

Collection #  
P 0868

**DAVID K. RUBINS COLLECTION  
CA. 1960–1965, N.D.**

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Processed by

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## COLLECTION INFORMATION

VOLUME OF COLLECTION:	5 Photograph folders; 2 OVA Graphics folders
COLLECTION DATES:	Ca. 1960–1965, n.d.
PROVENANCE:	Gift from Benjamin Ortiz and Victor P. Torchia Jr. from their American Art & Artist Archive Collection, September 2023
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RELATED HOLDINGS:	
ACCESSION NUMBER:	2023.0133
NOTES:	<i>See also:</i> Rowland Allen Papers (M0508)

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

David K. Rubins was a sculptor and a professor at the Herron School of Art in Indianapolis. His works on display in Indianapolis include the statue of young Abraham Lincoln at the state government center, a bust of Governor Henry F. Schricker at the State House, the Lilly monument at Crown Hill Cemetery, the cherub that adorns the L.S. Ayres clock at Christmastime, commemorative plaques at the Riley Hospital for Children, ornamental work on the exterior of the Federal Building, and sculptures owned by the Indianapolis Museum of Art and the Herron School of Art. In 1964 Governor Matthew Welsh named Rubins a Sagamore of the Wabash.

David Kresz Rubins was born 5 September 1902 in Minneapolis, Minnesota, to Harry Winfield Rubins and Florence Hawkins Rubins. David had two older siblings – a sister, Marian, and a brother, Ralph. By 1910 the family had moved to New Rochelle, New York, but had moved back to Minneapolis by 1920. Rubins studied at Dartmouth College in New Hampshire and the Beaux Arts Institute of Design in New York before traveling to Paris to study at the École des Beaux-Arts and Académie Julian. In 1924, he was awarded the Paris Prize in Sculpture. He was a fellow of the American Academy in Rome from 1928 to 1931. Rubins worked as an apprentice to sculptor James Earle Fraser for seven years, collaborating with him on the equestrian statue of Theodore Roosevelt that resided for decades in front of the American Museum of Natural History in New York City. He also worked with Fraser on sculptures that sit outside the United States Supreme Court and the National Archives buildings in Washington, DC.

In 1931 Rubins married Marion Ayer (1897–1956) in Massachusetts. They had two sons. Their first, James Ayer Rubins, was born in 1933 in New York City. In 1935 Rubins joined the faculty of the Herron Art Institute in Indianapolis. His and Marion's second son, Harry Litchfield Rubins (1938–2022), was born in Indianapolis.

In 1953 Rubins published *The Human Figure: An Anatomy for Artists*, which became a standard text in art schools across the country and was translated into German. In 1961 twenty of his works were exhibited at the Herron's museum.

Rubins's statue of *Young Abe Lincoln* was two years in the making. It was created as a commissioned piece upon winning a competition. The bronze sculpture stands nine feet and four inches tall and weighs more than 1500 pounds. It shows Lincoln as a barefoot young man, with one of his fingers keeping his place in the book he is holding. The unveiling ceremony took place on 26 September 1963. The statue originally stood facing Senate Avenue in the State Government plaza; it was moved about a half block west in 1992.

Rubins's bronze bust of Governor Henry F. Schricker was unveiled in the State House on 25 November 1964. Other portraits he had sculpted included those of Evans Woollen Sr. and Frederick M. Ayres. His sculpture, *Stumbling Man*, created in 1969 for a state-sponsored competition to honor the memory of Indiana coal miners, was formally dedicated at the Indianapolis Museum of Art in 1981. Rubins was then the only living Indiana artist to have a sculpture on the IMA's grounds.

When the Herron school became part of Indiana University in 1967, Rubins was named a professor of sculpture. He retired three years later but remained an “artist in residence” at Herron. In 1973 Herron alumni honored him with “David K. Rubins Day,” which included a dinner party and the announcement of two scholarships in his name. Alumni honored him again in 1978 with a special exhibition of his work in the Herron Gallery. He continued to work in a studio across the street from the school on the Indiana University–Purdue University Indianapolis campus until illness caused him to stop. He became a professor emeritus in 1981. In 1983, he was one of six winners of the biennial Indiana Arts Awards given for contributions by Indiana artists to the national and international art community. David K. Rubins died on 6 March 1985 in Indianapolis.

Sources:

Ancestrylibrary.com (Accessed 20 October 2023):

Find a Grave

Indiana, U.S., Birth Certificates, 1907–1944

Indiana, U.S., Death Certificates, 1899–2017

Massachusetts, U.S., Marriage Index, 1901–1955

Minnesota, U.S., Births and Christenings Index, 1840–1980

New York, New York, U.S., Birth Index, 1910–1965

United States Federal Census, 1880–1950

U.S., Obituary Collection, 1930–Current

Garmel, Marion Simon. “David Rubins Honored” in *The Indianapolis News*, 12 April 1978, p. 24.

Garmel, Marion. “Sadly missed, but not soon forgotten” in *The Indianapolis News*, 13 March 1985, p. 46.

“Hands At Work.” In *The Indianapolis News*, 28 November 1970, p. 14.

“Herron’s Rubins To Be Honored Today.” In *The Indianapolis Star*, 11 June 1961, sec. 8, p. 5.

“Indiana Lincoln Statue Unveiled.” In *The Indianapolis News*, 26 September 1963, p. 17.

Jensen, Jean. “Cherubic Secret Unveiled” in *The Indianapolis News*, 25 December 1978, p. 16.

Morehouse, Lucille E. “High Standard Set By First Two-Man Show In New Series” in *The Indianapolis Star*, 27 October 1946, p. 18.

“Schricker Unveiled.” In *The Muncie Star*, 24 November 1964, p. 14.

“Sculptor David Rubins To Retire From Herron.” In *The Indianapolis Star*, 3 May 1970, sec. 9, p. 7.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

This collection consists of photographs, correspondence, and newspaper articles pertaining to the sculptor David K. Rubins. The collection is arranged into three series, as follows:

**Series 1, Photographs** – This series is composed of black-and-white photographs that show Rubins working in his studio on his *Young Abe Lincoln* and Lilly monument sculptures, the works in progress, the unveiling ceremony for the Lincoln statue, the installation of the Lilly monument, and the bust of Governor Henry F. Schricker.

**Series 2, Correspondence** – This series includes two letters written by David K. Rubins to his aunt and uncle, Alice and Arthur N. Hosking, in November 1962 and February 1965; the first was addressed to 75 White Oak Street in New Rochelle, New York. He included newspaper clippings with his letters. [Alice was the sister of David's mother, Florence.]

**Series 3, Newspaper Articles** – This series contains photocopies of newspaper articles about David K. Rubins that appeared in *The Indianapolis Star Sunday Magazine* in October 1962 and February 1965. Rubins had sent these articles to his aunt and uncle, Alice and Arthur N. Hosking.

## SERIES CONTENTS

### Series 1: Photographs

#### CONTENTS

Eleven photographs of the *Young Abe Lincoln* statue in the sculptor's studio. David K. Rubins appears in two of these photos. [ca. 1960–1962]

Seven photographs of the unveiling ceremony for the *Young Abe Lincoln* statue, 26 September 1963. Two photos show David K. Rubins's mother and two sons in the audience; one shows the crowd in attendance; one shows Rubins being introduced outside the Indiana State Office Building; one shows Rubins with Governor Matthew E. Welsh at the foot of the statue; two show the statue.

Eight photographs of the *Peace Angel* for the Lilly Monument by the graves of Eli and Ruth Lilly: models in the studio and the final monument being placed in Crown Hill Cemetery. One photo in the studio shows David K. Rubins working on the sculpture. One photo at the cemetery shows Rubins; another taken in the cemetery shows Richard Murphy, owner of a granite business in Connecticut, on a ladder. [n.d.]

One photograph of the sculpted bust of Governor Henry F. Schricker, 1964. Written at the bottom of the photo: "Uncle Arthur – Aunt Alice - Dave – 1964."

#### CONTAINER

Photographs,  
Folder 1

Photographs,  
Folder 2

Photographs,  
Folder 3

Photographs,  
Folder 4

## Series 2: Correspondence

### CONTENTS

Letter written by Rubins to his Aunt Alice in New Rochelle, New York [on 9 November 1962] discusses his mother's complaint of a dress made for her; the ceremony dedicating the new building [Fesler Hall, at the Herron School of Art, designed by Evans Woollen, dedication held the weekend of November 3–4, 1962]; and stated that the "plaster men" from New York had picked up his mould, taken it back to New York where they'll make a positive plaster cast and deliver it to the foundry for the bronze [probably referring to his sculpture of the *Young Abe Lincoln*].

Letter written by Rubins to his Uncle Arthur and Aunt Alice in New Rochelle, New York [on 7 February 1965] in which he had included a clipping of *The Indianapolis Star* article about him from that day's "Sunday Magazine" section. He complains about the poor writing and being misquoted.

### CONTAINER

Photographs,  
Folder 5

Photographs,  
Folder 5

## Series 3: Newspaper Articles (photocopies)

### CONTENTS

"David K. Rubins" article by Lotys Benning Stewart with photographs by Tommy Wadelton, in *The Indianapolis Star Magazine*, 21 October 1962, pages 11–14. (photocopies of newspaper pages)

"Young Lincoln As Seen By A Hoosier Sculptor" shows a photo of Rubins working on his sculpture of Lincoln. This is a promotion for the upcoming article in the next Sunday's *Indianapolis Star Magazine* [clipped from *The Indianapolis News*, 5 February 1965, p. 20]. (photocopy of newspaper clipping)

"Young Lincoln As Seen By A Hoosier Sculptor" article in *The Indianapolis Star Sunday Magazine*, 7 February 1965 – magazine cover plus pages 28–31. (photocopies of newspaper pages)

### CONTAINER

OVA Graphics, Folder 1

OVA Graphics, Folder 2

OVA Graphics, Folder 2