



Local Craftsman Donates Gateway Arch Replica to L&C

by Laura Inlow

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GODFREY – The north entrance to Lewis and Clark Community College’s Godfrey Campus became a little brighter recently with the addition of a gleaming, 20-foot, stainless steel replica of St. Louis’ Gateway Arch.

The sculpture, which was donated to L&C by Jim and Marge Weinman, of rural Brighton, sits in front of the Weber Workforce Center, home of the college's Welding Technology program.

Weinman, a veteran and retired aircraft mechanic, was asked to build the arch in the mid-1980s for an aviation convention and trade show in Atlanta, Georgia. It has been stored in his barn ever since.

"I wanted it to be someplace where it would be appreciated," he said. "I'm glad it's here."

L&C President Ken Trzaska expressed his gratitude for the Weinmans' generous donation.

"Mr. Weinman's artwork is not only a representation of his talent, but it is a clear demonstration of his commitment and passion to our region," Trzaska said. "I was particularly intrigued by his story, which brings an entirely new level of appreciation to what this amazing structure represents to Lewis and Clark and our region."

Weinman initially contacted L&C during the pandemic, but it wasn't until he spoke with Welding Program Coordinator and Associate Professor Travis Jumper that the sculpture was brought to campus.

"Jim came to campus with some photos of the arch," Jumper said. "We appreciated the craftsmanship he put into the construction and the fact that it is a scale replica. We felt it would be a great motivator for our welding students."

Weinman, 86, fabricated the arch out of high-grade stainless steel, which is held together by over 100 feet of tungsten inert gas (TIG) welding. It breaks down into five pieces and stands 20 feet high and 20 feet wide at the base. He built the arch by himself and it's the only sculpture he's ever done.

"Jim did an amazing job figuring out all the measurements to make the legs of the arch meet at the top appropriately," Jumper said. "Welding thin gauge stainless steel can be difficult. If you overheat the materials enough, you will burn out the chemicals that keep it from rusting."

According to Jumper, a great deal of time and skill is required to achieve such a mirror-like finish.

“There isn’t a single straight line on it.” Weinman said. “Stainless steel moves around a lot, so I placed a bulkhead every 18 inches.”

Ideally, Jumper would like to make the structure more visible and accessible by adding solar lights and sidewalks, he said.

For more information about L&C’s Welding Program, contact Advisor Nic Jones in the Enrollment Center at (618) 468-5256 or davnjones@lc.edu. Jumper can be reached at (618) 468-4931 or tjumper@lc.edu.

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Caption: *L&C President Ken Trzaska and Vice President of Academic Affairs Sue Czerwinski met with Jim Weinman, center, to thank him for his contribution to campus.*
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