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Symbols return to library steps

BY STEVE SMITH Staff Writer

Originally light fixtures, two globes had adorned the front entrance to the Rockville Public Library for more than 100 years, until the fall of 2007, when they were stolen.



Last Tuesday, a ceremony took place, with several town officials, library trustees and staff, state Reps. Joan Lewis and Claire Janowski and state Sen. Tony Guglielmo, to dedicate the replacement globes now sitting atop the same pedestals.

Bob Hurd, president of the library's trustees, said the bronze spheres, replicas of the ones that were there, were replaced with the help of the library's insurance and the efforts of local architect and sculptor Roger DiTarando.

"I met Roger through the RDA committee . He was able to pull off the recreation of these globes in bronze," Hurd said. "If you are not familiar with his work, you should get familiar

with his work."

The original globe artist, was part of an artists community in Cornish, New Hampshire.

A campaign was launched by the Tolland County Chamber of Commerce to raise funds for a reward leading to the capture of the theft perpetrators, but since no one was ever caught, those funds went to pay the insurance deductible .

Rockville Bank was the depository of the funds, which Chamber Executive Director Candice Corcione said was more than \$1,500, raised primarily from donations by Chamber members.

The copper globes, according to DiTarando and library staff, would not have netted the thieves more than a few hundred dollars.

Mayor Jason McCoy said it was "very sad" when the globes were taken.

"I feel like those globes and the library are symbols for all of us of the public's access to knowledge," McCoy said. "Rich or poor, you have equal access [to the library], and that is access to the world."

McCoy thanked everyone for their efforts and donations for seeing the project through.

"It's not the biggest issue in the world, but when a symbol is taken, I think it creates a problem with the spirit of the people in the community," he said. "I'm so happy this is finally completed."

"Now the building is complete again," said Library Director Donna Enman. "It's a good feeling. It's permanence."

"We're restoring a part of the history of the community. For people to take them away – really the whole community missed them."

DiTarando said he has works throughout the state, including a sculpture on the UConn campus, and two large weather vanes at the Tunxis Plantation Golf Course in Farmington.

He said he had a fuzzy picture of the original globes, and had measured the green ring left on top of the pillars where they sat.

From that, he was able to calculate the dimensions.

"I sculpted the three fish [which form the "feet" of the spheres] in clay," he said. "I made molds and had them cast. The rest of it was all fabricated from sheet rods. I hammered them, bent them and welded them."

DiTarando said it only took him about two months to complete the entire project.

Security cameras are installed, keeping constant watch over the globes, to deter anyone from stealing them again.

DiTarando said he used stainless steel bolts and an epoxy resin to fasten the globes to the pillars, and the composite is much heavier, making them substantially more difficult to remove.

"I'm very pleased to be part of the project," he said. "It's the perfect project for me."

See DiTarando's other artworks at his Web site, www.ditarando.com, and visit the library's Web site at www.biblio.org/rockville.

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