

# Big Rock Garden Park

*Cover Photo:*

*The “Korean War Children’s Memorial Pavilion” honors American Service members who aided children during that time. This was a lifelong cause that George Drake supported.*

# Big Rock Garden Park

2900 Sylvan St

Bellingham, WA 98226

Open Daily from 8:00 am to 5:00 pm.

Parking Space Is Limited and No Dogs Allowed.

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BR  
GP

Founded  
1998

## PREFACE

The three most important figures in the creation of Big Rock Garden Park were George Drake, his wife Mary Ann, and David Marshall. The Drakes started Big Rock Garden Nursery in 1981. In 1993 they sold the property to the City of Bellingham for urban open space usage, and they began to explore ways to transform the Nursery into a Sculpture Garden instead. After seeing outdoor sculpture exhibits in Vancouver, BC, that had been staged by David Marshall, the Drakes asked him to help create a permanent sculpture garden/gallery on their 2.5 acre Silver Beach parcel. In 1998 the Nursery was renamed **Big Rock Garden Park**.

Over the years George Drake and David Marshall became best friends and supporters of each other's endeavors. Together, Drake and Marshall mounted some of the most successful outdoor sculpture shows in the Pacific Northwest, including the second major solo exhibition of Marshall's work in 2001.

Today 38 pieces of sculpture are on display in Big Rock Garden Park, including seven of Marshall's. The Drakes have donated or shared in the purchase of 28 works. More information re: George Drake is on the final page of this booklet.

## DAVID MARSHALL

Since Marshall's death in 2006, there has been renewed interest in his sculpture in his hometown (Vancouver, BC): largely due to George Drake's dogged support. In contrast to the more popular conceptual sculptors of his era, Marshall was not a good self-publicist: 'art speak' was an anathema to him. He just wanted people to have an immediate reaction to the language of his forms:

*"Sculpture is an international language capable of speaking to everyone who looks at it carefully. The written or spoken description often becomes a substitute, and a poor one, for what is being communicated by form. Look at the work." \**

In 2014 David Marshall's widow, Carel, donated a 12 ton marble sculpture made from beautiful Vancouver Island marble (from Nootka Sound) to the City of Bellingham, in grateful recognition for the role that George Drake and this city played in the furtherance of her husband's work. Today it sits in Cornwall Park just off Meridian, awaiting its final placement in the new waterfront park.

\* Quote from "The Life and Art of David Marshall", by Monika Ullmann, published in 2008 by the Mother Tongue Publishing Company, Vancouver, BC.

## DAVID MARSHALL IN BRGP



*Turtle* (Carrera Marble) 1974



*Sun Gate* (Bronze on Marble base) 1982



*Animal* (Sandstone) 1963

## DAVID MARSHALL IN BRGP



Marshall hoped that this Bronze sculpture (*Variations on a Sphere*) would serve as a model (*maquette*) for the construction of a monumental sized version. Both Drake and Sebastian tried to find a sponsor that would provide a suitable public location, and cover the construction and placement costs. They were unsuccessful. This piece was included in Marshall's 2001 Big Rock Garden exhibition, and later purchased by Drake for the Park.

"Marshall considered touch to be the key to sculpture's power to communicate," according to his biographer, Monika Ullmann. So when you see this piece rub your hands over it!



*Turtle (Marble) and Sun Gate (Bronze) in their natural habitat among the Azaleas.*



MORE OF DAVID MARSHALL



*Bust of Marshall (Bronze) by Jack Hardman*



*Four Forms (Marble)*



*Large Head (Bronze)*



*Man with a Broken Arm (Concrete)*



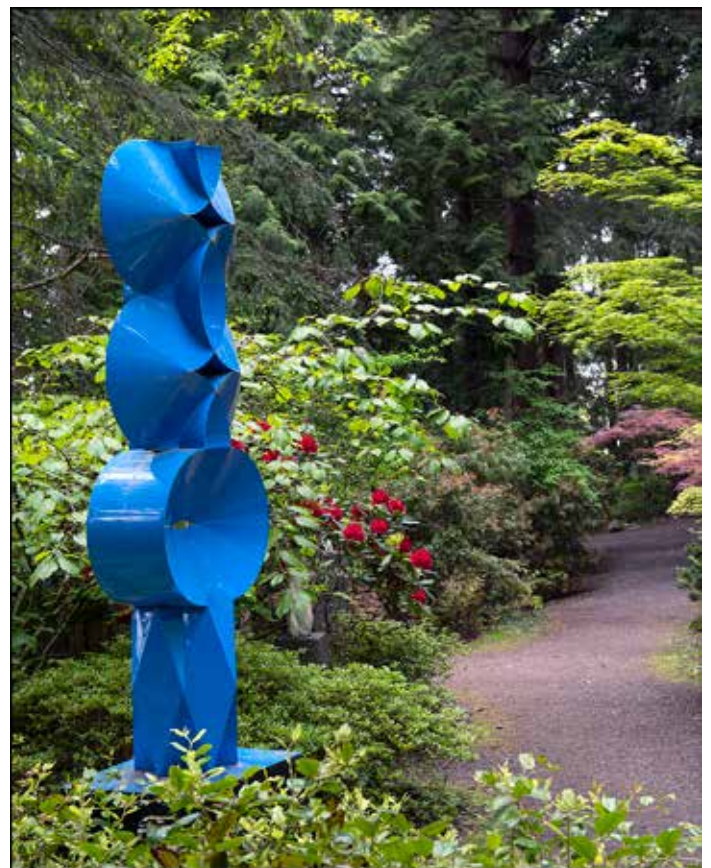
## Lipchitziana by Sebastian

### Painted Steel

Enrique Carbajal Gonzalez, who works under the artistic name of **Sebastian**, was born in 1947 in northern Mexico, and studied at the National Arts School in Mexico City. There he was heavily influenced by the works of Picasso and Henry Moore. Today he has more than 200 pieces on public display all over the world, making him one of the most famous and successful living sculptors of our time.

David Marshall arranged for George Drake and his wife to have dinner with Sebastian in Mexico City. Marshall had met the famed Mexican artist as part of an exchange program between Canadian and Mexican artists. Since Drake had previously done foreign aid development work for the State Dept. (U.S.A.I.D.) in Columbia, he spoke fluent Spanish. So he quickly established a genuine rapport with Sebastian.

In 2010 Drake arranged for an outdoor exhibit of several of Sebastian's sculptures in Bellingham. The big blue metal piece, *Lipchitziana*, was one of them. At the conclusion of the show the Drakes purchased it for the Big Rock Garden Park. It's the largest and most recognizable piece in the Park. The sculpture's name is a reference to Jacques Lipchitz, a contemporary of Picasso, who copied his Cubist artistic style in three dimensions.





*Cobra Dream*, Elaine MacKay (Basalt)



*Three Musicians, C.A. Scott (Steel)*



*Intuition Free* , Ann Morris (Bronze)



*Spiral Fractal #2*, Don Anderson (Stainless Steel)



*Positive Spirit*, Shirley Erickson





*Temple Guardian*, Arnie Garborg (Corten Steel),



*Tree of Life*, [in context], Michael Jacobsen (Granite & Basalt)



*Tree of Life*, Michael Jacobsen (Granite & Basalt)



*Turn*, Lee Imonen (Cypress Pine & Copper)



*The Messenger*, Devin Laurence Field (Stainless Steel)



*Endangered Species*, Georg Schmerholz



*Sweetwater*, C.A. Scott (Steel)



*Swell*, Aaron Loveitt (Aluminum)



*Zoe Garden Wall*, Donna Dobberfuhl (Carved Brick)





*Stabile*, Jan Za (Painted Steel)



*Volatus*, Rodney Carroll (Steel & Polished Aluminum)



*Gorgon, C.A. Scott (Steel)*



*Hope*, Scott F. Emory (Cascade Granite)



*Hope [in context] Scott F. Emory (Cascade Granite)*



*Twining*, Deborah Wilson (Carved Cement)



*Embrace*, Pasha Stinson (Onyx)



*Form of Chain, Kenji Gomi (Resin & Stainless Steel)*





*Natura*, Charles J. Armstrong (Carrera Marble)



*Sap*, Michael Decker (Douglas Fir, Resin & Steel)



*Peace*, Tracy Powell (Limestone)



*Lives in the Balance*, Michael Jacobsen (Bronze & Granite)



*State Street Totem, Reg Akright (Granite Curb Stone)*



*Untitled*, Pat Kuehnel (Stainless Steel)



*Eve & Adam*, Alexei Kazantsev (Carrera Marble)



*Unity*, Russ Beardsley & Cameron Scott (Granite & Marble)



## IN MEMORIAM

George Drake died peacefully at the age of 90 in 2020. He received his A.B. & M.A. from the University of California, Berkeley and his Ph.D. from the University of Wisconsin. In 1967 he came to Bellingham to teach at Western Washington University as a Professor of Sociology. In addition to his teaching duties, he also directed the International Teaching and Learning Programs for the University.

In 1981 with his wife and two sons, the Drakes opened the Big Rock Garden Nursery on a 2-1/2 acre portion of the 11 acre parcel of wooded land they owned next to their home on a hilltop in the Silver Beach neighborhood. The Drakes planned to specialize in Asian garden plants, such as: azaleas, rhododendrons and Japanese maples. But the primary purpose of the Nursery was to provide employment training for developmentally disabled youths to work in horticulture. (The Drakes had a Downs Syndrome son of their own.) Over time it morphed into the wonderful public Park that is documented in this booklet.

Before attending college, Drake enlisted in the Army at the start of the Korean War. The Army sent him to the Monterey Language School to learn Mandarin Chinese, so he could translate enemy radio communications. Upon arrival in Korea he was shocked by the poverty, and in particular, the number of orphaned children. Since then he has worked continuously to improve their plight. Both the U.S. and the Korean Governments have recognized his contributions to this cause.

The opening of the Big Rock Garden Park in 1998 coincided with the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War. That timing inspired Drake to build a monument in the Park to honor the humanitarianism of the American GI's in assisting Korean children. The result is the hilltop memorial (shown on the cover) that was dedicated in 2003. Drake also commissioned a 9 ft. tall carved granite pagoda for the Park to honor the twelve young men from Whatcom County who died in that conflict (shown on the back cover).



*Granite Pagoda to Honor the 12 Local Men Who Died in the Korean War*

The Bellingham Parks & Recreation Department manages the Big Rock Garden property and a volunteer organization, the *Friends of the Big Rock Garden*, is responsible for the art collection. This group depends on donations of time and money to preserve the sculptures and maintain the landscape in the Park.

If you'd like to help financially, donations can be made to the Whatcom Parks and Recreation Foundation, a 501(c)3 charity. To donate your time contact the *Friends of Big Rock Garden Park* at 360-778-7105.