

**Restoration of the fountain**  
*Light Dispelling Darkness*

**Title:** *Light Dispelling Darkness*  
**Artist:** Waylande Gregory  
**Materials:** Cast Concrete & Terra Cotta  
**Date:** 1938

**History of the Fountain**

*Light Dispelling Darkness* was designed by sculptor, Waylande Gregory in 1937 and erected in Roosevelt Park, in Edison, in the spring of 1938. The fountain was part of the New Jersey Federal Arts Projects under the Works Progress Administration. The fountain honors the achievements of Thomas Edison's triumph over darkness with the electric light. It also incorporates Gregory's concept of light and knowledge dispelling ignorance in society.

## **Artist Information**

Waylande Gregory (1905 - 1971) was an accomplished ceramic sculptor who moved from Michigan to New Jersey in the 1930's to be near the thriving local ceramic industry. Gregory gained a prominent status through commissions from celebrities such as Henry Fonda and Albert Einstein. He was best known for creating large ceramic sculptures, including a fountain for the 1939 Worlds Fair. During the 1950's Gregory was a guest host on the NBC television program, *Ding Dong School*, in which he taught children how to create artwork.

## **Fountain Specifications**

The fountain consists of a cast concrete center topped with a terra cotta globe rising from the center of a 40-foot diameter pool. The center pillar is decorated with three high relief sculptures depicting science, labor/industry and a world peace conference. Six buttresses radiate from the center pillar. Each buttress has a brilliantly glazed terra cotta sculpture representing the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse as well as two additional sculptures that represent Greed and Materialism. Water and light elements are also design concepts of the fountain.

## **Deterioration of the Fountain**

This monumental sculpture has been damaged over the years and today is in need of restoration. Vandalism, decay and the environment have taken their toll on the artwork. Spalling and surface loss has given the fountain an unsightly look and has opened up the sculpture to further deterioration. The center pillar has also received damage from salts in the cement. In addition, several sections have cracked, allowing water to infiltrate into the center of the pillar.

## **Restoration of the Fountain**

*Light Dispelling Darkness* has received funding for a full and professional restoration through the initiative of Freeholder Director David B. Crabiel, Freeholder Deputy Director Stephen J. "Pete" Dalina and the Middlesex County Board of Chosen Freeholders. A partial grant from *Save Outdoor Sculpture!* will also aid in the fountain restoration. The Middlesex County Parks Department and the Middlesex County Cultural and Heritage Commission have been coordinating the restoration effort with a team of professional engineers and artists.

## **Current Restoration**

The restoration process has begun with the dismantling of several sculpted elements of the fountain. The terra cotta sculptures of Death, War, Famine, Pestilence, Materialism and Greed have all been removed and taken off site for restoration. Using early photographs, models and written information from Waylande Gregory's estate, the County is restoring the fountain to the artist's original intent of operation.

For further information regarding the restoration or history of *Light Dispelling Darkness* please contact Mark Nonestied, Assistant Curator.

## **Middlesex County Cultural & Heritage Commission**

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