



HUGH ANDREW SHAFFER

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Arizona Commission on the Arts
Attn: Governor's Arts Awards
417 West Roosevelt Street
Phoenix, AZ 85003-1326

James Nathan Muir has been known to me since we were cadets together at West Point. After spending two years at the Academy, James departed to pursue other interests, but still managed to serve his country in the US Air Force, and to take with him a fierce determination to live by the ideals and truths of West Point. His life and his art reflect his deep and abiding belief in the ethics of West Point and its motto, "Duty Honor, Country."

James has accomplished something very unique in the world of art and in the world of West Point. He is the first, and will probably be the only, artist who, having attended the Academy, later produced a sculpture to stand on the hallowed grounds of West Point. As part of the Class of 1968 gift to the Academy, the class commissioned James to produce the sculpture of Thomas Jefferson to stand in the rotunda of the newly completed cadet library, Jefferson Hall. The bronze sculpture was to depict our third President of the United States contemplating the decision to sign the bill into law which would create the Military Academy at West Point, a move which Jefferson had opposed for years. Yet, with the stroke of his pen, Jefferson created an American icon, national treasure, and one of the foremost academic institutions in the country, if not in the world. The significance of this work is exponentially magnified by the importance, prestige, tradition, and value of the institution where it now resides.

Cadets will see the sculpture every time they enter Jefferson Hall. Academy Staff, faculty, and visitors will all view this piece whenever they enter the library. The sculpture has already become the symbol of the new West Point Library, and virtually no article has been published about the new library without including a picture of James' magnificent work. The cadets have really taken to Mr. Jefferson, and even managed to dress him in a "12th Man" tee shirt prior to this year's Army Navy game. Everyone who examines this work marvels at the detail captured in it from the shoe laces, to the quill pen, his ring, the veins on his hands and the look on the face of Jefferson in his later years.

I therefore strongly urge you to favorably consider James Nathan Muir as a most worthy recipient of the Governor's Art Award.

Sincerely,

