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PCI mural dedication ceremony honors artist, enhances Parkview Campus

A restored wall mural depicting the evolution of papermaking was dedicated recently in a ceremony held at the Parkview Campus CEAS building near the office of the Department of Paper Engineering, Chemical Engineering, and Imaging (PCI) where the mural has been on display since last March.

Jack Young (BA '54, Secondary Art Education) designed and painted the original canvas in 1959 when he was a graduate student. The mural, which hung in McCracken Hall for over 40 years, was taken down in August 2003. It was stored in art archives until last summer when Young began restoring the 48-year-old mural with the assistance of his granddaughter, Rebekah Johnson, a Comstock High School sophomore. “You don’t know how gratified I am by all this,” Young said.

About 100 attended a ceremony led by Dr. Said AbuBakr, chair of the PCI department. Those attending included Young’s family and friends, the Paper Technology Foundation (PTF) board of directors, CEAS administrators, many students presently enrolled in paper-related majors, WMU faculty, staff, and distinguished WMU administrators and emeriti.

Originally commissioned by the then Paper Technology Department, Young said it took about 10 weeks to complete the oil canvas, which is 4 feet high and 17 feet 8 inches wide. Done in a synthetic cubist style, the work is reminiscent of social murals of the 1930s and 1940s. “I think painting it earned me quite a few credits towards my degree,” Young said.