africa and the United States, but "searching for non-violent solutions is probably something worth thinking about."

Frudakis is now on a lecture tour of South Africa, talking about "The State of the Arts in America" to university students, arts professionals and artist organizations, through a grant from the Arts America program.

The sculptor also has created a life-size portrait bust of Philadelphia Mayor W. Wilson Goode for the Philadelphia City Hall and a bust of Gen. Douglas MacArthur for the MacArthur Memorial Foundation. A bas-relief bronze portrait of Mr. and Mrs. George Hillenbrand of Indiana was commissioned for the Hillenbrand wing of the Batesville Library last year.

Frudakis, whose family owned Greek restaurants in Gary, left Indiana in 1973 to attend the Pennsylvania Academy of Art in Philadelphia. He has both master and bachelor degrees in fine arts from the University of Pennsylvania.

He recently was invited to create another casting of the pair of his Indianapolis sculptures called "Reaching" for the Rodin Grand Prize Exhibition at the Hokone Open Air Museum in Tokyo, Japan, in 1990. Why not the third sculpture? "I guess they didn't see it," said Mrs. Frudakis. "We're going to send them a photograph of the third one, and maybe they'll want that one too."