

The City of Living Trees and Sculptures

Your guide to tour and enjoy some of the works of Sculptor, Bradford Rhea



Skygrazers

About the Sculptor

Bradford Rhea

Sterling, Colorado has its share of very talented local artists. Perhaps the most famous of them is Bradford Rhea. The city is home to many works of art created by this accomplished artist and sculptor. While people all over the nation and world are now familiar with Rhea's work, he began his sculpting career here on the Colorado high plains in the 1980s when he gave life to dying tree trunks throughout the community.

Following a terrible winter freeze in 1982 which killed many of the large trees throughout Sterling, Rhea began bringing some of the trunks back to life by carving them into works of art for public enjoyment. As local residents and visitors to the community began to see and enjoy his work, the city decided to play off of his creations and dub itself the "City of Living Trees."

Over the years, the weather took its toll on some of Rhea's sculptures located outdoors. Residents in the area formed a "Save the Sculptures" organization and worked to get many of the original carved trunks moved to indoor locations that would still be available for public viewing. Funds were raised to restore several of the most popular weathered carvings and cast bronzed versions were placed back outdoors for year-round viewing.

A Colorado native, Rhea was born in the Denver area in 1954. He admits to having a lifelong affinity for the arts. As a younger man, he studied fine art at the University of Northern Colorado and also spent three months studying the masters in Florence, Italy. Rhea was inspired after viewing Michelangelo's art, especially his unfinished marble works.

Uncertain whether or not he would be able to make a living as a professional artist, Rhea also obtained a degree in nuclear medicine and originally came to Sterling to work at the Logan County Hospital, now the Sterling Regional MedCenter, as a diagnostic technician.

BRADFORD RHEA

Acclaimed Sculptor



In the tranquil beauty of the High Plains, his artistic cravings quickly resurfaced and he eventually gave into his passion of sculpting. He has been fortunate to be able to use his studio to also provide his artistic abilities to Wisdom Rides, a carnival ride manufacturing company located in Merino, CO.

In 1993 he was commissioned by the United States Department of State to create a walking stick for President Bill Clinton to present to Pope John Paul II upon his visit to this country that year. In seven days, Rhea created a staff carved from the roots of a honey locust tree.

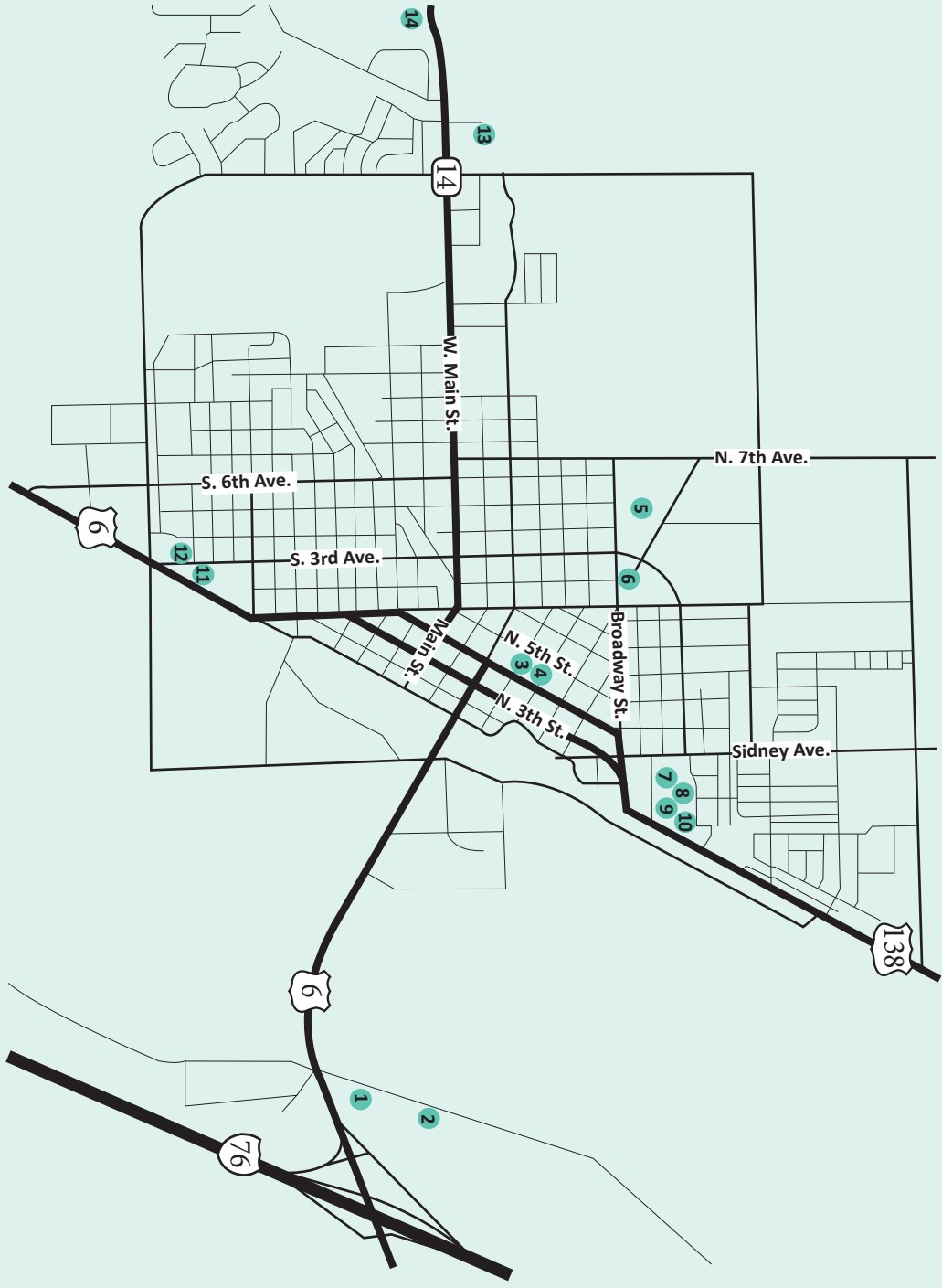
Today, Rhea continues to create masterpieces from his main street studio in Merino. He has advanced from wood carving into bronze productions and to his dream of sculpting marble, which included working on a 30,000 lb. block of Colorado Yule marble to create Exordium. His work is viewed and enjoyed frequently by visitors from throughout the nation and the world.

Tours of Bradford Rhea's studio may be arranged by appointment. Leave message at 970.520.1199 or email: thesculptor7@gmail.com or visit: www.TheSculptor.net

Bradford Rhea carved a total of 17 tree sculptures. However, several suffered irreparable damage from the elements, some are in locations that do not allow public viewing and some, while being located in Logan County, are not within the immediate vicinity of Sterling.

The 14 sculptures listed here are located within close proximity to one another and can be viewed during a self-directed tour. In order to see all of the sculptures listed in this pamphlet, the best time to take your tour is sometime Monday through Friday between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. when all facilities are open and available.

Mr. Rhea often describes his work with an original verse or two from the bible. Many of the sculptures are well over 8 feet tall, some reaching as high as 16 feet.



- 1 Metamorphosis**
Logan County Tourist Center
102 N. Riverview Rd.
- 2 Scion**
Logan County Justice Center
110 N. Riverview Rd.
- 3 Windlace**
Sterling Public Library
425 N. 5th St.
- 4 Seraphim**
Sterling Public Library
425 N. 5th St.
- 5 Tiger***
Sterling High School
407 W. Broadway St.
- 6 Dream Redeemer**
Prairie Park
807 Elm St. / Broadway St.
- 7 The Mask***
Northeast Junior College
100 College Ave. - ES French Hall
- 8 Metamorphosis* wood**
Northeast Junior College
100 College Ave. - ES French Hall
- 9 Plainsman Pete***
Northeast Junior College
100 College Ave. - Library
- 10 Jack**
Northeast Junior College
100 College Ave. - Event Center Courtyard
- 11 Skygrazers**
Columbine Park
1212 S. 3rd Ave.
- 12 The Minuteman**
National Guard Armory
1400 S. 3rd Ave.
- 13 The Dreamer**
Pioneer Park
17615 Hwy. 14
- 14 Full Swing**
Northeastern 18
17408 Hwy. 14

* Only available during school hours and with school personnel permission



Metamorphosis (Bronze & Wood) #1 & #8

The shape of the original tree suggested the form of spreading wings which inspired Rhea to sculpt the tree trunk into his beautiful version of a caterpillar spinning a cocoon which bursts into a butterfly ready to take flight. This piece is frequently referred to as "The Butterfly" by many locals. The original owners of the sculpture donated it to Northeastern Junior College. The bronze replica now graces the lawn at the Logan County Tourist Information Center.



Scion (Wood) #2

This sculpture consists of several bold, dauntless figures representing the incredible tenacity of those surviving life on the Plains. All of the figures are partially united in common support to symbolize the necessity for a cohesive element within the community. The figures form an overall winged appearance to illustrate our flight through time. Scion was carved from a 100-year-old cottonwood tree.



Windlace (Wood) #3

The sculpture symbolizes the courage, grace and evolution of women in our society. It was dedicated to the City of Sterling in the spring of 1987. "Against a swirling breeze, Imprisoned souls ascend; Rising from their knees, In a vision they transcend." - Bradford Rhea



Seraphim (Wood) #4

This cottonwood sculpture was inspired by a verse from the bible which, when explored further, tells about four living creatures covered with eyes front and back - a lion, an ox, a man and an eagle in flight. Each has six wings and eyes all over, inside and out. Seraphim was created in 1993, at the request of the City of Sterling.



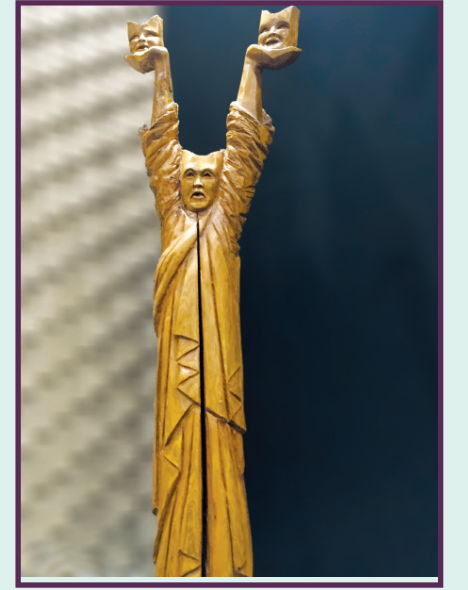
Tiger (Wood) #5

Commissioned by the Sterling High School graduating class of 1986, this sculpture depicts the school's mascot. "Within the shadows of devouring jaws, true courage can be found: Where rivals meet with slashing claws, true tigers stand their ground." - Bradford Rhea



Dream Redeemer (Bronze) #6

This bronze creation was commissioned by the Logan County Chamber of Commerce Marketing Committee in 2008. "Ticks and tocks of magic clocks, Hands whirring as they run, Meshing gears rewind the years, Erasing all that's done. Night and day he churns away, With passion he redeems, Deflated lives his throne revives, Machining all new dreams." - Bradford Rhea



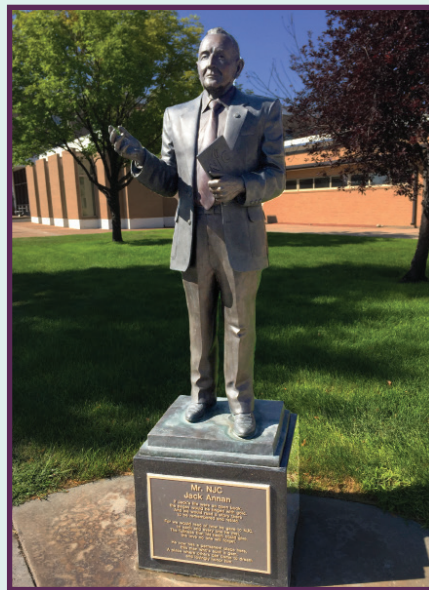
The Mask (Wood) #7

This piece exemplifies the traditional theme of comedy and tragedy. It originally was located at the entrance of the old Oak Street Theater, which was home to the Prairie Players, a local theatre troupe. The crack running up through the statue took place while the carving was in progress. This "check" appeared over the period of a week after the face was carved. The folds of the gown were cleverly carved to include this flaw.



Plainsman Pete (Wood) #9

This carving serves as a "mascot" for the two-year community college. Commissioned by the Northeastern Junior College administration and the Associated Student Government in 1986, the carving marked NJC's 45th year as an outstanding education institution.



Jack (Bronze) #10

This sculpture was created in 2004 to honor Jack Annan, "Mr. NJC," and his 38 years of service to the college and to Colorado agriculture. The bronze piece was commissioned by the Northeastern Junior College Arts on Campus Campaign.



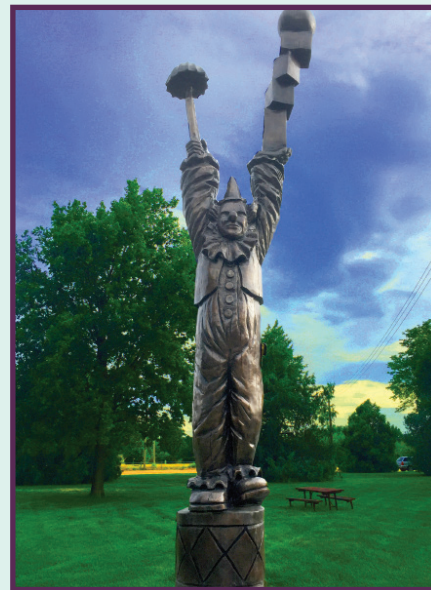
Skygrazers (Bronze) #11

This delightful carving has become the symbol of the "City of Living Trees." It was dedicated to the City of Sterling in the fall of 1984. This popular bronzed version of the elm tree sculpture is located in Sterling's Columbine Park for the perfect photo opportunity.



Minuteman (Bronze & Wood) #12

This sculpture depicts a revolutionary-era colonial guardsman in authentic dress and in proper stance to protect his nation. The bronze is outside, while the original wood version is indoors.



The Dreamer (Bronze) #13

This sculpture was created and donated by the artist in 1983. It stood originally in Columbine Park and is now located in Pioneer Park. "To shade the dawn by parasol, and ride till dusk the carousel; To be a clown for just a day, amidst the sound of children's play." - Bradford Rhea



Full Swing (Wood) #14

The figure presents the classic stance of the true golfing aficionado that is the consuming passion of every addict of the game. The original wood sculpture was carved near the first tee of the Sterling Country Club.



Exordium (Marble)

Carved from a 30,000 pound block of Colorado Yule marble, the sculpture was inspired by a verse of scripture (Revelations 8:6), "And the seven angels with the seven trumpets prepared to sound."