

Carl Paul Jennewein: The Sculptor Behind the Justice “Coverup”

By Jim Linz

Much has been written and reported these past few months about the Department of Justice’s “coverup” of the bare breasted “Lady Justice” and her skimpily clad male companion “Majesty of Law.” An \$8,000 drape was purchased to hide the two “risque” sculptures from public view during the Attorney General’s press conferences.

The great “coverup” drew the attention of both the national news media and the late night talk shows. Even entertainer Cher weighed in, commenting that “These statues have been there through other very conservative administrations, and no one has seen fit to put a curtain in front of them.” She went on the question “What are we going to do next? Put shorts on the statue of David, put an 1880s bathing suit on ‘Venus Rising’ and a shirt on the Venus de Milo?”



Greek Dance, 1926

So who was the artist whose work was considered so distracting that the Attorney General ordered it hidden from view during his news conferences?

The offending works are by one of the premier American sculptors of the 20th century—Carl Paul Jennewein. Jennewein, whose works are exhibited in major museums throughout the country, is listed in *Who’s Who in America*, 1936-37, and *Who’s Who in American Art*, 1940. He served for many years as the President of the Board of Trustees of South Carolina’s Brookgreen Gardens, America’s premier sculpture garden (See *Trans-Lux*, March 2000). Many of his works were prepared for schools, churches, memorials, and pub-

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lic buildings. His works often portray educational and patriotic themes.

Born in Stuttgart, Germany in 1890, Jennewein was apprenticing to artisans at the Stuttgart Art Museum by age 13. Three years later, he saw illustrations of the work of the New York architectural firm McKim, Mead, and White. Jennewein was so impressed with their work that he soon set sail for the United States to pursue his studies. He studied at New York's Art Students League, at the same time working for Buhler and Lauter, a firm specializing in architectural sculpting and commercial modeling. One of Buhler and Lauter's primary customers was McKim, Mead, and White.

At 21, Jennewein set out on his own, primarily receiving commissions for work at churches and schools. In 1916, he received a 3-year fellowship to study classical art in Italy as part of the prestigious Prix de Rome award for sculpture awarded by the American Academy in Rome. Jennewein remained in Italy until 1922, completing many of his most famous sculptures during this period. He served in the Red Cross during World War I.

Following his studies, Jennewein returned to New York, living in Larchmont, New York from 1924 until his death in 1978. He quickly received a commission for the Caruso Panel at the Metropolitan Opera House. A number of his works were purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art. He continued to receive acclaim for his works and, in 1933, was elected to the prestigious National Academy of Design and the Century Club. He also became a member of the National Institute of Arts and Sciences.

In addition to the 57 statues, pediments, and reliefs he prepared for the Department of Justice building, Jennewein's works in Washington, DC, include marble sculptures in front of the Rayburn House Office Building, allegorical relief panels in the White House, the Darlington Memorial Fountain, and the bas-relief eagles adorning the arches of Arlington Memorial Bridge.

“Where law ends tyranny begins.”

Carl Paul Jennewein

Jennewein's work is also on prominent display in New York, where nine of his bronze figures adorn the British Empire Building in Rockefeller Center, many of his sculptures are on display at the Metropolitan Museum of Art,

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and his bas relief sculptures adorn the entrance to the Brooklyn Central Library and the 1935 Federal Office Building. He also sculpted for the Woolworth and Cunard Buildings and created four entrance pylons for the 1939-40 New York World's Fair.



Stylized eagle by Carl Paul Jennewein for the 1935 Federal Building, New York City.

Jennewein appears to have been a favorite in Pennsylvania, contributing bas relief panels to the stunning 1932 Education Building (to be featured in the June 2002 *Trans-Lux*) as well as the Finance Building, and the pediment for the Philadelphia Museum of Art.



Pediment, Philadelphia Museum of Art

Jennewein used polychromed terra-cotta tiles to create this classical Greek scene.

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Panels by Carl Paul Jennewein for the Education Building, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania

Jennewein served in the American Red Cross during World War I and created numerous war memorials, including the Providence (RI) war memorial and the American War memorial in Tours, France, *American Indian Releasing American Eagle*. Other Jennewein memorials include the Caruso Memorial at the Metropolitan Opera House, the Plymouth, Massachusetts memorial fountain, the Levi Tomb in Mt. Pleasant, New York, the Dudley Memorial Gateway at Harvard University, the War Memorial in Worcester, Massachusetts, the John Endicott Memorial in Boston, and the Spanish American War Memorial in Rochester, New York.

The most extensive research collection of Jennewein's work is located at the Tampa Museum of Art. Following Jennewein's death in 1978, his family donated over 2000 objects, drawings, paintings, and other items to the museum. Two of Jennewein's works—Greek Dance (1926) and Coral (c.

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1915-20) are prominently displayed on the museum's web site.



Coral, circa 1915-1920, Carl Paul Jennewein.

Tampa Museum of Art

Not particularly known as a philosopher, it is nevertheless fitting that it is Jennewein who is quoted at Tourmobile® stops at the Federal Bureau of Investigations—“Justice alone sustains society: founded on the principles of right, expressed in the national laws, administered by public officers”—and at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial—“Where law ends tyranny begins.” While the works of this remarkable sculptor and patriot may be covered up at the Department of Justice, they remain on view at numerous other locations in Washington and around the world.

“Justice alone sustains society: founded on the principles of right, expressed in the national laws, administered by public officers.”

Carl Paul Jennewein

For further information, see *C. Paul Jennewein: Sculptor* by Shirley Reiff Howarth, published by the Tampa Museum of Art.