

## Funds granted to survey Lawrence's work

Next time you pass the University art museum or Main Library, crane your head up and look for the rows of heads lining the tops of the buildings.

They are some of the often-overlooked details of Ellis Lawrence's architecture. Decorative details such as the tile work on the facade of the art museum were Lawrence's forte.

The architecture school has received a \$34,000 grant to study and survey Lawrence's buildings in Oregon, which number about 400. Architecture students will be helping in the survey of the campus buildings.

The grant was awarded by the State of Oregon Historic Preservation Office. Lawrence designed the library, which was completed in 1937, and the art museum, completed in 1930. He also added open space and the quadrangle to the campus plan.

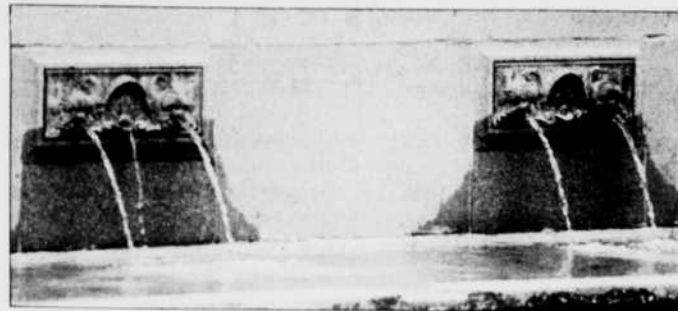
Lawrence's architecture was not that unusual for his time period, but his innovative contribution to the field was incorporating decorative arts

into the curriculum of the architecture school, according to art history professor Leland Roth. Lawrence was the first dean of the University's architecture school, from 1914 to 1946.

The cast-concrete heads atop the art museum represent Oriental and Arabic people in general. But the 45 heads on top of the library are a repetition of 15 heads representing specific historical figures, including Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr., Aristotle, Ludwig Von Beethoven, Buddha, Charles Darwin and Jesus Christ.

As University archivist Keith Richard recounts the story, Lawrence contracted with a University art student, Edna Dunberg, to sculpt the heads in 1936. Dunberg's minister told her not to sculpt the head of Christ because it would be a graven image.

In fact, Dunberg tripped while she was carrying the image and was taken to the hospital, where she was diagnosed as having tuberculosis of the spine, which caused her imminent death. She died thinking the minister was right.



*Architect Ellis Lawrence took the time to put details into his work. Clockwise, from left, are the fountain before the Main Library, the portals to the art museum, the head of Christ along the top of the library and a plaque from the facade of the art museum.*

Photos by Maria Corvallis

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