

Ask the Archivist: How Did a Yellowjacket Buzz Its Way into Wilson Commons?

A question for Melissa Mead, the John M. and Barbara Keil University Archivist and Rochester Collections Librarian.

I am an editor for the *Campus Times*. I am working on a story about the wooden statue of the yellowjacket found in the corner of Hirst Lounge, and was wondering if you had any information on it. I've been trying to figure out where it came from and if Jeremy Glick's fraternity played a role in the creation of the wood carving.—Melanie Earle '23

Campus Times staff often consult the University Archives for historical background and photographs, but usually the answer can be found in existing files. Tracking down the story of this wonderful sculpture truly required a “hive mind” approach, and Earle has graciously agreed to have her story scooped in *Review*.

The large, intricately carved sculpture depicting the University's mascot and flower currently sits in the corner of Hirst Lounge near the six clocks depicting time at sites around the world (a gift of the Class of 2007) and the plaques honoring Rochester alumni and staff who died while serving in the armed services during wartime. An inscription on its surface reads:

Way to
go Glick
9-11-2001

Jeremy Glick '93 was one of six Rochester alumni who died in the terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001. The others were Brendan Dolan '86, Aram Iskenderian '82, Jean Hoadley Peterson '69N, Jeffrey Smith '87, '88S (MBA), and Zhe (Zack) Zheng '95, '98S (MBA) (see pages 40-43).

Along with Peterson and her husband, Donald, Glick was one of the passengers on Flight 93, and he was honored for his heroism in the counterattack which ended in the plane's crash in Pennsylvania.

Need History?

Do you have a question about University history? Email it to rochrev@rochester.edu. Please put “Ask the Archivist” in the subject line.

The Archives holds photographs of the sculpture in its original location on Faculty Road near Gilbert Hall. The descriptive information embedded in the photos dates them to 2011 and makes particular note of the inscription. Glick served as president of the Rochester chapter of Alpha Delta Phi, so it seemed reasonable at first to conclude that it might have been commissioned by his fraternity. In 2002, a scholarship in Glick's name was established to provide financial

assistance to students in fraternities and sororities. But inquiries to a wide range of Alpha Deltas, spearheaded by John Braund '53, did not reveal any connection.

Staff in several University offices were contacted, but their records did not include the piece or its funding source. The medium of the sculpture, and its original location helped lead to the answer.

Shawn Casey, former manager of properties and contracts at the University, suggested contacting Dan Schied, now director of grounds at Cornell University. He is well remembered for his many contributions at Rochester, including expanding the horticultural variety on



YELLOWJACKET MEMORIAL: Carved from the remains of a campus oak tree, a wooden sculpture of the University's yellowjacket mascot honors the memory of Jeremy Glick '93, one of six Rochester alumni who died during the September 11, 2001, terrorist attacks. Aboard hijacked United Flight 93, Glick is credited as one of the passengers who overcame the hijackers, forcing the plane to crash in Pennsylvania. The carving by artist Matthew Kron now stands in the Hirst Lounge in Wilson Commons.

the campuses and for the University's recognition by the Arbor Day Foundation as a Tree Campus institution.

Schied recalled the circumstances clearly. The roots of a 130-year-old oak tree near Gilbert Hall had been compacted during a construction project, and the damage meant the tree could not survive. Coincidentally, Schied often drove past an eagle carved out of the trunk of a tree on Elmwood Avenue. Putting the two ideas together, he and his staff tracked down Matthew Kron whose chainsaw artistry was recommended for the job.

The design features a yellowjacket sitting upon an open dandelion, with two closed flowers. The carving was created during the first Meliora Weekend in October 2001. The inscription honoring Glick was Kron's initiative; only a month after the attacks, he was deeply moved by Glick's heroism.

Eris Oleksyn, maintenance supervisor for River Campus Riverside Facilities, supplied the next piece of the story. With the base of the trunk deteriorating and carpenter ants endangering the work, the carving was salvaged from the stump and cleaned up by facilities staff. At this point the signature block of the artist was removed because of damage.

The staff in Wilson Commons Student Activities welcomed the sculpture to Hirst Lounge, and it was relocated in August 2012. A plaque will be added to the piece to record the story for future Yellowjackets. 🐝

For more photographs of the Yellowjacket sculpture, visit <https://rbscpl.lib.rochester.edu/blog/ATA-Summer2021>.