

Holocaust Memorial Dedication in Scranton on December 12

Caryl Pickett leans over the dull bronze figure of a tabby, carefully and meticulously examining its rough surface to decide what kind of patina, or finish, it will be coated with. She is at the Tallix Art Foundry in upstate New York, a huge, cavernous, airplane hanger-sized industrial plant that produces hundreds of bronzes each year, from miniature figurines to life-size statues to tree-tall monuments, created by distinguished artists for museums and galleries throughout the world. It was Tallix that Caryl chose to cast her most ambitious and meaningful work, "Lest We Forget."

As its name implies, *Lest We Forget* is a memorial to the six million Jews lost in The Holocaust.

Caryl, a former New Yorker who now resides in Waverly, has been creating sculpture since age twelve. "I love the touching, the textured feeling in my hands," she explains. "I can't tell you what it does for me. When I can create a large piece like *Lest We Forget*, it's thrilling, it's exciting. The work takes over my inner being. I become very emotional, that I've been given such an extraordinary gift, that I can do something with my hands that other people can't."

The idea of creating a permanent memorial to remind future generations of Jews about the horrors of The Holocaust was originally conceived by the Scranton JCC three years ago. A select number of distinguished artists were invited to present sketches and maquettes (miniature models) of their vision of how best to commemorate The Holocaust. Caryl's concept of a naked, emaciated Holocaust victim who had lost everything and everyone, alongside a rabbi with outstretched hands to signify hope, was unanimously chosen by the selection committee. This was neither surprising nor unexpected, since many of Caryl's bronze sculptures grace synagogues, hotels, colleges, concert halls, and homes of private collectors. In fact, one of Caryl's best-known and most dramatic pieces, of an androgynous figure dancing joyfully with the Torah that commemorated the 150th anniversary of Temple Shaaray Tefila in Manhattan, was chosen from among 225 submissions.

However, the JCC project stalled about two years ago, from a lack of funds. That's when Gilbert Weinburger, a local philanthropist and Caryl's long-time companion, agreed to assume all costs associated with the project. "I want people to see that it's really a beautiful piece of art," Gilbert explains. "That it will be forever. I want people to see a piece that says when you are downtrodden, you will



eventually be uplifted. I'm doing it because we want to put something here to remind future generations of The Holocaust. In addition, I'm being selfish in that the work also commemorates the memory of my four deceased brothers." Gilbert is a native of Northeast Pennsylvania who, along with his brothers, served in the U.S. military during World War II.

The unveiling of *Lest We Forget* will be at the Jewish Community Center at 1:30 pm on Sunday, December 12th, at 601 Jefferson Avenue in Scranton. The public is cordially invited to attend.

- by Daniel Grata
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Lest
We
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