

law of the universe."

The ceremony received extensive coverage in the South African press as well as the international and U.S. media.

For an artist accustomed to a relatively cloistered art world, the ceremony was heady stuff — the emotional highlight of a career marked with considerable success.

"It'll be a focus for the black population there," Frudakis said of his sculpture. "They're going to schedule a lot of events around it in the future. It'll be there for years and years."

Frudakis left for South Africa on Jan. 8. He returned Jan. 20.

Expenses for the trip, which cost about \$4,000, were paid by a grant from the U.S. Information Agency. While in South Africa, he attended a number of workshops and informal discussions with South African artists in Pretoria and some surrounding black townships. He said he moved around rather freely.

But the purpose of his trip was supposed to be a secret.

"They [USA officials] told me not to talk with anyone about it. They told the South African government I was going over for an art showing. I said I was going over to deliver an artwork. I didn't lie," Frudakis said. "When I got in my application, they didn't want me to do it through the embassy. They wanted me to do it as a tourist."

Frudakis said he was asked not to talk of the enterprise before he left for South Africa for fear the bust might be turned back by South African customs. The U.S. Embassy did not inform the South African government of its intention to hold the dedication ceremony and have the bust of Dr. King placed permanently in the embassy, according to Perkins.

Frudakis said he "felt a little paranoid" in South Africa because white South Africans "are paranoid. They are prisoners of their own system."

South Africa, he said, "was a tense place to be. . . . You don't realize how tense you are until you leave."

Conrad Bessidenhopt, first secretary of the South African Embassy in Washington, said last week that the embassy had no comment.

"There is no reaction, really," he said. "The South African Embassy in Washington also observes that day as a holiday. We have no comment on the American Embassy having the statue on its premises and we don't interfere."

"Dr. King was in favor of peaceful change," he continued. "In South Africa, we're in the process of peacefully reforming our country as well, in order to incorporate all people in the policy-forming process."

In a recent interview from South Africa, Perkins said having a bust of Dr. King in South Africa has special meaning.

"Here in South Africa, we wanted Dr. King's bust put in the embassy as a symbol for human rights, for due process of law, a bill of rights, of the right of people to protest and the ability of government to step back when it goes too far in stepping on the rights of its citizens," he said. "These were the things we wanted to demonstrate here."

Perkins noted that "King felt that as long as the rights of anyone in the world were not secure, then no one's rights in the world were secure."

For that reason, he said, "the sym-



U.S. Information Agency worker Joyce Ngele with King's bust at the agency's library in Pretoria.



Frudakis played videotapes of King to try to capture his spirit.

bol of having his bust in the embassy gives more credibility here to manifest what our country stands for in terms of men and women living together."

Perkins said he gained a greater appreciation for Frudakis' work after meeting the artist. "I think he has captured some of the real facial features of King. . . . It demonstrates what I consider to be his strength of character but, more important, what a person believes in in a world where life is precious and the rights of individuals are stepped on all too often."

Frudakis tried to capture too in the bust. But it wasn't easy.

Frudakis worked intensely in his studio, surrounded by many of his works, as he talked about his experiences in South Africa.

Frudakis said the heavy burden of apartheid could be felt everywhere

during his 10-day trip.

For example, he said, South African public facilities have separate bathrooms. One entrance is for whites, the other is for other races, as categorized by the South African government: black, Indian and so-called "colored," or mixed.

Everywhere he went, he said, he saw uniformed young men holding machine guns. "These guys are all over the place. It's scary. They're all 18 or 19 years old."

Frudakis said his conversations with black artists were held in hushed tones because he feared that they might be overheard by government informants. He was afraid that the black artists might be thrown in jail and held indefinitely under South Africa's broad emergency powers.

Frudakis, a financially successful

has been commissioned to create about 25 pieces, ranging from intimate portraits for individuals to gigantic projects for corporate buildings.

Included among his more lucrative commissions is a piece, *Reaching*, commissioned by Browning Investments, which sits at the entrance to a Jersey office building in downtown Indianapolis. A similar work, done in 1987, was commissioned by Reuss & Associates. *Titled Dream To Fly*, it is a fountain sculpture of 7-foot-high figures placed on the grounds of the Colwick Office complex in Cherry Hill.

Frudakis has been invited to show a variation of *Dream To Fly* in the Rodin Grand Prize exhibition to be held in Japan in 1990.

The artist was contacted about the U.S. Embassy commission in June by Barry Ballow, a director in the USA's academic programs office, after the agency had been asked by the U.S. Embassy in South Africa to help find a sculptor for the project.

Frudakis was not given the go-ahead from Ballow until September. Frudakis said that left barely enough time to have the clay bust cast in bronze at the Laredo Bronze Foundry in Chester.

He was chosen by the U.S. Embassy diplomatic team in Pretoria from among three finalists in a previously held national competition to execute a bust of Dr. King for a room just off the grounds of the U.S. Capitol.

Frudakis was one of three finalists from 187 entries. But he lost out on the \$50,000 U.S. Capitol commission to Boston sculptor John Wilson in April 1988.

The loss disappointed Frudakis. But he felt vindicated when the U.S. Embassy team in Pretoria chose his work over Wilson's.

"I couldn't think of a better place for it to go, literally, in the world," Frudakis said in a recent interview in the two-story carriage-house studio on the property behind his home on Mount Carmel Avenue.

Although the embassy commission was less lucrative — in fact, it didn't even completely cover the expense of having it cast in bronze — he said there was no way he would trade the U.S. Capitol commission for having his Dr. King bust placed in South Africa.

"I basically gave it to them for cost," said Frudakis. "But I wanted them to have it. I really didn't care about making money over it."

He was not content to recast the bust he had entered into the U.S. Capitol competition and have it shipped off to South Africa. After he received the news he had been chosen, he reworked the life-sized bust in wax.

He put his heart and soul into the work, listening to Dr. King's tapes, reading his works and studying footage of Dr. King. Frudakis said he worked from more than 200 photographs of Dr. King, all of them surrounding him on three different boards as he worked.

Since then, Frudakis has done seven sculptures of Dr. King. He has been a finalist in two other national Dr. King competitions.

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