

History of the Sculptor

“Leading up to the sculpture's installation and subsequent dedication planned for September 29, 1979, McCloy worked as sculptor, plumber, handyman, and philanthropist. Though it seems the plumbing was never properly installed as the fountain may have always leaked.

The sculpture was planned as a gift of the Isser family to the Public Library of New London in memory of the late Isser Gruskin, an attorney and prominent city resident. Isser's widow, Mildred Gruskin, and his brother, attorney Samuel Gruskin, spoke at the dedication ceremony at the public library about the influence of libraries on Isser as an immigrant boy.

McCloy, then 66, said the plan for the sculpture was that it wouldn't cost him anything. He brought the sculpture from his home in Uncasville to the library, where it rests on the same New Hampshire granite as the stone exterior of the library.

McCloy also says the sculpture has two main themes: New London's commercial and literary history — whales and water represent the seafaring tradition intertwined with a book symbolizing education. The whale's sharp teeth should not be mistaken for those of a shark.

During installation, McCloy said passersby stopped to ask him about the meaning of the sculpture.

An article in *The Day* (1/1/1987) reports that McCloy was having a retrospective exhibition of his work at Lyman Allyn. McCloy's obituary was published in *The Day* on 6/6/2000.

There is a lot more information about McCloy in his faculty file in the archives in Shain.”

—Andrew Lopez, Research Support Librarian and Government Documents Coordinator, Charles E. Shain Library, Connecticut College

Collective Photo Gallery:

- New London Day article from 8/23/1979: *Fountain Flows from Sculptor*
- New London Day article from 10/2/1979: *Gruskin Fountain Dedicated in New London*
- The invitation card used for the dedication ceremony at the Public Library of New London: 9/23/1979

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Fountain flows from sculptor

By The Staff

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William McClay and fountain

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The Day 10/2/79

Gruskin fountain dedicated in New London

Attorney Samuel Gruskin spoke Saturday at the dedication of a 15-foot-tall bronze sculpture presented to the Public Library of New London in memory of his brother, the late Isser Gruskin, an attorney and prominent city resident. William McClay, professor emeritus at Connecticut College who did the sculpture, and Mildred Gruskin, wife of the late attorney, are at left. The sculpture is near the library's Huntington Street entrance. Mrs. Gruskin spoke about the influence libraries on her husband as an immigrant boy. McClay said the sculpture's theme reflects New London's history.

NEW LONDON — The city has Driscoll said the major problem If it is not acceptable, the employ-

*The Friends and Board of Directors of
The Public Library of New London, Connecticut
cordially invite you to attend
The Presentation of a Fountain
created and designed by William A. McClay
given in memory of
Isser Gruskin
by his family
Saturday, September 29, 1979, 2:30 p.m. at the Library
Program and light refreshments*