

Internationally celebrated artist

Special to The Clinton Courier

An internationally celebrated artist and Founding Father of the Mississippi College Art Department in the 1950s, Samuel Marshall Gore passed away Wednesday, April 25. The beloved 91-year-old Clintonian leaves a legacy of compelling Christian sculptures underscoring his deep faith and compassion. The Samuel M. Gore Art Gallery is named in his honor at Mississippi College.

A beloved Mississippian, long-time mentor and friend to many, Dr. Gore died of cardiac arrest at a Jackson hospital.

Tributes from Gore's legions of admirers poured in after the passing of the Founding Father of Mississippi College's Art Department.

"What he taught me about art wasn't just about art," Wyatt Waters said. "It was about life. I was just one of so many students who were inspired by having studied with him," said the award-winning Clinton painter and watercolor specialist. "He made you want to do your best."

Sam Gore mentored many aspiring artists in Mississippi and nationwide. They include MC Art Department Chair Randy Miley.

"I have learned so many valuable lessons from him over the years – from the time I was a junior high art lad to a college art major and later as a colleague in the Department of Art," Miley said.

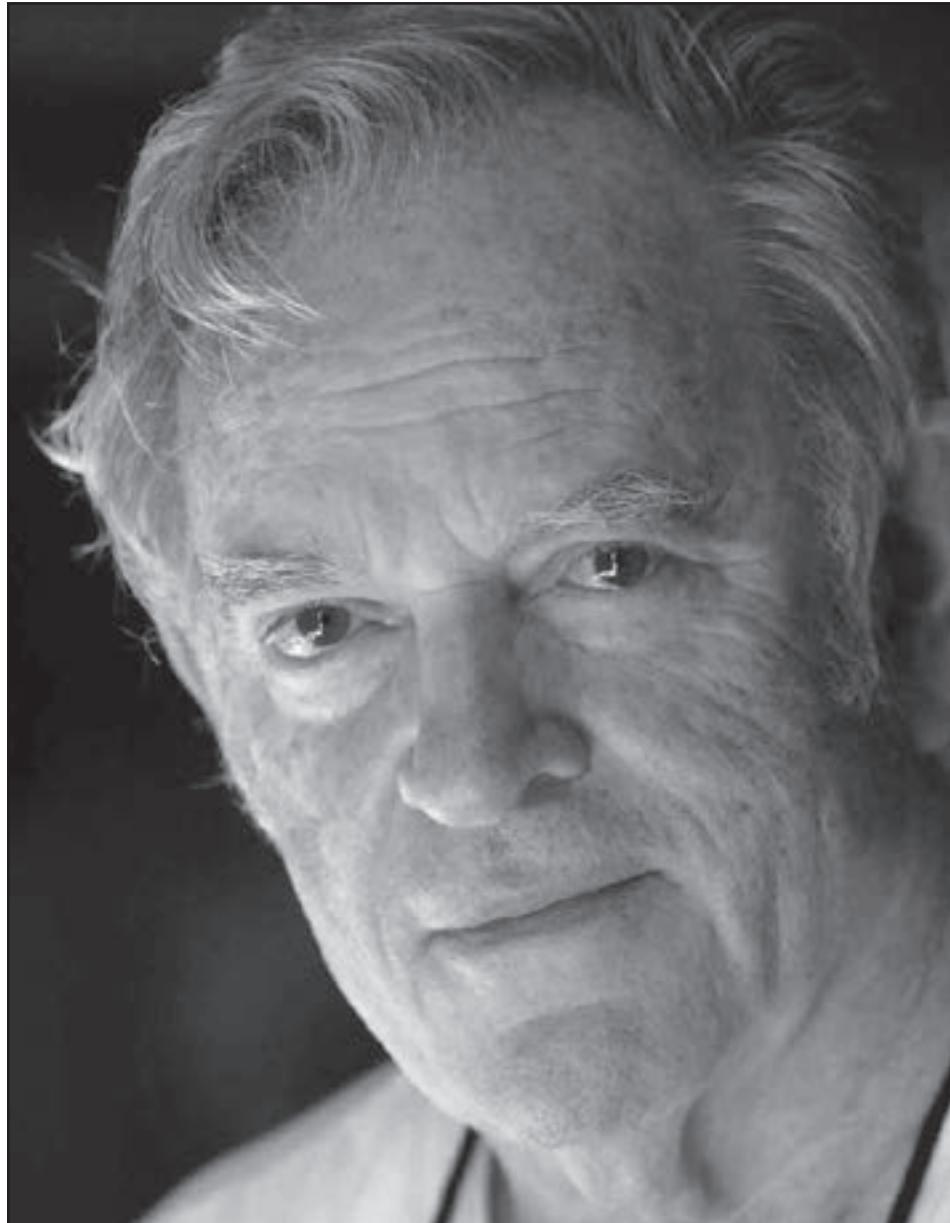
"Dr. Gore always impressed on me to never lose sight of Christ in whatever I do and keep Him at the center of my life. As Art Department chairman, he encouraged me to lean on the Lord and constantly ask for His leadership in all decisions," Miley said. "Most importantly, to use my art to glorify God and encourage our young people to do the same."

Mississippi College President Blake Thompson joined the sea of admirers expressing their deep admiration for the man who meant so much to Mississippi College and the art world beyond.

"No one in the modern era has served Mississippi College as faithfully and with as much impact as Sam Gore," Dr. Thompson said. "In my short time here, like all of you, I grew to love him and his family, to revere his great work, and to marvel at his many artistic contributions to MC. His life was simply a masterpiece."

At several spots around the 193-year-old Mississippi College campus are inspirational Christian sculptures forged with the labor of Gore's gifted hands.

In addition, his bronze sculpture



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This portrait of Dr. Sam Gore was taken by Barbara Gauntt, who authored the book, Samuel M. Gore: Blessed with Tired Hands.



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welcomes visitors to the Clinton Visitor Center. His *Fallen Comrade* masterpiece at the center off the Natchez Trace Parkway stands as a tribute to America's military veterans. Other pieces of Gore's art are showcased at the Mississippi Agriculture and Forestry Museum, the State Capitol, Chapel of the Cross in Madison, Baptist Medical Center, the Woolfolk Building in Jackson, Mississippi College School of Law in Jackson, First Baptist Church Clinton, First Baptist Church of Jackson and Bowmar Avenue Baptist Church. There are many other Gore statues that are in private homes as well as public facilities.

Christ in Gethsemane was Gore's most recently completed sculpture. It weighs 450 pounds and was unveiled at the Rhoda Royce Prayer Garden during MC President Blake Thompson's Inauguration Week in March. The sculpture took Gore nearly a year to craft, and he was working on three disciples to add to it.

The dramatic piece in the peaceful garden of fountains and flowers illustrates Jesus praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, prior to His betrayal, arrest and crucifixion.

Outside the MC School of Education sits another Gore sculpture, *Jesus and the Children*. Mounted on exterior walls of MC Law School in Jackson are Gore's enormous bronze sculptures: *Moses*, *Deliverer of the Law* was unveiled in 2007, and its companion piece, *Christ, Fulfillment of the Law*, came two years later.

A Mississippi College graduate, artist and retired professor at the University of Mississippi Medical Center, Dr. Judy Gearheart, Gore's daughter, spoke at the unveiling of her father's newest sculpture about a month ago. When her dad sculpted, he prayed, she said.

"He prays for those who will view the sculpture, and years for the story to be told through art," Gearheart said. "As people see *Christ in Gethsemane*, they should know that it is not just an image of Christ praying, but a prayer itself."

Throughout his career, the Clintonian noted he was inspired by his late wife, Margie, the love of his life. He said he was never finished learning. Until recently, Gore taught a sculpting class to a much younger generation.

Thousands of people at churches across Mississippi remember Gore as the artist shaping the head of Jesus out of pieces of clay in less than an hour. During the demonstrations, the sculptor worked while accompanied by the sacred music of his faith.