

THE
CATHOLIC
FOUNDATION

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North Texas Artist Robert Opel's "Wings of Joy" Wins Catholic Foundation's 2022 Art On The Plaza Competition

Monarch butterfly painting symbolizes the exuberance and joy of local performers, artists and musicians in Dallas Arts District



DALLAS – The Catholic Foundation has named Robert Opel of Garland, Texas, the 17th winner of its annual Art On The Plaza competition. Opel's artwork, "Wings Of Joy," was unveiled today on the 28-by-9-foot public art wall in The Catholic Foundation Plaza and will remain on display for one year in the downtown Dallas Arts District.

In addition to the public art recognition, Opel received \$2,500 as this year's winner. Artist Lori Cusick's painting, "Shine and Be Colorful," was selected as honorable mention in this year's competition and she received \$500. Before the winner and honorable mention entries were selected, all submissions from Texas artists were reviewed by a panel of highly respected members of the local arts community.

According to Opel, "Wings Of Joy" symbolizes the exuberance and joy of local performers, artists and musicians in the Dallas Arts District.

"Millions of monarch butterflies pass through North Texas every year as they migrate between Canada and the northern U.S. on the way to Mexico where they spend winter. In late March, the butterflies are back in the Dallas area as they return north to breed," said J. Matthew Kramer, President and CEO of The Catholic Foundation.

“But thanks to Robert’s vision, visitors to the downtown Dallas Arts District will always find the biggest monarch in Texas at The Catholic Foundation Plaza for one full year until the next winning artwork is displayed in October 2023,” added Kramer.

Opel believes spirituality and joy are very much one in the same. He also believes that the message of Jesus was of love, beauty and joy and is what awaits believers in heaven.

“Monarch butterflies are the acrobats of the sky,” says Opel. “Monarchs use wind in ways we don’t understand. It doesn’t make sense that they can fly, but they do.”

Opel, who moved to Texas as a teenager with his family, refers to the town in which he was raised of Windsor, Mo. as being like a Norman Rockwell painting - a place where everyone knew one another and lived a happy life.

In Missouri, he spent a considerable amount of time on his grandparent’s farm where he learned to draw designs on the fabric his grandmother quilted. There, Robert fell in love with birds and flying insects that he would later doodle with the help of his father.

As a high school student in Conroe, just north of Houston, Robert became an Eagle Scout, reflecting his many talents. He honed his artistic skills in Denton where he earned a bachelor’s degree in advertising art from the University of North Texas.

After college, Robert became a commercial artist and worked for many years as a graphic designer before he joined the Dallas Museum of Art. At the DMA, Robert not only teaches people of all ages about art as a docent, but he sells art and gifts in the museum retail store and creates commissioned art pieces in his home studio.

Located on the north side of the Cathedral Santuario de Guadalupe and across from the Meyerson Symphony Center, The Catholic Foundation Plaza was dedicated in 2006 as a gift to the Dallas community from The Catholic Foundation to commemorate its 50th anniversary.

About the Catholic Foundation

The Catholic Foundation is a trusted giving vehicle for the Catholic community. Chartered in 1955, the Foundation was founded by a group of dedicated Catholic laymen with a vision that extended far beyond the charitable needs of the moment. The Foundation has spent decades building a strong community, helping donors fulfill their charitable goals, and preserving the founders’ vision and philanthropic legacy. Over time, the Foundation has provided more than \$250 million in grants to religious, charitable and educational organizations. At the end of 2021, the Foundation managed more than \$300 million in assets. Today, the Foundation houses more than 500 charitable funds and trusts. For additional information about The Catholic Foundation, call 972-661-9792 or visit www.catholicfoundation.com.