

# A Passion for Clay: Villa Gardens Dedicates Resident-Created Sculpture - 'Variations'

"Once I put my hands in the clay and got it under my fingernails I was a goner," laughed artist and Villa Gardens resident Joyce Newman about her first introduction to sculpting. "I was hooked. Since then, sculpting in clay has been my fascination for 60 years."



**Resident artist Joyce Newman and her sculpture "Variations."**

Although she has a doctorate in biochemistry and worked in that field briefly, Joyce's passion in life and her career has been art, specifically sculpting, although she also dabbles in watercolor. She had to decide between her love of science and art and art won. "I took a chance," she said. "It's very difficult to make a living as an artist but I felt it was my calling." Joyce is also a published author and was recognized by "Who's Who" from 1976-2001.

Joyce specializes in public sculptures. Her first was in 1970, which was installed at the Douglas County Library in Castle Rock, Colorado. Her works have also graced Carter Hall, the Administration Building of the University of Northern Colorado; Littleton Civic Center, in Littleton Colorado; and outside the Adult Multipurpose Room in the city of Chandler, Arizona, among other locations.

Her works range from small to monumental. The thematic material that interests Joyce the most are the interrelationship between people seen as forms in the clay. Joyce is basically self-taught, although a longtime artist friend, and sometimes collaborator, Henry Mead, helped her refine her skills over the years.

Joyce recently added an art installation to Villa Gardens senior living community in Pasadena, CA. In April, 2022, her piece titled "Variations," a site-specific sculpture she created exclusively for Villa Gardens, was dedicated.

"I'm thankful to Villa Gardens for the opportunity to create a piece that is unique to this special place of warmth and community," Joyce said.

"We are very grateful to Joyce," said Villa Gardens Executive Director Paula Digerness, who personally asked Joyce to create something for the community. "It's such a wonderful piece that

makes Villa Gardens an even more art filled place to enjoy life.”



**Villa Gardens residents admire “Variations.”**

“Variations” found its home in a partially shaded area in the garden courtyard near the putting green and Solarium Gym. The site, located above a sitting area and underneath a pergola, provides a variety of light and shadows, which makes it the perfect location, according to Joyce. “When deciding on a location for art, I either pick the site or the site picks me. At Villa, the site picked me.”

Although the wall-hung, high-fired stoneware sculpture is titled, Joyce is usually reluctant to name or interpret her pieces.

“The work has no specific meaning,” Joyce insists. “It is what it is to whomever looks at it. The thing about sculptures is that there are so many different ways to look at them. It looks different depending on the time of day. It’s fun to look at something and find new meaning in it every time.”

“I think the sculpture is very appropriate for Villa,” said resident Ruth Saffman. “It fits in so nicely.”

When Joyce lived in her family home in Pasadena, she maintained an art studio. When she moved to Villa, she was able to set up a new, small studio in her third-floor apartment so she could continue to work in watercolor and drawing.

“Villa has a reputation as an intellectually stimulating community,” Joyce said. “I just love that. Moving to a senior living community was not an easy decision but I wanted to make sure I made the move when I wanted to, not when necessity forced me to.”