




Internal Rating: CE (Crit. C)  
6/14/2022

## WEST VIRGINIA HISTORIC PROPERTY INVENTORY FORM

<b>Street Address</b> Marshall University Campus Student Center	<b>Common/Historic Name/Both</b> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>  Marshall University Memorial Fountain	<b>Field Survey #</b>  	<b>Site # (SHPO Only)</b> CB-2176_Rev01
<b>Town or Community</b> Huntington	<b>County</b> Cabell	<b>Negative No.</b> N/A	<b>NR Listed Date</b>  
<b>Architect/Builder</b> Harry Bertoia- Sculptor Keith Dean- Architect	<b>Date of Construction</b> 1972	<b>Style</b> Unknown/Abstract	
<b>Exterior Siding/Materials</b> Bronze, Copper tubing, welding rods, water, and concrete	<b>Roofing Material</b> N/A	<b>Foundation</b> Concrete (reflecting pool)	
<b>Property Use or Function</b> Residence <input type="checkbox"/> Commercial <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Commemorative Fountain	<b>UTM#</b> Longitude/Latitude (82.429051 W, 38.422823 N)  UTM 17N: (375254E, 4253696N)		
<b>Survey Organization &amp; Date</b>  WV SHPO, 2022	<b>Quadrangle Name</b> Huntington  <b>Part of What Survey/FR#</b>  		



CB-2176\_Rev01

Site No.



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## Description of Building or Site

The structure functions as a fountain. The sculpture is abstract in design in which the shapes of the sculpture emerge and flair outward and upward. The sculpture is composed of linear, tubular shapes which appear hollow at the bottom of the pedestal and continue upward in a parallel, ribbed pattern, and end at various heights at the top of the piece in flared “trumpet” shapes. The sculpture is open to two sides opposite each other. The sculpture takes on an overall flower shape with the center rising, then falling outward and down to rise again to its final height. The overall shape of the sculpture is one continuous form from the bottom to the top. (See *photo 1*)

Water is ejected vertically from the inner center of the piece and is briefly collected in the lower portion of the swooping shape before falling onto a square shaped “mini pool,” then into the reflecting pool below (see *photo 2*). The interior of the reflecting pool is painted an aqua color which is reflected on the surface of the sculpture. The sculpture has a greenish patina on the exterior surfaces which was either applied or because of the weathering of the bronze. The interior areas of the sculpture have a brownish hue evident most likely because of the water minerals and its action.

The sculpture and pool are located outside of the Marshall University Student Union in a plaza landscape with trees and shrubbery. The vegetation is not close enough to affect the deterioration of the sculpture’s materials. As far as surface appearance is concerned, there is slight evidence of metallic staining on the sculpture itself, most likely due to runoff from the bronze and not interference from the public. Water does collect in recessed areas of the sculpture and base, but a preliminary assessment indicates that the sculpture is well maintained.

Alterations to this sculpture include tile replacement at least one time, and the square “mini pool” that the fountain sat on did not originally exist, rather the fountain sat directly in the water of the main pool. The exact dates of these alterations are not known. “In early 2008, the Memorial Fountain and its foundation received extensive repairs—most notably a new granite surface for the foundation; a copper catch tray; and a higher water spray, similar to the original output when the fountain was installed in 1972.”<sup>1</sup>

## Statement of Significance

This sculpture was originally commissioned to honor the lives lost in the 1970 plane crash that killed all 75 passengers, including the Marshall University football team and football staff. “This site is a memorial to the lives that were lost on that evening; to honor those men and women who made a mark in the hearts of a school, a community and a nation.”<sup>2</sup> Some sources have described this crash

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.marshall.edu/history-and-traditions/sample-page/historic-buildings-and-monuments/memorial-fountain/>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.marshall.edu/special-collections/memorial/>.

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as “the worst single air tragedy in NCAA sports history.”<sup>3</sup> Harry Bertoia would later be tasked with memorializing this event into a fountain, which was dedicated to the lives lost in the crash.

Harry Bertoia was born in San Lorenzo, Friuli, Italy on March 15, 1913. He had three siblings, “one brother Oreste, and one sister Ave. Another sister, Ada died at eighteen months old; she was the subject of one of his first paintings.”<sup>4</sup> Bertoia came to America in 1930 to attend Cass Technical High School at the age of 15, and later, the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts to study painting and drawing. He studied heavily with resident ceramist Walter Gropius. Bertoia’s designs have always been very abstract in style.

Bertoia completed over 50 public commissions throughout the country, but the Marshall University Memorial Fountain was the only work of his to be publicly commissioned in the state of West Virginia. During his career, he made other large pieces of a similar nature, such as the “Bush Form” sculpture (see *photo 5*) which was created around the same time as the Memorial Fountain<sup>5</sup>. However, Bertoia rarely made large outdoor sculptures.

Bertoia also made jewelry during the world wars because metal was needed for the war effort. Jewelry required less metal than sculptures, so he focused his efforts on it. “Materials included silver, gold, aluminum, copper, bronze, brass, cotton thread, ivory, ebony, plastic, pebbles. All were handcrafted, most during the Cranbrook era from 1937-1943, some in California up until 1950, and a few gong pendants in the 1970s.”<sup>6</sup> Bertoia won numerous architectural and artistic awards throughout his career.

Keith Dean was the architect tasked with assisting Bertoia on the Marshall University Memorial Fountain. Son of prominent Huntington architect Levi Dean, Keith Dean rose to prominence and became one of the more prominent architects to come out of Huntington, WV.

Ed Tucker & Associates evolved from the Dean firm. “Our firm continues the architectural legacy of the Dean family, who designed many of the most significant buildings in Huntington starting in 1910... Dean and Dean was formed in 1956 by S. Brooks Dean and E. Keith Dean, to carry on the architectural legacy of their father, Levi Johnson Dean after his death. Levi was the nineteenth architect to be licensed in West Virginia, opening his practice in 1910. His legacy includes some of the area’s most beautiful and ornate architectural works, including churches, county courthouses, and commercial buildings, such as those on Huntington’s Fourth Avenue. Additionally, two private residences designed by Levi are listed on the National Register of Historic Places.”<sup>7</sup>

“On November 14, 1970, Southern Airways Flight 932, a chartered jet flight from Kinston, North Carolina, to Kenova, West Virginia, clipped into some trees and crashed into a hill just short of its

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<sup>3</sup> <https://www.marshall.edu/special-collections/memorial/>.

<sup>4</sup> [Harrybertoia.org/harry/](http://Harrybertoia.org/harry/).

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.thespacedetroit.com/shop-the-space-detroit-mid-century-modern-vintage-furniture-collection-michigan-modern-chair-cabinet-lighting/harry-bertoia-sculpture-bush-form-circa-1973>.

<sup>6</sup> <https://harrybertoia.org/about-harry-bertoia-jewelry/jewelry/>.

<sup>7</sup> <https://etarch.com/heritage/>

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arrival at Huntington Tri-State Airport. All 75 passengers on the team plane were killed in the crash, including 37 members of the Marshall University football team, eight football coaches, including head coach Rick Tolley, athletic director Charlie Kautz, 25 boosters and five flight crew members.”<sup>8</sup> Every year since the crash, Marshall University honors the lives lost with a ceremony every November 14th, in which the water to the fountain is turned off until the following spring (*see photo 4*).

This sculpture was, and still is, a significant example of public art created by a nationally recognized artist. This fountain is eligible under Criterion C: Design/Construction as a significant example of public art created by nationally recognized artist Harry Bertioia.

The memorial fountain would also meet Criteria Consideration F since it is commemorative in its design, tradition, and symbolic value for Marshall University. Its aesthetic values depict that of the period of its creation (1970), as well as a great example of the abstract/organic architectural designs of Master Sculptor Harry Bertioia. Specifically, the symbolic value of this fountain is of the highest consideration, as it represents the University bringing itself together after the plane crash. This sculpture also has an area of significance in art, more specifically in that of sculpture. This fountain is also a significant example of public art created by nationally recognized artist Henry Bertioia.

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<sup>8</sup> <https://fanbuzz.com/college-football/marshall-plane-crash/>.

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## Bibliography

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Example of Bertoia’s Works. <https://www.thespacedetroit.com/shop-the-space-detroit-mid-century-modern-vintage-furniture-collection-michigan-modern-chair-cabinet-lighting/harry-bertoia-sculpture-bush-form-circa-1973>.

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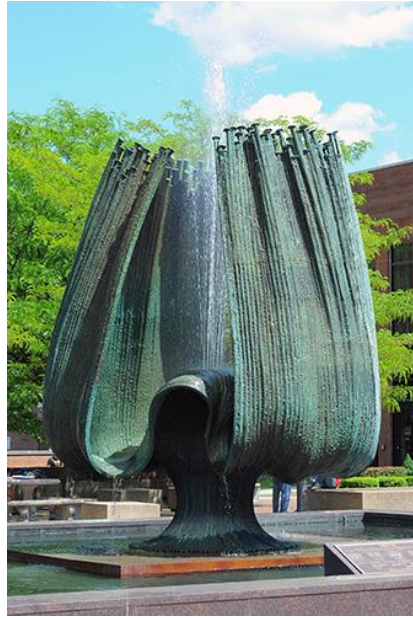
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## Supplemental Photos



*Photo 1—Memorial Fountain with water running*

*Sculpture Dimensions—H: 13' W: 8' D: 7'6"*

*Base Dimensions (Reflecting Pool)—H: 18" W: 26' D: 26'*



*Photo 2—Memorial Fountain showing reflecting pool*

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Photo 3—November 12, 1972-Fountain dedication; pre-square “mini pool”; fountain sits directly in the reflecting pool below

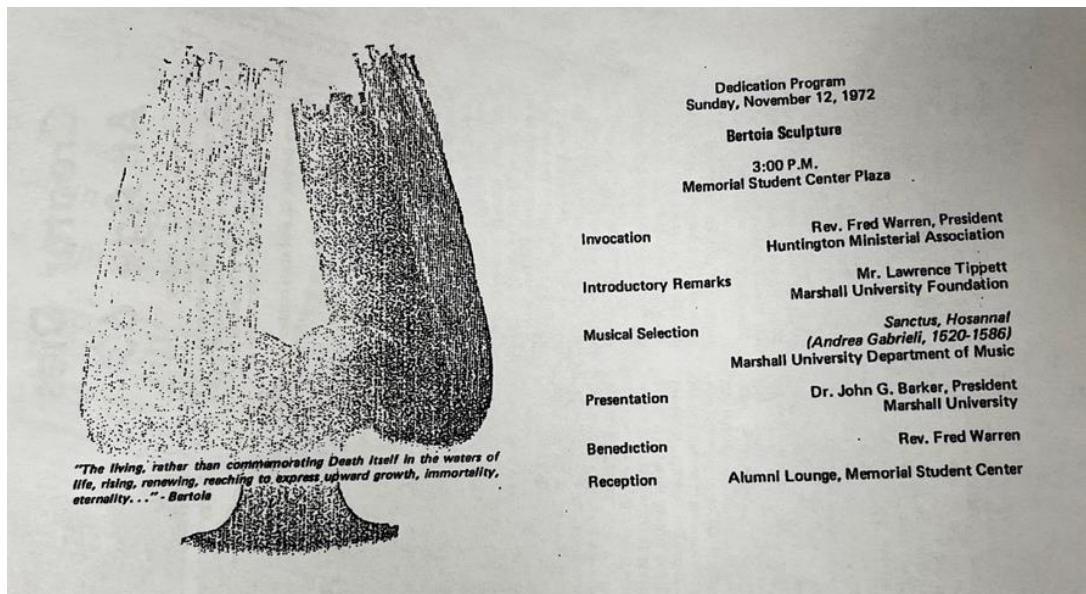


Photo 4—Program from the Dedication on Sunday, November 12, 1972

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*Photo 5—Harry Bertoia Sculpture “Bush Form” c. 1973*