

The Governor--In Bronze and on Film

A Candid Camera Recorded in Full

Detail the Making of the McKeldin

Bust that's Now in the State House

Photos by Wilbur H. Hunter, Jr.

Story by Kenneth B. Sawyer

THAT'S Dad, all right," said 16-year-old Theodore McKeldin, Jr., when a bronze bust of the Governor was unveiled recently in Maryland's State House.

How it became "Dad" is a story that normally could be told only in words. But in this case it can be told even more vividly in pictures.

When a group of Governor McKeldin's friends commissioned the Baltimore sculptor Reuben R. Kramer to make the bust there duly took place a series of ten weekly sittings during which a plaster model was made.

Present at all of those sittings was a third man--Wilbur H. Hunter, Jr., director of the Peale Museum, a friend of both principals and an expert amateur

photographer. And as work on the bust progressed Mr. Hunter made a camera record of it. Standing quietly in the shadows of the Eutaw place studio, he took literally hundreds of unposed pictures of the sculptor and his subject, and of the work in progress.

It is a selection of those pictures that appear on these two pages.

THE insights gained from such a record are notable: Kramer is perpetually tense and active, the Governor good-humored and at ease, the lump of plastecene, of which the preliminary state was modeled, emerging gradually into a remarkable likeness.

Kramer began the work by making numerous pen-and-ink sketches from photographs of the Governor. He then built an armature, or foundation, of wire on which to mass the plastic clay with which he would model from life.

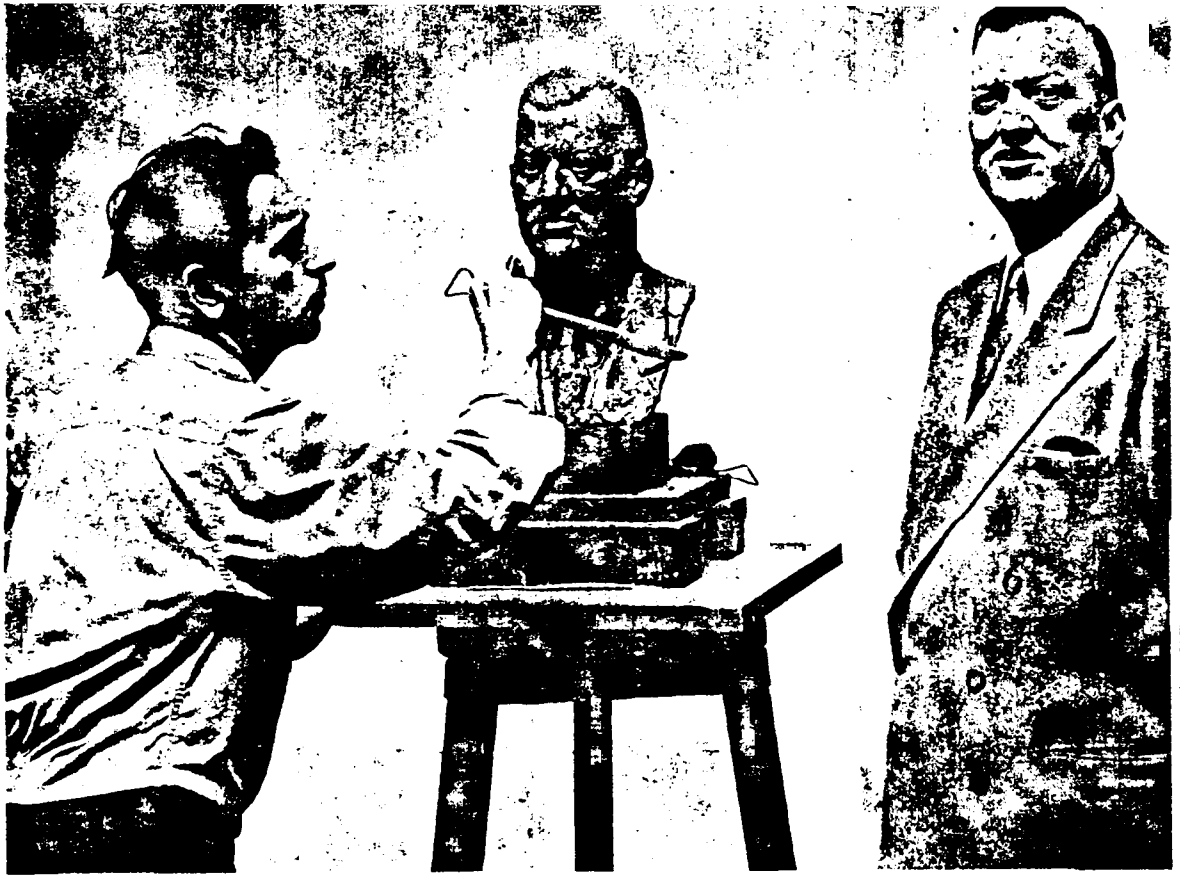
AFTER that began the tense and arduous task of modeling the underlying structure of the head, the subtle configuration of features; of capturing the play of expression across the eyes. Like every good sculptor,

Eve. Sun

JUL 7 1955



PORTRAIT IN BRONZE—Governor McKeldin poses here with a head sculpture of himself, the work of the Maryland artist, Reuben Kramer. The sculpture was commissioned by a group of friends of Maryland's chief executive.



Reuben R. Kramer, the Baltimore sculptor whose bust of Governor McKeldin was recently placed in the State House, touches up the plastecene model during the last of ten sittings at his studio.

Kramer was more interested in capturing a lively image of his subject than in creating an exact piece of taxidermy. The mobility of Mr. McKeldin's features, with their wide range of expression, was a severe challenge.

After the plastecene model was completed to Kramer's satisfaction, he took a plaster cast from it, and this, ribbed in iron, was the model from which the finished bronze was cast. The plaster mold was sent to a foundry in New York, where the molten bronze was poured.

Unlike most sculptors, Kramer rejects foundry-finished sculpture. The difficult process of smoothing, filling and refining he insists on doing himself.

DURING the ten weeks of sittings, the artist and the Governor had ample time to become great friends. Of Governor McKeldin, Mr. Kramer says:

"A sincere man with great energy, at ease under all circumstances. He read and dictated correspondence, wrote and rehearsed speeches, quipped and chatted amiably. He has a warm and earthy sense of humor and is the most relaxed subject I ever had."

The Governor was no less enthusiastic. He said:

"Both Mr. and Mrs. Kramer are such fascinating people that one can't help being at ease with them. As for the portrait, Mr. Kramer is a true perfectionist—it looked finished to me after the first hour. I found sitting for it a tremendously interesting experience."

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Governor McKeldin taking his first look at the completed bust, which was commissioned by a group of his friends. He called Mr. Kramer "a perfectionist."



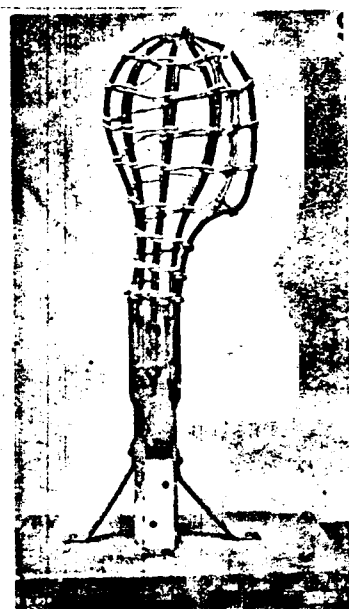
Mr. Kramer at work smoothing, filling and refining the bronze as it came from a New York foundry. Unlike most sculptors, the Baltimorean insists on doing this himself.



At top, the plaster cast; at bottom, the bronze from it.



The model in its "shins," which divide it into two sections for the making of a plaster cast.



This wire "armature" was the starting point for the bust.



This is the way the model of the bust looked after the first hour's sitting.



Two views of the completed plastecene model — the result of ten hours' work.