

**United States Department of the Interior**  
National Park Service

# National Register of Historic Places Registration Form

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in National Register Bulletin, *How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form*. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions.

## 1. Name of Property

Historic name: Marshall University Memorial Fountain

Other names/site number: Bertoia Marshall University Memorial Sculpture

Name of related multiple property listing:

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing)

## 2. Location

Street & number: 1 John Marshall Drive

City or town: Huntington State: WV County: Cabell

Not For Publication:  Vicinity:

## 3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended,

I hereby certify that this X nomination \_\_\_ request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60.

In my opinion, the property X meets \_\_\_ does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant at the following level(s) of significance:

\_\_\_ national      \_\_\_ statewide      X local

Applicable National Register Criteria:

\_\_\_ A      \_\_\_ B      X C      \_\_\_ D

Deputy State Historic Preservation Officer	
<b>Signature of certifying official/Title:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<u>West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office, Department of Arts, Culture and History</u>	
<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>	
In my opinion, the property ___ meets ___ does not meet the National Register criteria.	
<b>Signature of commenting official:</b>	<b>Date</b>
<b>Title :</b>	<b>State or Federal agency/bureau or Tribal Government</b>

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**4. National Park Service Certification**

I hereby certify that this property is:

- entered in the National Register
- determined eligible for the National Register
- determined not eligible for the National Register
- removed from the National Register
- other (explain:) \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of the Keeper

\_\_\_\_\_  
Date of Action

**5. Classification**

**Ownership of Property**

(Check as many boxes as apply.)

- Private:
- Public – Local
- Public – State
- Public – Federal

**Category of Property**

(Check only **one** box.)

- Building(s)
- District
- Site
- Structure
- Object

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**Number of Resources within Property**

(Do not include previously listed resources in the count)

Contributing	Noncontributing	
_____	_____	buildings
_____	_____	sites
_____	_____	structures
_____ 1 _____	_____	objects
_____ 1 _____	_____ 0 _____	Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register \_\_\_\_\_

**6. Function or Use**

**Historic Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/monument/marker

RECREATION AND CULTURE/work of art

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Current Functions**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

RECREATION AND CULTURE/monument/marker

RECREATION AND CULTURE/work of art

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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## 7. Description

### Architectural Classification

(Enter categories from instructions.)

N/A \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Materials:** (enter categories from instructions.)

Principal exterior materials of the property: Other: bronze, copper; Foundation: concrete, granite

### Narrative Description

(Describe the historic and current physical appearance and condition of the property. Describe contributing and noncontributing resources if applicable. Begin with a **summary paragraph** that briefly describes the general characteristics of the property, such as its location, type, style, method of construction, setting, size, and significant features. Indicate whether the property has historic integrity.)

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### Summary Paragraph

The Marshall University Memorial Fountain is a water fountain sculpture and reflecting pool located on the campus of Marshall University, between 3<sup>rd</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> Avenues in Huntington, West Virginia. The fountain's location, in a plaza on the north side of the Memorial Student Center, forms the heart of the university's campus. Created by artist Harry Bertoia, the memorial consists of a green sculpture made with bronze and copper materials bent and welded together. Its abstract design forms an organic shape meant to symbolize life, growth, and renewal. A fountain jet propels water from the sculpture's center. The sculpture rests within a square reflecting pool, where water from the fountain is collected and recycled. The only major alterations to the fountain have been the installation of a catch tray and black granite tiles on the reflecting pool. The sculpture itself is virtually unchanged and retains excellent integrity.

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## Narrative Description

The Marshall University Memorial Fountain is located in the center of a brick-paved plaza on the north side of the school's Memorial Student Center building. The plaza is adorned with small trees, concrete-lined flower beds, lampposts, and tables. The plaza and student center themselves are located in the south central part of the Marshall University campus. They are surrounded by greenspaces, trees, sidewalks, and various early-to-late-twentieth century collegiate buildings.

The primary component of the fountain is a 6,500-pound sculpture made of copper tubing welded together with a green, bronze surface. It measures 12'11" tall with a width of 8' and a depth of 7'6". At its center is a fountain jet that propels water vertically several feet in the air. The sculpture consists of a series of tubular, green rods shaped to form an abstract, fluid or plant-like design. The rods begin as a circular pedestal and rise upward. When they reach the center, where the fountain jet begins, the rods curve and fall outward, before curving again and rising to the top. The rods terminate at various heights, with flared, trumpet-like caps on their tops. The sculpture is open on two parallel sides, exposing the water stream.

The sculpture rests upon a concrete base surrounded by a square catch tray, where water from the jet is collected. The sculpture and tray are located in the center of a 26'8" by 26'8" square reflecting pool. The pool is concrete and layered with square, dark granite tiles. Four submerged lights, one at each corner of the pool, provides illumination at night. At the west side of the reflecting pool is a slanted granite pedestal with a bronze memorial plaque. The plaque lists the names of all 75 people killed in the 1970 Marshall University Plane Crash, along with the phrase "They shall live on in the hearts of their families and friends forever, and this memorial records their loss to the university and to the community."

The Memorial Fountain retains a high degree of historic integrity. The only major alterations have been the addition of a granite tile surface to the reflecting pool and the installation of a water catch tray around the sculpture's base, both of which occurred in 2008. The sculpture itself is unaltered. It has never been relocated, and the campus – with its mixture of concrete, brick, and green spaces – conveys the same atmosphere it did back in 1972. The Memorial Fountain therefore maintains its integrity of location, design, setting, materials, workmanship, feeling, and association.

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**Figure 1:** Memorial Fountain in 2015, courtesy of Library of Congress, Carol M. Highsmith Archive

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## 8. Statement of Significance

### Applicable National Register Criteria

(Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing.)

- A. Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- B. Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- C. Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- D. Property has yielded, or is likely to yield, information important in prehistory or history.

### Criteria Considerations

(Mark "x" in all the boxes that apply.)

- A. Owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes
- B. Removed from its original location
- C. A birthplace or grave
- D. A cemetery
- E. A reconstructed building, object, or structure
- F. A commemorative property
- G. Less than 50 years old or achieving significance within the past 50 years

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**Areas of Significance**

(Enter categories from instructions.)

Art  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Period of Significance**

1972  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Dates**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Significant Person**

(Complete only if Criterion B is marked above.)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Cultural Affiliation**

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

**Architect/Builder**

Harry Bertoia  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_



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**Statement of Significance Summary Paragraph** (Provide a summary paragraph that includes level of significance, applicable criteria, justification for the period of significance, and any applicable criteria considerations.)

The Marshall University Memorial Fountain is eligible for the National Register of Historic Places under *Criterion C: Art* as a prominent and unique public sculpture created by internationally recognized, mid-twentieth century artist Harry Bertoia. Marshall University commissioned the fountain to honor the 75 victims of the 1970 Marshall Plane Crash, which devastated the Huntington, West Virginia community and nearly wiped out the school's entire football program. Since its installation, the fountain has become an integral part of Marshall University's culture and is the focus of annual memorial ceremonies. The Memorial Fountain satisfies *Criteria Consideration F: Commemorative Properties* because it possesses historical significance derived from its artistic design. The Period of Significance is 1972, the year the memorial was created and dedicated.

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**Narrative Statement of Significance** (Provide at least **one** paragraph for each area of significance.)

### **Background History**

Residents of Cabell County, Virginia established Marshall Academy, named after Supreme Court Chief Justice John Marshall, in 1837. Classes were first held in a small log building on a hill surrounded by farms. The school struggled for years until 1858, when the State of Virginia amended their charter and promoted the school to college status. Marshall closed during the Civil War amid local turbulence. It was reopened in 1867 by the new State of West Virginia as a state normal school, which focused on training teachers. Growth accelerated following the incorporation of the City of Huntington in 1871, with Marshall falling inside its borders. The school gradually expanded over the decades, developing a substantial campus, and constructing Old Main, the central administrative building, in phases over time. In 1961, Marshall obtained university status.<sup>1</sup>

In 1969, Marshall began construction of a new, \$4 million student center on campus to replace the smaller, aging Shawkey Student Union building. The modern glass and brick structure was designed by the Huntington-based architectural firm of Dean & Dean. It was located at a central part of campus, along the north side of 5<sup>th</sup> Avenue. The north side of the student center included an expansive brick and concrete plaza, containing tables, ornamental trees, bushes, and flower

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<sup>1</sup> Cora P. Teel, "Marshall University," e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia, October 12, 2023, accessed January 25, 2024; <https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1529>; "History and Traditions," Marshall University, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.marshall.edu/history-and-traditions/>; Charles Hill Moffat, *Marshall University: An Institution Comes of Age, 1837-1980*, Marshall University Alumni Association, 1981, accessed January 25, 2024, [https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=lib\\_manu](https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1008&context=lib_manu).

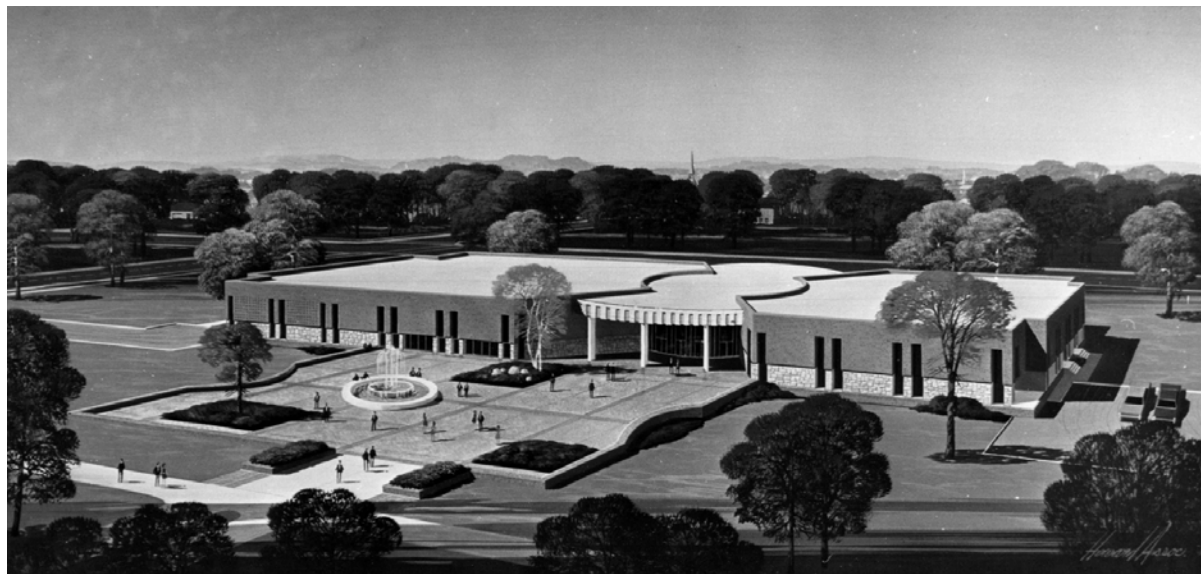
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beds. Dean & Dean's plans also called for a fountain to be installed in the middle of the plaza. The student center opened in August 1971.<sup>2</sup>



**Figure 2:** Dean & Dean Conceptual Art for Marshall Memorial Student Center, 1969, courtesy Marshall University Special Collections. Parthenon Photo Morae. StP.19860502.01.28.06

## Marshall University Plane Crash

On November 14, 1970, the Marshall University football team played a game against Eastern Carolina University in Greenville, North Carolina. That evening, the team and some boosters chartered Southern Airways Flight 932 to fly back to Huntington. At approximately 7:36 pm, their Douglas DC-9 aircraft crashed into a hillside during the approach to Huntington Tri-State Airport. All 75 passengers and crew died. Among the victims were nearly the entire Marshall University football team, much of their staff, and many prominent members of the Huntington community, including businessmen, physicians, and civic leaders. It remains the worst sports-related air disaster in U.S. history.<sup>3</sup>

The plane crash plunged Huntington and Marshall University into a period of shock and mourning. The following days were occupied by numerous funerals and memorial services. The school administration very nearly dissolved its football program, but supporters convinced Acting President Donald Dedmon to keep it. The program received a major boost when the National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) granted special permission for Marshall to place freshmen on their varsity team for the 1971 season. The hastily assembled new team,

<sup>2</sup> Steven Cody Straley et. al., "Memorial Student Center, Marshall University," Clio: Your Guide to History, February 16, 2020, accessed March 7, 2024, <https://www.theclio.com/entry/29277>; Lynn Withrow and Sondra Lewis, "Something for everyone...the Marshall Memorial Student Center." *Marshall Alumnus* 11, no. 3 (October 1971): 7-9; Charles H. Ferguson, "New union will serve students first," *The Parthenon* 72, No. 6 (August 5, 1971). <sup>3</sup> Tom D. Miller, "Marshall Plane Crash," e-WV: The West Virginia Encyclopedia, December 26, 2023, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.wvencyclopedia.org/articles/1528>; "Plane Crash Memorial," Marshall University Special Collections, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://www.marshall.edu/special-collections/memorial/>.

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nicknamed the Young Thundering Herd, played a 2-8 season that year. The football program gradually recovered from that point. The Marshall University Plane Crash and the football team's subsequent resurrection have since become an integral part of Marshall University's culture and collective memory.<sup>4</sup>

## Development of the Memorial Fountain

In the immediate aftermath of the disaster, Marshall established an "Air Tragedy Memorial Committee" to identify ways to commemorate the victims. This body included representatives from the university administration, faculty, and the alumni association. By May 1971, the committee had recommended four memorial proposals which were ultimately accepted. One was to erect a memorial cenotaph at Huntington's Spring Hill Cemetery, where six unidentified football players were buried together. Another was to place a bronze plaque inside the locker room of Fairfield Stadium, where the University held its football games. The new student center on campus, per the endorsement of a student referendum held by the Student Government Association, would be christened the Memorial Student Center. Finally, a memorial sculpture would be built on the new student center's outdoor plaza.<sup>5</sup>

By early 1971, the Memorial Committee had decided that the student center plaza sculpture would be the primary monument to the plane crash victims because such a memorial "should be on Marshall's campus and in a prominent place where there is a lot of traffic."<sup>6</sup> After consultations with the center's architect, Keith Dean of Dean & Dean, it was decided to incorporate a sculpture into the proposed fountain in the middle of the plaza. When the Memorial Student Center was completed in August 1971, a space was left in the middle of the plaza for the future memorial fountain. Keith Dean, with the support of Huntington Museum of Art Director Roberta Emerson, suggested that artist Harry Bertoia be commissioned for the job.<sup>7</sup> By January 1972, the Memorial Committee had retained him to submit a design.<sup>8</sup> The committee also considered sculptor Bernhard Zuckermann.

The two artists represented two vastly different visions for Marshall's memorial. Zuckermann had a more traditional, representational style. He specialized in creating classical depictions of people and animals using marble. Zuckermann's portfolio included a marble panel depicting the

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<sup>4</sup> Miller, "Marshall Plane Crash"; *We Remember*, *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, November 14, 2020; "The Plane Crash," *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, accessed January 25, 2024, [https://www.herald-dispatch.com/sports/marshall\\_plane\\_crash/the\\_plane\\_crash/](https://www.herald-dispatch.com/sports/marshall_plane_crash/the_plane_crash/).

<sup>5</sup> "Marshall University News Release May 19, 1971," Marshall University Archives, Marshall University Special Collections, Huntington, WV; "Students vote on memorial for victims of plane crash," *The Parthenon* 71, No. 72 (February 18, 1971).

<sup>6</sup> Sandra Lewis, "Combination is suggested for memorial," *The Parthenon*, March 12, 1971, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5212&context=parthenon>.

<sup>7</sup> Mike Kirtner, "The Architect of Remembrance," *Herd Insider*, November 9, 2005; Letter to Dr. Stephen Kopp from E. Keith Dean, December 1, 2006, Marshall University Archives, Accession Number 20140807.3, Marshall University Special Collections, Huntington, WV.

<sup>8</sup> Nikki Humrichouser, "Memorial plans still incomplete," *The Parthenon*, January 19, 1972, accessed March 12, 2024, <https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5815&context=parthenon>; Letter to Dr. Stephen Kopp from E. Keith Dean, December 1, 2006.

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Last Supper for Lenawee Hills Memorial Park in Adrian, Michigan; a replica of the “Boy with Thorn” statue for the Raphael Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri; the Kennedy Memorial Fountain for the University of Southern Florida; and eight bronze statues for the Alabama War Memorial.<sup>9</sup> Bertoia, by contrast, was an abstract artist. He used welded and shaped metal to create unique designs with organic, lively forms that were more open to interpretation. His portfolio included a metal screen panel for the General Motors Technical Center in Warren, Michigan; two tree-like sculptures for the Southdale Shopping Center in Edina, Minnesota; a bronze bush for Reading, Pennsylvania; and seven gold-plated dandelions for the Eastman Kodak Pavilion at the 1964 World’s Fair.<sup>10</sup>

The Memorial Committee sought to create a monument that was “something of artistic value representing the school’s sense of loss that will be meaningful in the future.”<sup>11</sup> One early proposal that gained some traction was for the sculpture to depict a buffalo, the mascot of Marshall’s “Thundering Herd” football team. Huntington-based interior designer John E. Jenkins offered one design that depicted several buffalo standing on a cloud, for example.<sup>12</sup> Other people, including Bertoia himself, preferred a sculpture that was less representational and more abstract – something that could appeal not just to the current generation, but to future generations, and that could evoke a variety of interpretations among people. A traditional statue, Bertoia believed, would also clash with the modern design of the new student center. “I think the Campus Student Center is very handsome and I would not like to see a buffalo detract from it,” he wrote to Keith Dean.<sup>13</sup>

Ultimately, the Memorial Committee voted 5-4 in favor of commissioning Bertoia to produce the sculpture. The four opposing committee members voted for Zuckermann. “The majority has overlooked the fact that this is a memorial to those persons who were student athletes and fans and were not student artists,” they wrote in a letter of dissent.<sup>14</sup> Despite some opposition, the project moved forward smoothly. In May 1972, Marshall announced its selection of Bertoia. The Marshall Foundation, the school’s fundraising organization, paid Bertoia his modest asking price of \$25,000 to create the memorial.

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<sup>9</sup> “Boy with Thorn,” The Raphael Hotel, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://www.raphaelkc.com/boy-with-thorn>; Dan Cherry, “Adrian memorial park sculpture bears scars of tragic storm,” *Daily Telegram*, November 19, 2019, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://www.lenconnect.com/story/news/disaster/2019/11/19/adrian-memorial-park-sculpture-bears/2258792007/>; Bernhard Zuckermann Resume, Marshall University Archives, Accession Number 19840227, Marshall University Special Collections, Huntington, WV.

<sup>10</sup> “Public Commissions,” Harry Bertoia Foundation, accessed February 9, 2024, <https://harrybertoia.org/harry-bertoia-public-commisisions/>.

<sup>11</sup> Humrichouser, “Memorial plans still incomplete.”

<sup>12</sup> Aundrea Horsley, “Something to identify with: The journey to find a proper Memorial Fountain,” *The Parthenon*, November 14, 2014, accessed March 12, 2024, <https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1427&context=parthenon>.

<sup>13</sup> Letter from Harry Bertoia to E. Keith Dean, September 10, 1972, Marshall University Archives, Accession Number 20140807.3, Marshall University Special Collections, Huntington, WV.

<sup>14</sup> Letter to Dr. John Barker from James O. Porter, William A. Thompson, James E. Phipps, and Nathaniel Ruffin, May 23, 1972, Marshall University Archives, Accession Number 19840227, Marshall University Special Collections, Huntington, WV.

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From his studio in Barto, Pennsylvania, Bertioia spent the next several months building his sculpture using bent and welded copper tubes with a bronze coating. He crafted a unique, curvy, organic shape, which he said “resembles a chalice, a form that encloses a precious fluid. Perhaps the fluid of life.”<sup>15</sup> Its tubes reached up to the sky, with a waterspout placed in the center. Bertioia explained that the sculpture was meant to evoke “the living, rather than commemorating Death itself in the waters of life, rising, renewing, reaching to express upward growth, immortality and eternity.”<sup>16</sup> Dr. Eugene Hoak, co-chairman of the Memorial Committee, commented that “The essence of it is the eternal renewal of the human spirit.”<sup>17</sup> In mid-October 1972, Bertioia completed work on the sculpture and shipped it to Marshall.

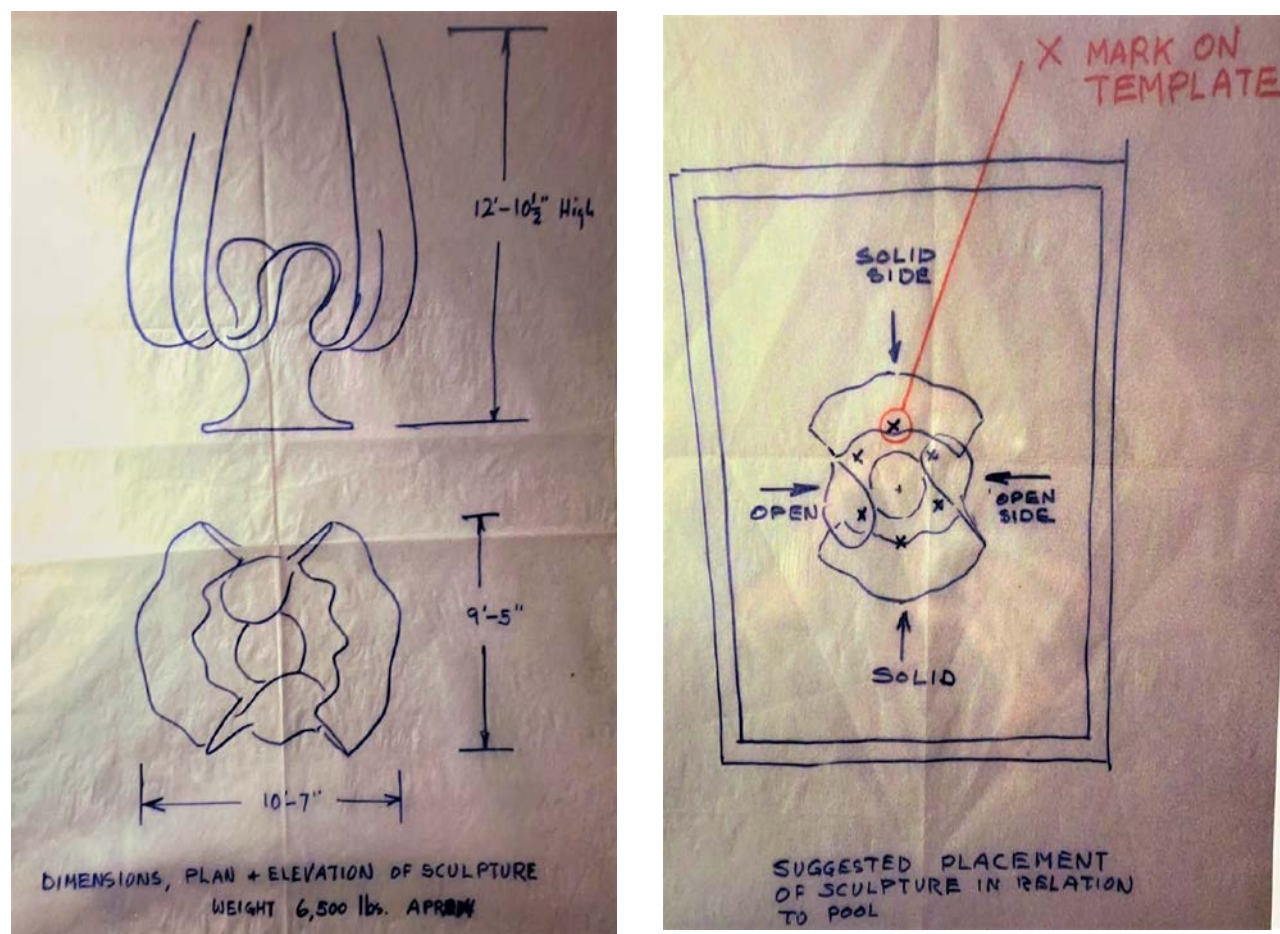


Figure 3: Bertioia Sketches of Fountain, courtesy Marshall University Special Collections

<sup>15</sup> Kevin Melrose, “Remembering . . . Memorials leave lasting symbols of community loss,” *The Parthenon*, November 14, 1990, accessed March 12, 2024,

<https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3857&context=parthenon>.

<sup>16</sup> Dedication Program, November 12, 1972, Marshall University Archives, Accession Number 20140807.3, Marshall University Special Collections, Huntington, WV.

<sup>17</sup> Elizabeth Kaplan, “Reaction to memorial pleases sculptor,” *Huntington Advertiser*, November 13, 1972.

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The fountain was dedicated in a “brief and impressive” ceremony on a Sunday afternoon, November 12, 1972, with over 500 people in attendance.<sup>18</sup> Assistant coaches Red Dawson and Mickey Jackson; Assistant Athletic Director Ed Starling; and graduate assistant Nate Ruffin, on behalf of the 1970 team, removed the covering to unveil the fountain. Remarks were delivered by Marshall President Dr. John G. Barker; Lawrence Tippet of the Marshall University Foundation; and Rev. Fred Warren, President of the Huntington Ministerial Association.<sup>19</sup> In his remarks, Tippet proclaimed that the memorial was “a fitting testimony to skill and creativity.”<sup>20</sup> Harry Bertoia attended the ceremony as well. When asked by a reporter how he thought students would respond to the sculpture, he answered, “Students are like other individuals. If they like the sound of the moving water and understand the impression of life constantly continuing, then that is good.”<sup>21</sup>

In August 1973, a pedestal and bronze plaque were installed in the reflecting pool by the F. C. McColm Granite Company and Neighborgall Construction Company, replacing a temporary marker that had been set for the fountain’s dedication the previous year.<sup>22</sup>



**Figure 4:** Memorial Fountain Dedication Ceremony Nov. 12, 1972, courtesy Marshall University Special Collections

<sup>18</sup> Denise Welker, “MU Fountain Dedication Brief And Impressive,” *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, November 13, 1972.

<sup>19</sup> Charles Coffman, “West Virginia Save Outdoor Sculpture (SOS!) Inventory Form: Memorial Sculpture,” West Virginia Historic Preservation Office. 1992, accessed January 25, 2024. <https://mapwv.gov/shpo/docs/PDFs/ArchitecturalSites/CB-2176.pdf>.

<sup>20</sup> Lawrence Tippet, “Memorial Sculpture Dedication,” Marshall University Archives, Marshall University Special Collections, Huntington, WV.

<sup>21</sup> “A lasting memorial . . . to those who died,” *The Parthenon*, November 14, 1972.

<sup>22</sup> Bob Withers, “Memorial Fountain designed to represent ‘upward growth, immortality, eternity,’” *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, July 27, 2006.

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## Impact of the Memorial Fountain

The fountain quickly proved popular with the student body, and it soon became an iconic landmark on campus, rivaled only by Old Main. In its early years, students often used the fountain as a wading pool, and some baptisms were even conducted in it.<sup>23</sup> In 1977, the Marshall University Art Gallery wrote of the impact that the sculpture was already having on campus:

“The fountain is becoming a symbol of the university itself, and, by extension, of the city of Huntington. It enlivens the space on campus, mediating . . . between the harsh geometry of most buildings and the organic geometry of nature.”<sup>24</sup>

The fountain dedication inaugurated a new annual tradition at Marshall University. Since that time, every year the school has held a “Fountain Ceremony” on November 14<sup>th</sup>, the day of the Marshall Plane Crash. Students, athletes, faculty, community leaders, and families of the crash victims gather at the fountain for a memorial service. Remarks are delivered by university leaders and a special keynote speaker. The names of all 75 victims are read out, and a white rose for each is laid at the edge of the reflecting pool. The school chorus performs a song, and the fountain is shut off. The fountain is turned back on in the spring with another ceremony.

In 2006, the fountain was filmed for the opening and closing scenes of the Warner Bros. movie *We Are Marshall*, which dramatized the plane crash and the rebirth of the football team.<sup>25</sup> That same year, the fountain was inspected and appraised at \$2.5 million.<sup>26</sup>

The fountain underwent \$200,000 worth of refurbishments in 2008 to address deterioration, especially around the sculpture’s concrete base. The base was repaired, and a water catch tray installed around it; the water pump system was upgraded, and aging pipes and electrical wiring replaced. The fountain itself was cleaned to remove some brown stains. Most noticeably, the reflecting pool was given a new mahogany granite tile surface by the McColm-Sears Monument Company. School officials stated that the granite tiles were meant to emphasize the fountain’s role as a memorial. It was rededicated in a ceremony on April 9, 2008.<sup>27</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Jim Ullian, “Memorial fountain site of baptismal,” *The Parthenon*, April 24, 1973, accessed March 13, 2024, <https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5869&context=parthenon>; Marshall University, *The Chief Justice, 1977* (State College, PA: American Yearbook Company, 1977), accessed March 13, 2024, <https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1058&context=yearbooks>.

<sup>24</sup> “Harry Bertoia: The Marshall Univ. Memorial Foundation,” Catalogue of Bertoia Exhibition, Art Gallery, Marshall University, September 26 – November 4, 1977.

<sup>25</sup> Dave Wellman, “The Story of We Are Marshall,” *Marshall Magazine* (Autumn 2006): 4-11, accessed March 13, 2024, [https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=marshall\\_magazine](https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1032&context=marshall_magazine).

<sup>26</sup> E. Keith Dean, Memorial Fountain Portfolio, Marshall University Archives, Accession Number 20140807.3, Marshall University Special Collections, Huntington, WV.

<sup>27</sup> Jessica Farner, “Campus Rebirth,” *Marshall Magazine* (Summer 2008): 4-10, accessed January 25, 2024, [https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=marshall\\_magazine](https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1021&context=marshall_magazine); “Video: Rededication of Marshall memorial fountain, April 9, 2008,” *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, March 29, 2018, accessed February 15, 2024, [https://www.herald-dispatch.com/multimedia/marshall\\_crash\\_videos/video-rededication-of-marshall-memorial-fountain-april-9-2008/video\\_9df93527-758b-5306-afa7-3879fac7e816.html](https://www.herald-dispatch.com/multimedia/marshall_crash_videos/video-rededication-of-marshall-memorial-fountain-april-9-2008/video_9df93527-758b-5306-afa7-3879fac7e816.html).

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**Figure 5:** Flowers covering the Memorial Fountain following the Nov. 14, 2022, Fountain Ceremony, courtesy Susan M. Pierce of WV SHPO

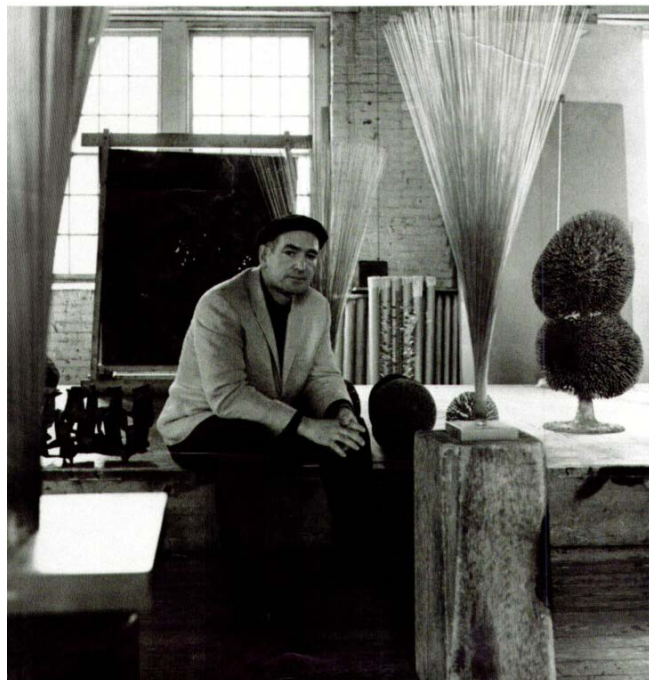


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**Figure 6:** Harry Bertoia, 1960s, courtesy of the Harry Bertoia Foundation

## Harry Bertoia

Harry Bertoia (1915-1978) was a mid-century abstract artist who specialized in using metal for his creations. Bertoia's works spanned a litany of items including jewelry, furniture, sculptures, and prints. His art was known for having interactive, organic qualities to them. "[W]hen you look at Bertoia's work there is a lot of life, movement and joy," said his daughter Celia Bertoia.<sup>28</sup>

Bertoia was born in 1915 in San Lorenzo, Italy and immigrated to the United States in 1930. His education included stints at the Detroit Society of Arts and Crafts, the Cranbrook Academy of Art, and welding training at Santa Monica College. While he studied different types of art, such as painting and printmaking, Bertoia developed

a talent for metalworking. During the 1940s he created metal jewelry and a successful series of monotypes. He designed furniture for Knoll, Inc. in the early 1950s. His most popular piece of furniture through Knoll was the Bertoia chair. Introduced in 1952, it was a distinct, diamond-shaped, metal wire grid seat. Sales of the chair allowed Bertoia to work on his art full time.

Bertoia began experimenting with tonal sculptures – sculptures that made sound – in the 1960s. Many of these consisted of vertical metal rods grouped together and would produce different chimes when touched. Others were gongs and singing bars. Bertoia used these sculptures to create his own music, which he termed "Sonambient." In the 1970s, he recorded 11 albums of original compositions using his tonal sculptures.

Beginning in 1953 and continuing until his death, Bertoia was commissioned to build a series of public sculptures, both indoor and outdoor. His main clients were banks, shopping centers, company headquarters, and government buildings. Of the more than 50 public sculptures he produced, most were metal screens, panels, hanging objects, gongs, and depictions of dandelions and sunbursts.

<sup>28</sup> Xena Bunton, "Abstract Memorial Continues to Memorialize Plane Crash," *The Parthenon*, November 10, 2020, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://marshallparthenon.com/26277/news/abstract-memorial-continues-to-memorialize-plane-crash/>.

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From the late 1960s to the early 1970s, he worked with copper tubing and bronze in his sculptures. Bertoia created five public fountains – for the Philadelphia Civic Center (1967); One M&T Plaza in Buffalo, New York (1968); Lake Clifton Senior High School in Baltimore, Maryland (1971); Marshall University (1972); and the National Bank of Boyertown in Pennsylvania (1974). A sixth tubular sculpture, though not functioning as a fountain, was produced for the A. Price Woodard, Jr. Park in Wichita, Kansas in 1974.<sup>29</sup>



**Figure 7:** Bertoia's Philadelphia Civic Center Fountain, circa 1967, courtesy Marshall University Special Collections

Bertoia's five fountains are similar in that each is composed entirely of welded copper tubes sealed in bronze, and each depicts an organic, plant-like form. The One M&T Plaza and Philadelphia Civic Center fountains also share the Marshall Memorial Fountain's green patina. The Marshall fountain is unique in that its tubes stretch upwards towards the sky, whereas the other fountains expand outward and are lower to the ground. The flared caps on the top of the Marshall fountain's tubes are also unique to it, not being present on the other fountains.

Harry Bertoia passed away in 1978. His many accolades included medals from the Architectural League of New York and the American Institute of Architects. His artworks are in the permanent collections of the Museum of Modern Art and the Smithsonian American Art Museum, among others. Many of his public sculptures also remain on display.<sup>30</sup>

<sup>29</sup> "Bertoia Public Works Timeline," Harry Bertoia Foundation, accessed February 8, 2024, <https://harrybertoi.org/harry-bertoia-public-commisisions/public-works-timeline/>; Peter Crimmins, "Long-dormant Bertoia sculpture transplanted to Chestnut Hill," WHY?Y, July 21, 2016, accessed February 8, 2024, <https://why.org/articles/long-dormant-bertoia-sculpture-transplanted-to-chestnut-hill/>.

<sup>30</sup> "About Harry," Harry Bertoia Foundation, accessed March 14, 2024, <https://harrybertoi.org/harry/>; "Harry Bertoia," Smithsonian American Art Museum, accessed March 14, 2024, <https://americanart.si.edu/artist/harry-bertoia-385>; Bill Belanger, "MU Fountain Creator Dies At Age 63," *Huntington Herald-Dispatch*, November 8, 1978.

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### Criterion C: Art

The Marshall University Memorial Fountain is significant under *Criterion C: Art* as a prominent work of public art created by famed abstract artist Harry Bertioia. It is Bertioia's only public, outdoor sculpture in West Virginia and one of the few he created that functions as a fountain. The fountain is an outstanding example of Bertioia's trademark artistic style. While his works spanned various mediums, Bertioia's metal sculptures in particular are noted by the art community for their attributes, such as form and sound, that reflect life. "Through his manipulation of industrial materials . . . Bertioia has achieved an organic, living quality," wrote art history scholar Judy Van Wagner.<sup>31</sup>

The Marshall Memorial Fountain exemplifies Bertioia's efforts to convey life in his artwork. The sculpture's unique tubular and curvy design; its focus upward; and the flowing waters give it a natural, uplifting feel. It was especially poignant given the commemorative nature of this sculpture. "Bertioia emphasized life with the fountain, not death, for our memory of the deceased is in life, not in death," said art professor Beverly Twitchell in 1983.<sup>32</sup>

The abstract design of the Memorial Fountain has been credited as one reason why, despite being over fifty years old, it still remains relevant and popular among the Marshall University community. "Time has proven that it is a successful memorial. The quality of the sculpture, the fact that it is not representational – you bring your own meaning," said Huntington Museum of Art Curator Chris Hatten in 2020.<sup>33</sup>

### Criteria Consideration F: Commemorative Properties

*Criteria Consideration F* holds that a "property primarily commemorative in intent can be eligible if design, age, tradition, or symbolic value has invested it with its own historical significance."<sup>34</sup> The Marshall University Memorial Fountain meets this criteria consideration for its historically significant design. It is a prominent work of abstract public art created by Harry Bertioia and one of his few fountain projects.

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<sup>31</sup> Judy Van Wagner, "Joslyn's Bertioia," undated article, publication unknown, Marshall University Archives, Accession No. 19840227, Marshall University Special Collections, Huntington, WV.

<sup>32</sup> Lorie Wyant, "Memorials stand as silent tribute to victims," *The Parthenon*, November 14, 1983, accessed March 12, 2024, <https://mds.marshall.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=3066&context=parthenon>.

<sup>33</sup> Xena Bunton, "Abstract Memorial Continues to Memorialize Plane Crash," *The Parthenon*, November 10, 2020, accessed January 25, 2024, <https://marshallparthenon.com/26277/news/abstract-memorial-continues-to-memorialize-plane-crash/>.

<sup>34</sup> *National Register Bulletin: How to Apply the National Register Criteria for Evaluation*, National Park Service, 1990, 39.

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**Previous documentation on file (NPS):**

- preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested
- previously listed in the National Register
- previously determined eligible by the National Register
- designated a National Historic Landmark
- recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # \_\_\_\_\_
- recorded by Historic American Landscape Survey # \_\_\_\_\_

**Primary location of additional data:**

- State Historic Preservation Office
  - Other State agency
  - Federal agency
  - Local government
  - University
  - Other
- Name of repository: Marshall University Special Collections

**Historic Resources Survey Number (if assigned):** CB-2176

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**10. Geographical Data**

**Acree of Property** less than one acre

Use either the UTM system or latitude/longitude coordinates

**Latitude/Longitude Coordinates**

Datum if other than WGS84: \_\_\_\_\_

(enter coordinates to 6 decimal places)

- |              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| 1. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 2. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 3. Latitude: | Longitude: |
| 4. Latitude: | Longitude: |

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**Or**  
**UTM References**

Datum (indicated on USGS map):

NAD 1927 or  NAD 1983

- |              |                 |                   |
|--------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| 1. Zone: 17N | Easting: 375254 | Northing: 4253696 |
| 2. Zone:     | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 3. Zone:     | Easting:        | Northing:         |
| 4. Zone:     | Easting :       | Northing:         |

**Verbal Boundary Description** (Describe the boundaries of the property.)

The nomination boundary comprises a 26'8" x 26'8" square surrounding the UTM references given above, matching the dimensions of the reflecting pool. Located in the center of the Marshall Memorial Student Center Plaza, within the 25.65 acre parcel described in Cabell County Deed Book 1149, Page 434. Boundary depicted in Figure 9.

**Boundary Justification** (Explain why the boundaries were selected.)

The selected boundary fully encompasses the nominated resource.

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### 11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Steven Cody Straley, National Register Coordinator  
organization: West Virginia State Historic Preservation Office  
street & number: 1900 Kanawha Boulevard, East  
city or town: Charleston state: WV zip code: 25305  
e-mail Cody.Straley@wv.gov  
telephone: 304-558-0240  
date: March 19, 2024

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### Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

- **Maps:** A **USGS map** or equivalent (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.
- **Sketch map** for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources. Key all photographs to this map.
- **Additional items:** (Check with the SHPO, TPO, or FPO for any additional items.)

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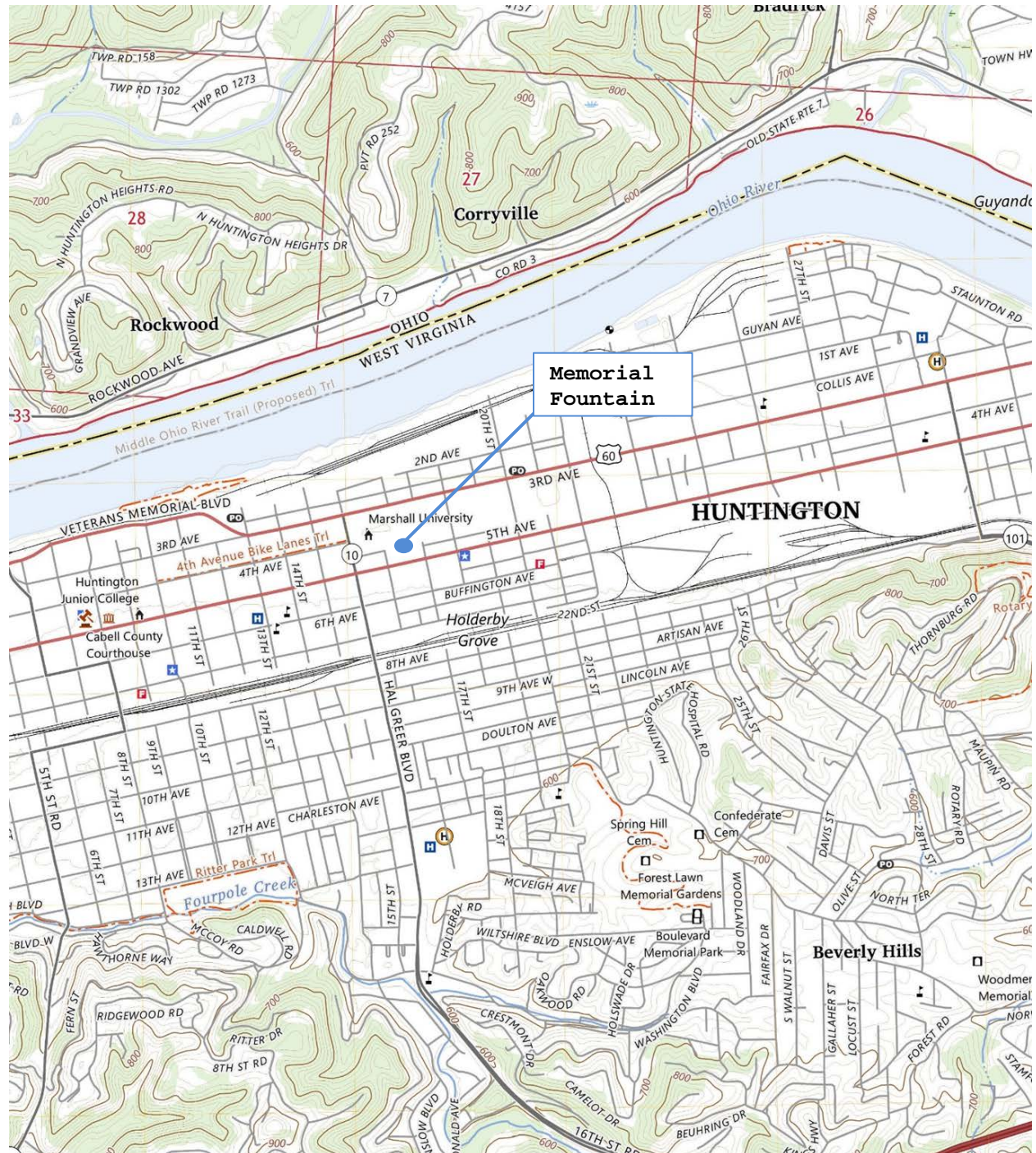


Figure 8: USGS Map – Huntington Quadrangle, 7.5-Minute Series, 2023

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**Figure 9:** Boundary Line & Photo Key – Satellite Image, WVGISTC, WWSHPO



= NR Boundary



= Photo Viewpoints

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## Photographs

Submit clear and descriptive photographs. The size of each image must be 1600x1200 pixels (minimum), 3000x2000 preferred, at 300 ppi (pixels per inch) or larger. Key all photographs to the sketch map. Each photograph must be numbered and that number must correspond to the photograph number on the photo log. For simplicity, the name of the photographer, photo date, etc. may be listed once on the photograph log and doesn't need to be labeled on every photograph.

## Photo Log

Name of Property: Marshall University Memorial Fountain

City or Vicinity: Huntington

County: Cabell

State: West Virginia

Photographer: Steven Cody Straley

Date Photographed: February 6, 2024

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

- 1 of 7: Memorial Fountain, northwest elevation  
WV\_CabellCo\_MarshallMemorialFountain\_0001
- 2 of 7: Memorial Fountain close-up, northwest elevation  
WV\_CabellCo\_MarshallMemorialFountain\_0002
- 3 of 7: Memorial Fountain base, northwest elevation  
WV\_CabellCo\_MarshallMemorialFountain\_0003
- 4 of 7: Memorial Fountain top, north elevation  
WV\_CabellCo\_MarshallMemorialFountain\_0004
- 5 of 7: Memorial Fountain, east elevation  
WV\_CabellCo\_MarshallMemorialFountain\_0005
- 6 of 7: Memorial Fountain Plaque, east elevation  
WV\_CabellCo\_MarshallMemorialFountain\_0006
- 7 of 7: Memorial Fountain and plaza, southwest elevation  
WV\_CabellCo\_MarshallMemorialFountain\_0007

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**Photo 1:** *Memorial Fountain, northwest elevation*

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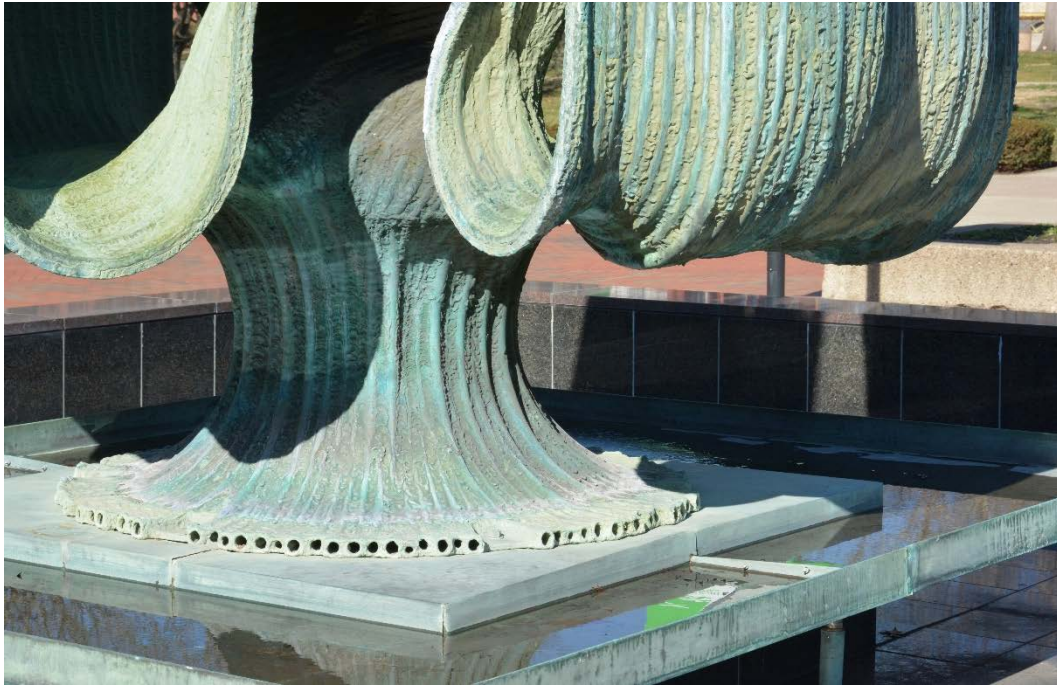


**Photo 2:** Memorial Fountain close-up, northwest elevation



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**Photo 3:** Memorial Fountain base, northwest elevation



**Photo 4:** Memorial Fountain top, north elevation

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Photo 5: Memorial Fountain, east elevation

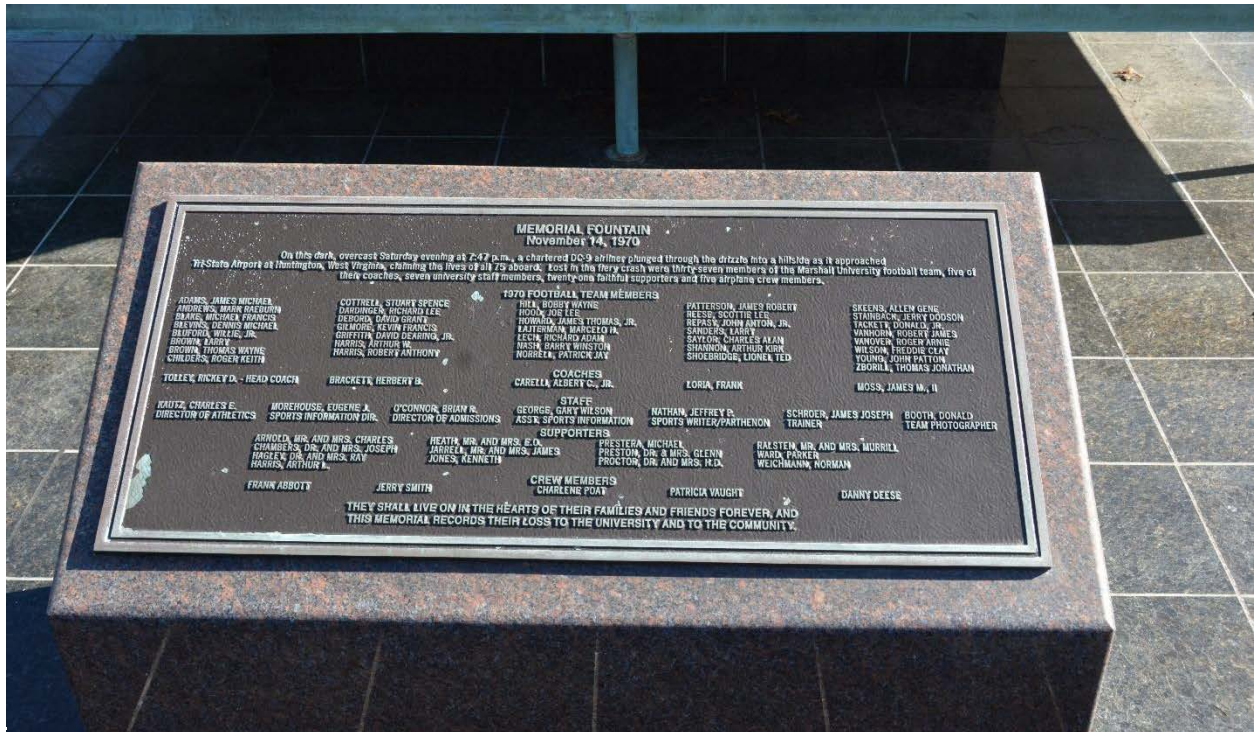


Photo 6: Memorial Fountain plaque, east elevation

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*Photo 7: Memorial Fountain and plaza, southwest elevation*

**Paperwork Reduction Act Statement:** This information is being collected for nominations to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C.460 et seq.). We may not conduct or sponsor and you are not required to respond to a collection of information unless it displays a currently valid OMB control number.

**Estimated Burden Statement:** Public reporting burden for each response using this form is estimated to be between the Tier 1 and Tier 4 levels with the estimate of the time for each tier as follows:

- Tier 1 – 60-100 hours
- Tier 2 – 120 hours
- Tier 3 – 230 hours
- Tier 4 – 280 hours

The above estimates include time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and preparing and transmitting nominations. Send comments regarding these estimates or any other aspect of the requirement(s) to the Service Information Collection Clearance Officer, National Park Service, 1201 Oakridge Drive Fort Collins, CO 80525.