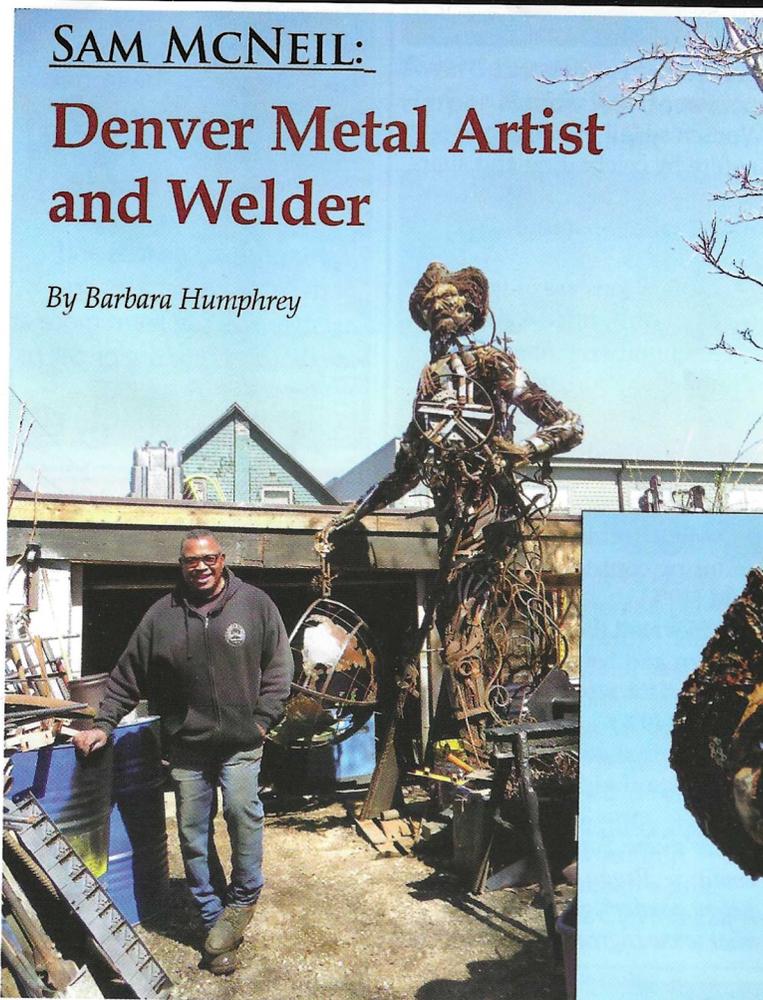


Sam McNeil is a creative artist in Denver who does much of his work by welding recycled metal into amazing sculptures, benches, fences, doors, window coverings, and even colorful flowers. After a year's work, he is now completing a large sculpture of Frederick Douglass which is approximately 12 feet tall.

This astonishing sculpture of the famous 19th century abolitionist, social reformer, orator, and author also has a swing incorporated into it in the shape of a globe which symbolizes world peace and unity. The swing is an added attraction for children so they will not only look at it but can touch it and have some fun swinging on it as well as perhaps being inspired to learn more about this historic person.

McNeil started welding in junior high school and would weld projects in his parents'



SAM MCNEIL: Denver Metal Artist and Welder

By Barbara Humphrey

garage. After graduating from South High School in Denver, Colorado, he attended Emily Griffith Opportunity School as a student. While learning his trade, people would bring projects to the school to be repaired. Usually, he would be the first to volunteer to do the jobs.

Later, his two welding instructors recommended him to be the welder instructor at the school. When he received the call from the school asking if he would consider taking the job, he didn't give them an immediate answer. He waited until he talked to his mother who was a teacher. After she told him to take the job, he then sealed the deal.

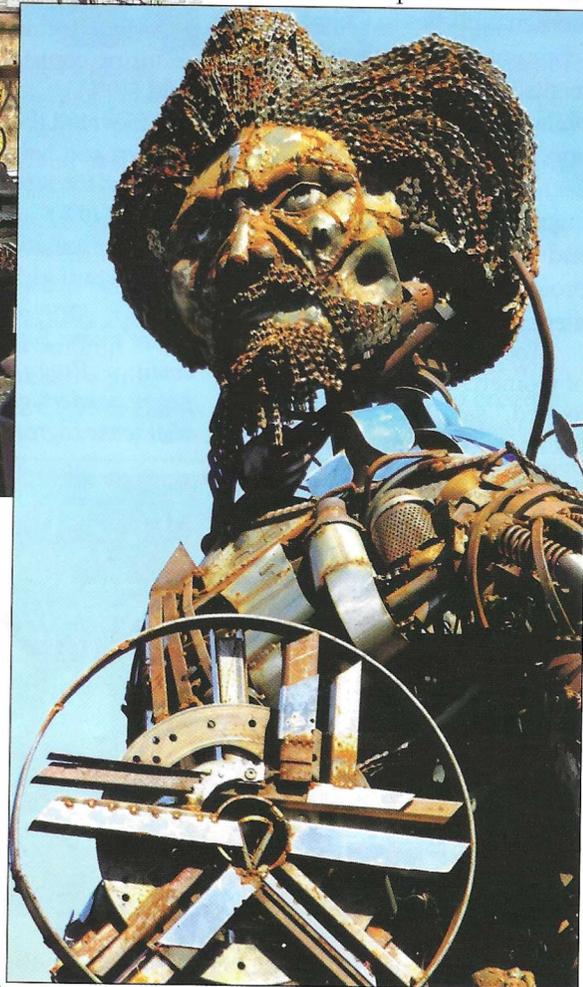
McNeil often recalls that he got the job without even applying for it, saying "people are always watching you, so always be at your best and do your best." He worked at Emily Griffith for several years before

starting his own company where his experience and creativity has evolved for more than 40 years. He believes that a person must always have a purpose in life and succeed in it.

McNeil has created his own custom hand-crafted designs and outdoor furniture using recycled material. Much of the materials are found through internet searches and material left from other jobs. He located two tons of bicycle chains that he used and is using to create the look of hair on the heads the Miles Davis sculpture playing his trumpet and the Frederick Douglass sculpture.

South of McNeil's studio on Arapahoe St. and in the lobby of the RedLine Art Gallery showcases a combination bench and sculpture of Denver's famous classical and jazz musician, Charles Burrell, with his very unique cigar and string bass.

McNeil continues to work, inspire, and encourage others every day. He has three highly creative master welders who make his vision come alive: Matthew, Sam (the other Sam) and Minerva Spencer. Minerva



is a creator of incredibly unique and colorful metal flowers. She finishes many of the projects with a vibrant flare of paint colors that defines the finished look. ■

Editor's note: The public is invited to visit Superior Iron Works studio at 2630 Arapahoe Street in the Five Points community. To schedule a time, call 720-435-8502. For more information, visit <http://superior-workplus.com>.

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