

The Statues At Independence Square

The four bronze statues at Independence Square were a gift to the City of Charlotte by the Queens Table, a private philanthropic group, most of whose members choose to remain anonymous. The statues were created by Washington, D.C. sculptor Raymond Kaskey, who also sculpted the statue of Queen Charlotte at Charlotte/Douglas International Airport.

The figures of Commerce, Industry and Transportation represent elements of the past which have contributed to Charlotte's growth as a major commercial center. The three figures are all looking toward the fourth figure, The Future.

Each of the statues weighs about 5,000 pounds, is attached to a granite base, and is about 25 feet tall, including the base. The cost of the four statues was about \$500,000. They were erected in November 1995 and were dedicated in a ceremony at noon on November 27, 1995.

The four figures are:



Commerce

The principal figure is a nineteenth century prospector panning for gold, representing the gold rush which followed the discovery gold near Charlotte in 1799. He empties his pan over a secondary figure, a likeness of former Federal Reserve Chairman Alan Greenspan, representing the banking industry.

Industry

Industry is represented by a woman millworker, recalling Charlotte's early textile factories. The secondary figure at her knees represents the children who labored alongside their parents in the mills during the days before enactment of child labor laws. The child's face is a self-portrait of the sculptor, Raymond Kaskey, as a child.



Transportation

An African American man represents the builders of the first railroads in Charlotte, begun in the 1850s, leading to the city's status as a transportation hub. The number, 1401, commemorates a steam locomotive named "Charlotte" which once pulled trains through the city. A second element picturing an eagle with feathers encircling its back represents air transportation.

Future

As the focal point of the four-cornered composition, the future is represented by a mother and child. The mother figure emerges from a bower of branches, leaves and flowers of the dogwood, which is the state flower of North Carolina. Stretched between the branches is a hornets nest to make it more specific to Charlotte.

