

'Pi Bench' sculpture celebrates math, art

By Marcie Grover/Reporter Staff

It took more than two years of filing paperwork, but a metal sculpture dubbed the "Pi Bench" found its way to Will C. Wood High School Tuesday, courtesy of the Carrington Foundation for Public Art.

The one ton, 15-foot tall "drop steel" piece, a reclining "W" with a Greek "pi" symbol rising from its center, is the creation of artist and retired Vacaville High School math teacher Ray Carrington, whose Fairfield-based foundation has placed hundreds of pieces of metal sculpture in public places around the world, free of charge.

"The Foundation's purpose is to educate the public about sculpture," Carrington said.

"When people hear the word 'art,' they often just think of it as a flat medium."

The metalwork was executed by COFAB, a Vallejo based company that has brought many of Carrington's creations from the drawing board to three dimensions.

Drawing an inquisitive crowd as a COFAB flatbed truck hauled the massive piece onto campus Monday morning, it was school district maintenance engineers who had the task of jockeying a forklift's prongs to carefully bring the piece off of the truck in one piece.

Will C. Wood student body president Samson Elsbernd is credited as the driving force behind the "Pi Bench" finally coming to rest at the high school campus.

"I heard the math teachers talking about it last year," Elsbernd said. "(Principal Henrie) Newland had pretty much given up because of all of the legalities at district level of accepting a gift for the school."

Newland turned the project over to Elsbernd, who meticulously made sure all of the district requirements and legalities were met.

Artist Carrington, who accompanied his creation to the school Monday morning, said it was an old story having difficulty presenting any public entity with a substantial piece of art.

"It's really a shame when you can't give it away," said the award-winning °artist whose work adorns parks, lawns and buildings from Washington, D.C. to Ramstein Air Base in Germany.

The "Pi Bench" will become a permanent resting spot in the math wing of the school some time in March, Elsbernd said.

"We still have to finish preparing the ground and shift some of the landscaping," he explained. "When the area is finished, it will be a nice spot for students to sit and talk."

The Carrington Foundation also offers grants of \$500 to any school that has student-generated and executed art that will remain at the applying school.

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