

Honoring Louie in Bronze

Artist Who Honed Skills at Cathedral to Sculpt Celebrated Comptroller

By LISA FRIEDMAN
Special to The Washington Post

Virtually everyone in Maryland politics has a story to tell about the legendary state comptroller Louis L. Goldstein. His uncanny memory for names and faces. The political acumen masked by his folksy "Call me Louie" manner. And those gold coins, the ones he ordered by the tens of thousands, inscribed with Goldstein's trademark, "God Bless y'all real good."

Now it is the job of sculptor Jay Hall Carpenter to boil down countless anecdotes about the popular 10-term tax collector and recast them into bronze.

Carpenter, 39, the former sculptor in residence at the Washington National Cathedral, was commissioned in

May to create a statue of Goldstein. The artist never met Goldstein, who died last year at age 85 with six decades of public service under his belt. But like thousands of others, Carpenter said, "I'd seen his name on my tax information every year of my life."

In preparing for the sculpture, though, he studied photographs and videos to capture Goldstein's movements, facial expressions and gestures. He also talked with friends and acquaintances gathering stories and trying, as Carpenter describes it, to "capture a telling moment in time."

The result is a figure of Goldstein striding purposefully, carrying one of his celebrated coins.

Plans for a Goldstein tribute began last year when Lutherville artist Frederick Kail proposed a memorial.

Robert L. Swann, Goldstein's successor and now deputy comptroller, hired Kail for the job. After being questioned by reporters on his decision to use a sole-source contract—exactly the type Goldstein was known for scrutinizing—Swann decided the statue proposal should go out to bid.

The Maryland Commission on Artistic Property, which oversees all state art, took over the search and solicited proposals from sculptors statewide. Twenty-three artists submitted proposals, and a committee voted on five finalists. The choice of Carpenter was unanimous.

"When you saw it, you said, 'That's it,'" said Louisa

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Panel Chose Design of Goldstein Statue From 23 Proposals

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Goldstein, the Goldstein family spokeswoman, who served on the commission along with her brother and sister. All three shared a vote in deciding who would fashion their father's image.

"It was just something about the way he captured the way my father looked. The smile, the eyes," she said of Carpenter's proposal. "He

tried to capture the dignity of my father's office and also his friendliness."

It's what Carpenter said he was going for. In researching Goldstein, the artist said, he tried to do what he does with all portrait sculpture: develop a concept of the subject's nature.

"The challenge in portrait sculpture is not to create a likeness," he once said. "The challenge is to cap-

ture the personality."

Carpenter has created busts of several other public figures, including the father of Tupperware, Earl Tupper, and actress Pat Carroll. But he is best known for his work at the Washington National Cathedral, where he spent more than 22 years creating gargoyles and angels. His first piece—a clay gargoyle committing suicide that he

the cathedral's west facade. Since then, Carpenter has designed more than 300 figures for the church. He also is working on a dozen statues of saints and biblical figures for Saint Anne's Church in Barrington, National Cathedral, where he spent more than 22 years creating gargoyles and angels. His first piece—a clay gargoyle committing suicide that he

stein Treasury Building and the Income Tax Building in Annapolis.

A portrait of Goldstein, now in the lobby of the state treasury building, also was recently unveiled. Lawmakers discussed last year creating a "Louis L. Goldstein Day," and the contents of the former comptroller's office are in storage awaiting the day when they will be reassembled as a museum piece.

"Everyone wants to remember

him," said Carol Borchert, curator of the Maryland Commission on Artistic Property.

What would Louie think of all the fuss?

Swann said his old friend and boss had enough of the politician in him to appreciate public tributes.

"You have to have a certain amount of ego to be a politician," Swann said. "He would be very happy."



BY ANDREW HARRIS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

"The challenge is to capture the personality," says Jay Hall Carpenter, whose design for a statue of longtime comptroller Louis L. Goldstein was a committee's unanimous choice.