

SPOTLIGHT

Sculptor's symbols bring classic tribute to heroes

This monthly feature will serve to explain the efforts now under way to replace the Civil War monument and statue of Fame in Sewickley Cemetery.

This effort is borne by Citizens for Soldiers, a group of dedicated residents of the Sewickley Valley, but the success of the project is dependent upon the support of all the people of the valley.

As a nation we seem intent on showing support for our troops, regardless of our opinion of the war.

Flags are prominently displayed from houses and businesses, while countless vehicles sport magnetic ribbons in yellow or red, white and blue. One local group, Citizens for Soldiers, continues to work towards creating a permanent tribute to our soldiers by replacing the Civil War Monument and creating a Veteran's Plaza in the Sewickley Cemetery.

Is there better evidence of our support than to show that we honor all soldiers who have fallen?

More than 1,090,000 have died in combat or combat related events, according to the U.S. Department of Veteran Affairs. What is the price of an appropriate monument? What symbols should be used?

Memorials are a way to set history in stone and help us remember. "Set in stone," suggests that an idea, fact or event has been placed in its final form, and monuments are ideas set in stone.

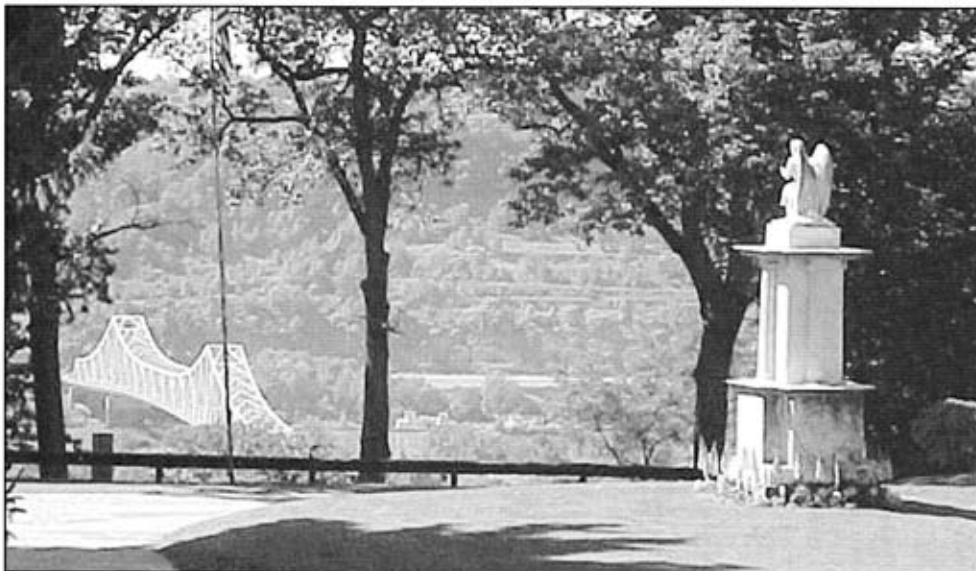
Memorials attempt to place fact, or understanding of history beyond dispute; these men and women were heroes, they should be remembered and their sacrifice should be honored.

Successful monuments make clear statements, and earn (although not always at first) wide agreement. Ultimately they inspire us with both their message and design.

By examining the aesthetics and the symbolism used by Isaac Broome, the sculptor, who created the Civil War Monument, we can begin to understand his talents and the remarkable value of this work. With that knowledge we gain appreciation of both the monument and the efforts to create a replica in lasting granite.

Dedicated in July of 1866, one year after the war, this monument is one of the first erected to the Civil War in Allegheny County, and may in fact be the first.

Two impressive aspects of the Civil War Monument are the speed with which



FAME KEEPS her constant watch over the Sewickley Valley from the cemetery grounds.

it was erected, and it was accomplished, impressively, without making sacrifices in size or design.

The Civil War Monument at the Sewickley Cemetery stands nearly 21 feet tall, and can be divided into three distinct sections; the base, the support shaft and the statue.

The cross shaped base section provides 12 panels which Broome masterfully uses. Each of the four main sides of the base contains an inscription placed within a carved wreath.

The wreath is symbolic of an oversized crown and rightfully represents glory. The other eight panels on the base section feature carved upside down torches. An extinguished torch has long been representative of death. Broome included that visual representation prominently throughout the base section.

The rectangular support shaft features Greek Ionic columns on each of the four sides. The Ionic order of columns is the second of three Greek orders that were used in all of the ancient Greek architecture that we can see today.

Ionic columns feature a fluted shaft that rests on an elaborate curving base, and the capital has two spiral volutes

that resemble partly unrolled scrolls. Although we cannot be sure why Broome used these four columns, it is interesting to note that the Four Freedoms Monument in Evansville, Ind., uses four Ionic columns to represent four of our most beloved freedoms: freedom of speech, freedom of religion, freedom from fear, and freedom from oppression.

These columns help support the carved capstone that provides weather protection from the elements and creates a visual separation from the statue above.

The top of the monument displays a 5-foot carved statue of Fame, the Greek goddess, holding a trumpet in one hand and a laurel crown in the other. Although statues of soldiers and obelisks were predominately used in Civil War Monuments created later, Broome led the way, instead, with a larger-than-life female figure.

This statue reflects the continuing mid-19th century influence in sculpture of the School of Rome, the intent of which was to uplift humanity through the inspiration of perfect grace and beauty. Broome chose to create the statue kneeling on one knee to show respect and homage to the fallen heroes.

The laurel crown represents Fame's desire to bestow glory upon the soldiers, her trumpet a harbinger of resurrection.

With Isaac Broome providing such a perfect model to work from, Citizens for Soldiers avoided controversy over design and has been able to focus most of its energy on obtaining funding for the project.

Citizens for Soldiers' efforts to date have produced donations of almost \$100,000, but more help is necessary. Recreating this work of art and providing a lasting tribute to our soldiers is not an economical endeavor, but like the freedom soldiers defend, it is worth the effort.

Tax-deductible donations may be sent to: Citizens for Soldiers, Fame Fund, P.O. Box 293, Sewickley, PA 15143.

No donation is too small or too large.

Citizens for Soldiers is a Pennsylvania not-for-profit organization. It has a 501(c) (3) designation from the IRS.

The committee meets bimonthly and welcomes your interest and support.

Visit www.CitizensForSoldiers.org, or call 412-980-6013.