

Collection #  
M 1502

**PATRICK FLANIGAN  
COLLECTION, 1953-1989**

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Processed by

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## **COLLECTION INFORMATION**

**VOLUME OF COLLECTION:** 1 half-sized manuscript box, 5 folders photographs, 5 folders cold storage color photographs

**COLLECTION DATES:** 1953-1989

**PROVENANCE:** Nora Hovee

**RESTRICTIONS:** Color photos are kept in cold storage and need at least four hours to acclimate to room temperature. Patrons are advised to call ahead if they wish to view those items.

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**ALTERNATE FORMATS:**

**RELATED HOLDINGS:**

**ACCESSION NUMBER:** 2004.0137

**NOTES:**

## BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Patrick Flanigan was born 8 September 1927 to Georgia [Marshall] Flanigan and Walter Flanigan of Bartholomew County, Indiana. Flanigan lived most of his life in Indianapolis and attended John Herron Art School. A Catholic, during World War II he served as assistant to Father Charles W. "Dismas" Clark, S.J., also known as "The Hoodlum Priest." In the mid-1950s he worked as art consultant to President Dwight D. Eisenhower. Flanigan also met and maintained friendships with Hollywood personalities Helen Hayes, Frances Farmer, and Christine Jorgensen, and local notables Richard Lugar and Bob Carter (Sammy Terry).

As a painter, Flanigan was well-known in Indianapolis and beyond for his large-scale murals. He often said, "The large, the difficult, and the impossible are all my specialties." His murals usually depicted muscular, stylized male figures in muted tones with large, visible brushstrokes. He specialized in religious subject matter and frequently worked with churches and other philanthropical organizations.

In 1969 Flanigan traveled to the middle east and on behalf of Indianapolis mayor Richard Lugar presented a key to the city of Indianapolis to Jerusalem mayor Teddy Kollek. While there, Flanigan received permission to make rubbings at each of the stations of the cross. In 1971 he went to Rome and presented the rubbings to Pope Paul VI.

Flanigan made friends easily and his acquaintances regularly commented on his personable nature and wide smile. In 1975, he received more votes than his friend, outgoing Mayor Lugar, in the *Indianapolis Star's* "Man of the Year" contest. At an art festival that year, he made friends with members of the American Indian Council. Flanigan had long been interested in the cultures of indigenous peoples. Three years later, he said a group of Blackfoot people "adopted" him and gave him the name "Sun Eagle." Thereafter he often used native iconography in his work, wore traditional native jewelry, and signed his paintings "Sun Eagle."

After a fall in the early 1980s, Flanigan's work slowed due to injuries he sustained and associated health troubles. However, he continued to participate in art shows and was frequently quoted in the newspaper on art topics.

Patrick Flanigan passed away in 2004. His body was donated to the Anatomical Education Program.

Sources:

Materials in the collection

"Patrick 'Sun Eagle' Flanigan," *Indianapolis Star*, 18 July 2004, accessed 2 September 2022 via newspapers.com

## **SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE**

This collection consists of materials kept by Flanigan in scrapbooks. The scrapbooks, which contained photographs, news clippings, and correspondence, had been disassembled at some point prior to acquisition. Consequently, the pages were out of order. The processor removed the items from their scrapbook pages and arranged them into chronological order as near as was possible.

Major works represented in the collection are “St. Dismas,” at Dismas House in St. Louis, 1962; “Martyrdom of St. Brebeuf,” at Brebeuf Preparatory School in Indianapolis, 1964; “Crucifixion,” at Cardinal Ritter High School in Indianapolis, 1967; “Noah’s Ark,” at Fletcher Place United Methodist Church in Indianapolis, 1973; “Jesus’ Baptism,” at Emmanuel Baptist Church in Toledo, Ohio, 1974; various murals at the Veteran’s Hospital on Cold Spring Road in Indianapolis, 1976; and “Custer’s Last Stand,” at a truck stop on I-65 at Greenwood, 1981. Also well-represented is an art show held at Greenbrier Interiors, a business co-owned by Frances Farmer, circa 1965. Other clippings describe his work in Israel, Italy, Hawaii, and Kalamazoo, Michigan, among others.

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Undated promotional material

Artworks, portraits, postcard from Lillian Roth, circa 1953-1957

Clippings, letters, and other scrapbook materials, 1954-1964

Dismas House, St. Louis, 1962

Dismas House, St. Louis, 1962

Dismas House, St. Louis, 1962

Portraits and Greenbrier Interiors art show, circa 1960-1965

Greenbrier Interiors art show, circa 1965

Brebeuf Preparatory School, 1964; unknown television appearance, n.d.

Brebeuf Preparatory School, Cardinal Ritter High School, other shows, circa 1964-1972

Clippings, letters, and other scrapbook materials, 1965-1970

Silhouette National Health Spa office blanks, letter to Col. Roscoe Turner, 1967-1968, n.d.

Clippings, letters, and other scrapbook materials, 1971-1973

Miscellaneous art shows, portraits, and appearances, circa 1972-1976

### CONTAINER

Box 1, Folder 1

Photographs,  
Folder 1 of 5

Box 1, Folder 2

Cold Storage  
Color Photographs:  
Folder 1 of 5

Cold Storage  
Color Photographs:  
Folder 2 of 5

Photographs,  
Folder 2 of 5

Cold Storage  
Color Photographs:  
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Photographs,  
Folder 3 of 5

Photographs,  
Folder 4 of 5

Cold Storage  
Color Photographs:  
Folder 4 of 5

Box 1, Folder 3

Box 1, Folder 4

Box 1, Folder 5

Photographs,  
Folder 5 of 5

Miscellaneous art shows, portraits, and murals, circa 1972-1979, n.d.	Cold Storage Color Photographs: Folder 5 of 5
Clippings, letters, and other scrapbook materials, 1974	Box 1, Folder 6
Clippings, letters, and other materials, 1975	Box 1, Folder 7
Clippings, letters, and other scrapbook materials, 1976-1989	Box 1, Folder 8
Clippings, letters, and other scrapbook materials, n.d.	Box 1, Folder 9