

# St. Isidore and St. Maria Patron Saints of Farmers

Linda Dabeau, an Albuquerque sculptor dedicated to the “tactile and visual beauty of truth of pure form,” was commissioned by the Diocese of Dodge City to sculpt the image of St. Isidore, patron Saint of farmers, and his wife, St. Maria.

The life-sized sculpture will be placed in one of the curved alcoves surrounding the worship area.



Like other artists commissioned by the diocese, Dabeau first had to have her design approved by Bishop Ronald Gilmore. She said that her initial sketch included a more contemporary version of the 12th century farmer. After careful study, the bishop opted for clothing suited more toward the time the saint lived.

“There will be a few changes, but just about everything that the bishop approved will be there,” Dabeau said.

“The style is *figurative contemporary*. It’s somewhat realized, but I always add a lot of my creativity so that it’s more expressive.”

Like nearly everyone associated with the dedication, her most dire concern in the quickly approaching dedication date. When she spoke to the SKR Nov. 8, she expected to be done

sculpting within one week, after which time the sculpture would have to dry for a full month before she could fire it in a kiln.

“You have to work in sequence with wet clay,” she explained. “It’s very tedious. You want to make sure it’s going to come out as well and beautiful as it can.” Dabeau is known for exploring a multiplicity of materials and styles in her art. She said that the results of her labors are “aimed at the viewer’s spiritual core.”

Dabeau was born in Dallas, Texas in 1947, but spent her formative years and adolescence in Latin America. She was steeped in the “self-righteously rational skyscraper economic extravagance of central Texas” and the “romantic sacred mythic mysteries of pre-Columbian civiliza-

tions and traditional Hispanic Catholicism of Central America.”

After studying painting at the University of the Americas in Mexico City, she continued to explore the physicality of aesthetic form. She pursued painting and design at North Texas University in Denton.

As she matured as an artist, her multinational and cross-cultural influences insured a successful 14-year career as a free-lance designer and illustrator. However, her commercial success was unable to satisfy a yearning to marry her life-long love of stone with her visceral desire for tangible self-expression.

In 1985, she moved to Albuquerque and opened a professional sculpture studio. With fierce tenacity and an acute awareness of the artistic resources of New Mexico, she dove into and mastered the sculptural process.

In the past, Dabeau has experimented with various sculptural mediums including carved stone, ceramics, and cast bronze. Like fellow modernists Henry Moore, Jean Arp, and Alexander Archipenko, she is inspired by the complexity of natural forms and the clarity of vision expressed in primitive art.

From a wide range of sources including the human figure, Dabeau extracts the “atavistic essence of art.” She mingles inspiration drawn from modern masters, traditional folk artists, and the intricacies of her own life experience in the creation of works ranging in form and content from realistically-rendered religious icons to absolute abstractions.

Her expressions in stone and bronze have been exhibited throughout the United States, Mexico, and Japan. Her works have been published in *Dartmouth Street Gallery* catalogues, *New Mexico Magazine*, the *Albuquerque Journal*, the *Southwest Art* magazine and some have been seen on public television.

Her reverent, emotionally laden and spiritually touching religious images have been commissioned by many churches in New Mexico and nationally.