

## An enduring gift: Class of '57 presents commemorative sculpture to Bolles

by Beth Stambaugh

It's not unusual for classes to make collective donations to their alma maters. For the Bolles Class of 1957, a monetary gift just wasn't enough.

Instead, the class commissioned a bronze statue by renowned sculptor W. Stanley Proctor which they dedicated to the school on Oct. 16. Called "Transition," the three life-size figures depict the school's history – first, as an all-male military boarding school, then as a non-military all-male school, and finally, as the co-ed K-12 college prep school it is today.

"We wanted to do something that was significant, lasting and meaningful," says Ted Quantz, who was the class of '57's president and battalion commander.

Early in the process, Quantz and fellow classmates consulted with longtime faculty member Rufus McClure to get his ideas about what would make a lasting impression. A member of the Bolles' faculty for 57 years, McClure knew that artwork was lacking from the Bolles' campus. He suggested the class consider a statue of some kind.

McClure's suggestion gained momentum during the class's 50th reunion weekend. "We rekindled old friendships and relived memories. We all shared personal stories about what Bolles meant to us," said Quantz.

Class members came from different places and had varying backgrounds. Some were "sent" to the military school

for behavior or grades; others were from Jacksonville and didn't board.

"We all felt that the school taught us lifelong lessons that helped us become better people," said class member George Lawrence. With renewed friendships came a class commitment to make a lasting gift to the school that meant so much to them.

"We agreed that we wanted our gift to be visual, permanent and tell the story connecting the Bolles we knew as cadets to the Bolles that we saw when we returned to the campus 50 years later," said Quantz.

The search for the right artist led the class to the works of Stanley Proctor based in Tallahassee. Among his many works, Proctor is known for creating the Bobby Bowden statue at Doak Campbell Stadium and "The Guardians," a sculpture of two Navy SEALs killed in the line of duty for the Veteran's Memorial Park in California. Proctor was inducted into the Florida Artists Hall of Fame in 2006.

"Working with these guys was wonderful," said Proctor. "They were determined to present something lasting to the school. Their passion was contagious."

Like the school's history, the sculpture evolved over time. Originally, the class envisioned just one figure: a male cadet in a military uniform. Soon, that idea grew to include a non-military student reflecting the transition away from a military school in 1962. As the statue became more com-



plex, the need for donations from the class increased. Classmate John Morris issued a fundraising challenge that was soon met by the class.

In addition to funds, commissioning a bronze statue like Transition involves a great deal of collaboration between the client and the artist. Once the sculpture's basic composition is determined, the next step is to photograph live models representing the figures. Every detail, from clothing to hairstyle, must be a realistic representation to create an authentic looking sculpture.

"During the photo shoot, we noticed a young girl in 9th or 10th grade nearby. We wondered why she was there," explained Quantz. Stanley Proctor, the sculptor, had arranged for the girl to be there. "Stanley felt the piece wasn't complete without showing the final transition to a co-educational school in 1972." The class agreed,

but adding yet another figure meant even more funds would be needed. Again, the 43 remaining class members stepped up to the challenge and raised more than \$80,000.

"Transition represents the largest gift ever presented to Bolles by a class," said McClure as he accepted the statue on behalf of the school. "This is far more than a class project," he told the student body. "This gift is something your children and grandchildren will identify as a unique icon of the Bolles School for years to come."

Transition is located at the epicenter of the Bolles' campus. The class hopes it will inspire other graduates to be creative in giving back to the school.

"We hope Transition will encourage other classes let their imaginations run wild when considering a donation to the school," said Quantz. "If you have vision backed up by passion, anything is possible."