

RAYMOND KASKEY



*First Study for the WWII Memorial.*



*Federal Eagle, Gilded Bronze, Edition: 250.*



*Justice Delayed, Justice Denied, Bronze, Edition: 250.*

# RAYMOND KASKEY

American Sculptor

Raymond Kaskey is the consummate professional whose career has been marked by a series of remarkably successful and brilliantly designed public commissions. With little formal training in the craft of modeling, save for time spent in Italy observing the classical and Renaissance masters, Kaskey has produced a body of work that ranks him as one of America's best figurative sculptors. From the national accolades showered on his hammered-copper Portlandia (1985) for the Public Services Building, Portland, to the impressive allegorical sculptural program, conceived and executed under the guidance of architect Friedrich St. Florian for the National World War II Memorial in Washington, Kaskey has demonstrated an ability to address problems and find solutions on each of his major projects. He is a tenacious problem-solver in the contemporary urban cityscape.

Kaskey began his career as an architect, earning a Bachelor's degree from Carnegie Mellon University and a



*Tricentennial, 1997.*

Master's degree in environmental design from Yale University. As an assistant professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Maryland's College Park campus from 1969 to 1976, Kaskey also had a small domestic practice. When he was denied tenure, an interest in architectural ornament launched a career in figurative sculpture, with a special concentration on large-scale projects.

His success is evident by the multiple honors bestowed upon him such as two Henry Hering Prizes (1986 and 1993) from the National Sculpture Society and the one-person exhibit at the Montpelier-Prince Georges County Arts Center, Laurel, MD (1997). But the best measure of Kaskey's talent are the recurring commissions he has received from his frequent General Services Administration competitions to his direct appointment by some of the country's leading architectural firms.

What is impressive as one enters his spacious and unpretentious Brentwood studio is the quantity and quality of the work he has made in just over twenty-five years. Shelves and cupboards are filled with sketches, figure studies, maquettes for projects won as well as designs for jobs lost. Clays, painted and white plasters, even bronzes are in their proper positions, as though everything has a purpose in Kaskey's evolving and changing career. In the practice of his craft, he seems to look for challenges and relishes the well-thought out resolutions. And at the core of this exploration is the human figure, often in a unexpected pose or with an exaggerated gesture that demands of the viewer a fresh look or careful inspection. Kaskey's sculptures, in large and small scale, demand participation and expect an attentive effort while giving much reward in return.

As Kaskey begins to produce more gallery-scale works that began their artistic life as early stage design



*Bather*, Bronze, Edition: 250.



*Hand of NOAA*, Bronze, Edition: 20.



*Horse Study*, from *Tricentennial*,  
Bronze, Edition: 20.

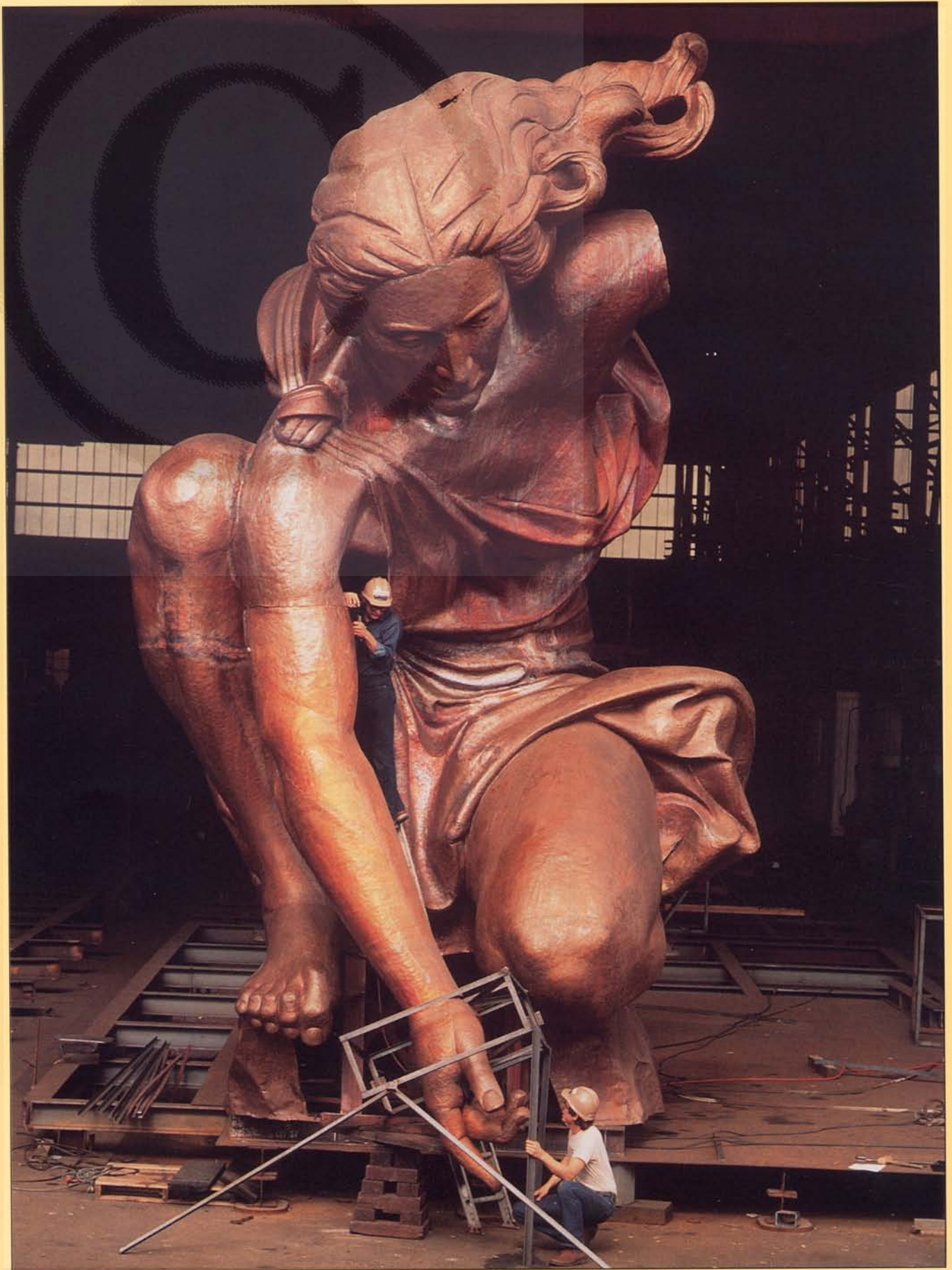
ideas, the more apparent will be the triumphs of his major commissions. The decorative embellishments for the Harold Washington Public Library in Chicago (1990) are original in concept, properly subservient to the architecture and brilliantly executed. The pairs of male and female Lions at the entrances to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington (1991) provide the proper allegorical message of courage and the right visual element, respecting the elegant architectural treatment by Davis Buckley.

From the onset, Kaskey's wife, Sherri, has shared in his work, often serving as his principal studio model. The sculptor was interested primarily in gesture and pose rather than anatomical correctness or surface accuracy. The wonderful progression from Portlandia, to Iphigenia study (1990), to the Shreveport figure of Justice (1993), and finally to the Alexandria Federal Courthouse allegory of Justice Delayed, Justice Denied

(1995) mark the finest collection of female figures executed by an American sculptor in the last half of the 20th Century.

Throughout Kaskey's oeuvre there are the unexpected surprises—the seated portrait of Pittsburgh Steeler owner Art Rooney (1990), the Boundary Groups marking the four corners of the National Building Museum in Washington (1998), and a sketch model for the Federal Eagle (1997)—each exemplifies the thoroughness of Raymond Kaskey's commitment to innovation in opening people's eyes to the real world.

— Michael Richman



Fabrication of the second largest statue in the United States, Raymond Kaskey's *Portlandia*, 1985.