

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

How do I acknowledge all the people who helped to bring this project to life? It's not possible to mention or thank everyone involved, so forgive me if you do not see imprinted here the gratitude held in my heart. Trust that your contributions are known and appreciated.

I'll start with Sarah Kleinman, who was invaluable to this book, providing the impetus for its publication. As a Virginia Commonwealth University Art History graduate student, she spent a part of one hot summer in Richmond, Virginia organizing a scattered assortment of photographs, aging Kodachrome slides, gallery invitations and exhibition reviews spanning half a century into a meaningful archival history of my work.

Early recognition and encouragement are important to any artist and I am indebted to Jack Blanton for his enthusiastic appreciation and promotion of my work. Through him, I acquired significant commissions that were the building blocks of my career. Thanks to Jack, my time in Italy studying foundry techniques resulted in the future prominent placement of sculptures that helped to solidify my reputation. Not only did he secure commissions and exposure for me, Jack collected my work.

My good friend of 50 years, artist Harvey McWilliams and his partner Ken Coleman, amassed a large and diversified collection of my work. I am grateful for their long and enduring support as well as their unforgettable dinner parties that brought talented and interesting people together over many, many years.

Friends since I first arrived in Richmond in 1967, Henrietta and Pinkney Near offered genuine and gracious support over the decades. They were the bedrock of Richmond's artistic community and hosted many inspiring gatherings both at the Virginia Museum of Fine Arts and in their home. Thanks to Henrietta's generosity, my "Untitled Totem," created for her garden, now lives in the VMFA Sculpture Garden.

Ambassador Thomas Wilson Beale, whom I met in Jamaica during my Peace Corps days, remained a close and influential friend until his death in 1997. He provided guidance and encouragement at the beginning of my career, widening my horizons through international travels. In addition, Tom commissioned works that gave me artistic freedom to explore new paths and connected me with Franz Bader and Sidney Mickelson whose Washington DC galleries provided important exposure for my work.

Any artist would envy a collector such as Kip Kephart, who offered me an annual commission for 20 years to create bronzes of my choice. What a gift and what a special incentive to experiment in new directions.

My parents Hethie and Ernest Peacock brought me up in a world of adventure and left me an inheritance of freedom. Also, they gave me two brothers--Roland and Ernest Franklin—who were my best friends. An accomplished photographer with a terrific eye, Roland photographed many of my bronzes throughout the years.

While not always involved in my work, my former wife Sylvia and my daughter Corelia sacrificed a lot as I pursued my dreams and my life as an artist. Our experiences –good and bad—were enriched by being together.

Certain friends have shared aesthetic and mind-expanding experiences. For years they've served as a balancing pole for my high-wire teetering. Tom Robbins showed me the tight rope while my non-biological brother Ryland Fleet, with his technical advice and sense of daring, both rattled and supported the balancing pole. Fellow artists William Kendrick, Sam Forrest, William Fletcher Jones, Warren Cooke and Kevin Brown added a spiritual spark to our experiences over many years. Guy Asbury, Janet Cameron, and Cameron Cardy each added something unexpected to the simmering stone soup of my life.

My appreciation goes beyond a simple expression of thanks to Jennie and Walter Dotts for their advocacy, perseverance, and educated good sense in reviewing my convoluted manuscript and scrambled photographs. An uncountable number of Saturday afternoons, after-dinner phone calls and road trips were spent sorting through dates, photos, and files. After three years of poring over materials, the project is finished. All of this went beyond the call of friendship or duty. I am more than grateful and not really satisfied with a simple, over-used expression: "Special thanks." Their earnest hard work deserves more.

Lastly, I want to offer my heartfelt appreciation to my clever wordsmith friend Tom Erhardt, who edited this book, and Linda Sawyers, who thoughtfully read the manuscript and recommended changes. Leni Price, who designed this book kept the project going with professionalism, patience and an excellent eye for interpreting and presenting my work to those readers who will only know me through these pages.

In the spirit of recognizing contributions, please know that any shortcomings or faults herein should be credited to me.