

Hero in our midst

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for 1996." When he received the Order of the Long Leaf Pine award from Gov. Jim Hunt 13 years ago, he thought all retirees in North Carolina received it. He said he later discovered the importance of it when he saw a gentleman receive it on a news program.

The Order of the Long Leaf Pine award is considered among the most prestigious awards presented by the governor of North Carolina. Some of the past winners include Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines, Oprah Winfrey, Dean Smith, Michael Jordan, Richard Petty and Dale Earnhardt. It is pre-

plexion deceived those around him.

"They can't put me in jail, so they put me in books, because my life is constructive. I am a disciplined man," he said. He said he is a vegetarian and drinks several gallons of distilled water a week.

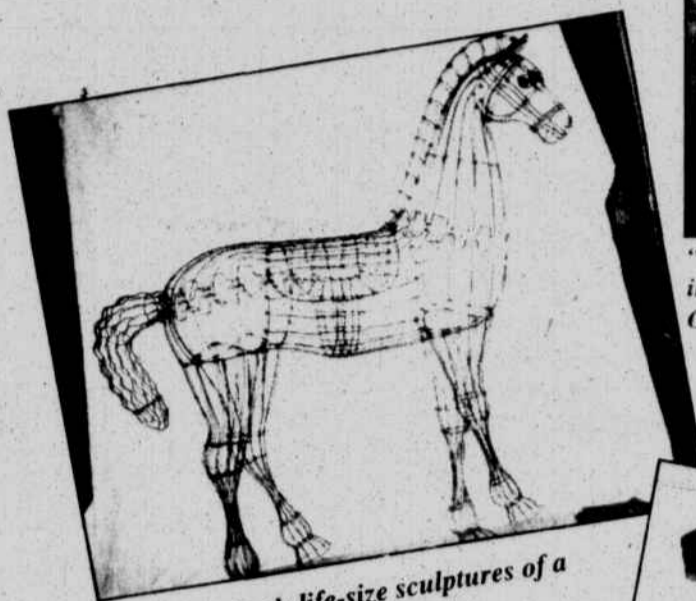
Oubre often uses nonconventional means to achieve his level of form, technique and color. Another challenge of convention became his when he corrected the Color Triangle devised by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. Oubre said that James T. Diggs gave him the triangle and asked him to examine it. "I give him credit for calling this to my atten-



Sgt. Hayward Oubre stands on the top row, fourth from the left, with his regiment. They helped build the Alcan Highway in Alaska during World War II.



"The Prophet" (above) stands 5 feet 11 inches. "Seated Figure" (below) is a figure Oubre sculpted from a block of mahogany.



One of Oubre's life-size sculptures of a horse includes intricate detail.



This painting, called "Wilted," describes the psychological state of a black man in America. Oubre said he will only sell this piece to someone who respects black men.



Hayward Oubre stands with the Chief of State of the Army when he was recognized in the Hall of Heroes in 1993 at the Pentagon.

sented to individuals who have a proven record of service to the State of North Carolina.

Oubre was recognized in the Hall of Heroes in 1993 for his commitment as a soldier. He was one of the more than 3,000 African-American men who were sent to Alaska to construct the first highway that connected the United States with Alaska in 1942. It took 50 years for the black soldiers who worked on the Alaskan highway to be recognized. The naming of the Black Veterans Recognition Bridge on the Alaska Highway over the Gerstle River involved an act by the legislature of the state of Alaska which was approved by the governor June 1, 1993. Oubre was the sergeant of the regiment. He was recognized at the Pentagon.

Oubre has been featured in "Upscale Magazine," "Carolina Perspective" and "Fine Art for January 1997." Collectors still buy his self portrait. He used contour lines to make three-dimensional perception instead of light/dark expression.

"The three-dimensional world is God's world," said Oubre. Although he does not attend church or identify with a particular religion, he said he respects God and His laws.

He drew the portrait by looking at himself in a mirror, and it only took 10 minutes. The sketch is in the permanent collection at Clarke University in Atlanta.

Although Oubre has received many honors, he has also had many brushes with racism.

"Racism will never cease in this country, because of slavery. It is like a cancer," he said.

Some of his friends advised him to "pass" in order to avoid some of the pitfalls of racism, but Oubre said, "I wasn't passing; the white people passed me," he said. He said he has overheard many conversations that were far from complimentary to African Americans because his com-

tion," Oubre said. Oubre said he used math to design a three-intensity color wheel, thereby proving von Goethe's color triangle to be mathematically incorrect. He received the copyright in 1975. In addition, Oubre prepared "A Concise Study of Color Mixing and Color Relationships" in 1966.

"God has all intelligence. He is the active creator of the universe, and He is there to call upon," said Oubre. "He is the source of my inspiration."

His first wire sculpture was called "Proud Rooster." "I am always amazed at God's creation. I see Him constantly in His miracles and wonders, and I am inspired to use my gift. He gave it to me, and I thank Him for it everyday," he said. Oubre started doing wire sculpture when he studied isometrics as exercise. He maintains agility and power in his hands by molding and shaping clothes hangers. All he uses are pliers to cut the wire, and he paints them with brushes.

Born in New Orleans, Oubre was the youngest of three siblings. While studying at Dillard University, he played football and ran track. He graduated from Dillard with his bachelor's degree in 1939 and completed his master's of fine arts degree at University of Iowa in 1948. He served as chairman of painting and sculpture at Florida A&M University from 1948 to 1949. He served as associate professor and chairman of the Art Department at Alabama State University from 1950 to 1965, before going to WSSU.

Oubre works out in his gym daily and prides himself in having superior hand strength.

Oubre recently received a newsletter from the Friends of the Library at WSSU that revealed that the University Records Department received a \$1,900 grant to document the life of Oubre and Coach Clarence "Bighouse" Gaines.

"It was God who helped me to achieve," said Oubre. "I bow down only to Him. I bow to no man."

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