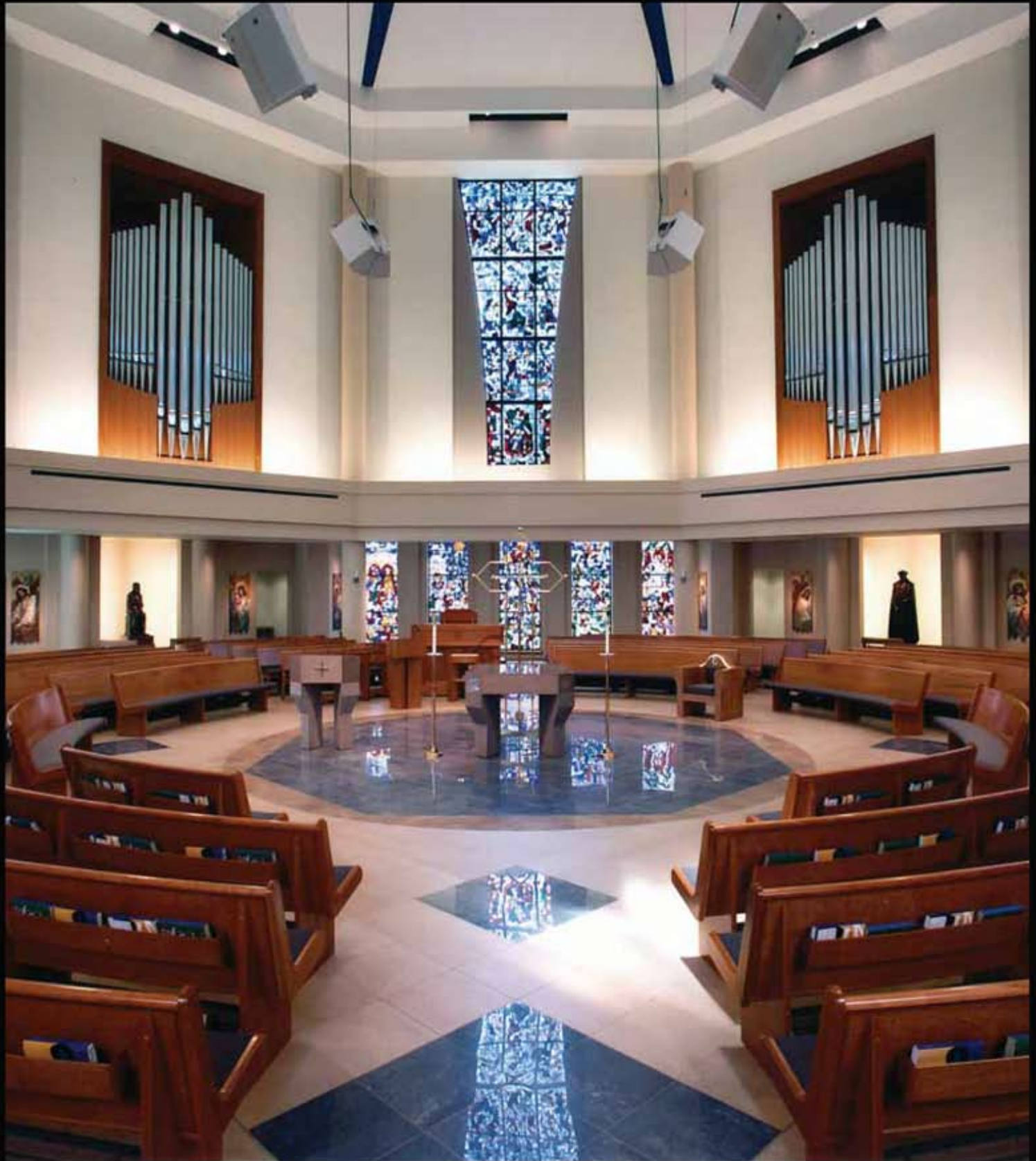


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The Jersey City Medical Center

by Harriet Hyams; photographs by Charles Shimel

I hope I haven't come full circle yet, as beginnings and endings can be vague and mysterious. I'd rather think in terms of spirals, which is a circuitous way of starting an article about round windows and the inspiration for the spirals in my windows in the new Jersey City Medical Center.

Jersey City is a much maligned city. I've never heard anyone proudly say that's where they're from, including myself. It usually takes years for an acquaintance to admit to having lived there. It definitely was a place to leave.

New York City was a haven for my friends and me. As teens, we easily escaped by bus to catch films at the Roxy and Paramount theaters. Downtown Jersey City was not the place to venture if you lived around Journal Square (uptown). Downtown were gangs, and also my father's original law office located at 1 Exchange Place. The Mafia maneuvered there and "I Am the Law" Frank Hague reigned in those days.

It was under his watch during the 1930s that the original Jersey City

Medical Center, including the Margaret Hague Maternity Hospital (named after Frank Hague's mother) became an Art Deco landmark. FDR dedicated the new hospital in 1936. Sister Elizabeth Kenny developed innovative treatments for polio there. It was an uptown hospital.

My brother (now living in Virginia with a law practice in Washington, D.C.) and his wife were involved for some years in the beginnings of the new Jersey City Medical Center also called Wilzig Hospital. The original Art Deco Medical Center had become obsolete and no



longer could serve the community as originally intended. It was around 1988 when the germ of an idea for the new Jersey City Medical Center took hold together with the beginnings of the rejuvenation of the city.

With fiscal constraints, deregulation, site location problems and more, construction was delayed for more than 17 years. However, as the new hospital neared completion, it became evident that I was to be involved in the beautification of this building. My brother and his wife gave me the opportunity to select two sites for stained glass. We quickly decided on the location with the approval of the arts committee.

I was to select themes and designs and present them to the committee for approval. This was done within a few months. The tricky part here was doing designs in memory of our parents and also the very well-known and accomplished honorable Senator Robert Menendez, from New Jersey. Menendez was responsible for obtaining a large portion of the funds making the hospital a reality. When I say tricky, what I mean is that my brother wouldn't look at my designs until after they were approved. He waited until the last minute; the windows were just about fabricated, and there was no time for changes. What he did know was the theme for each one,

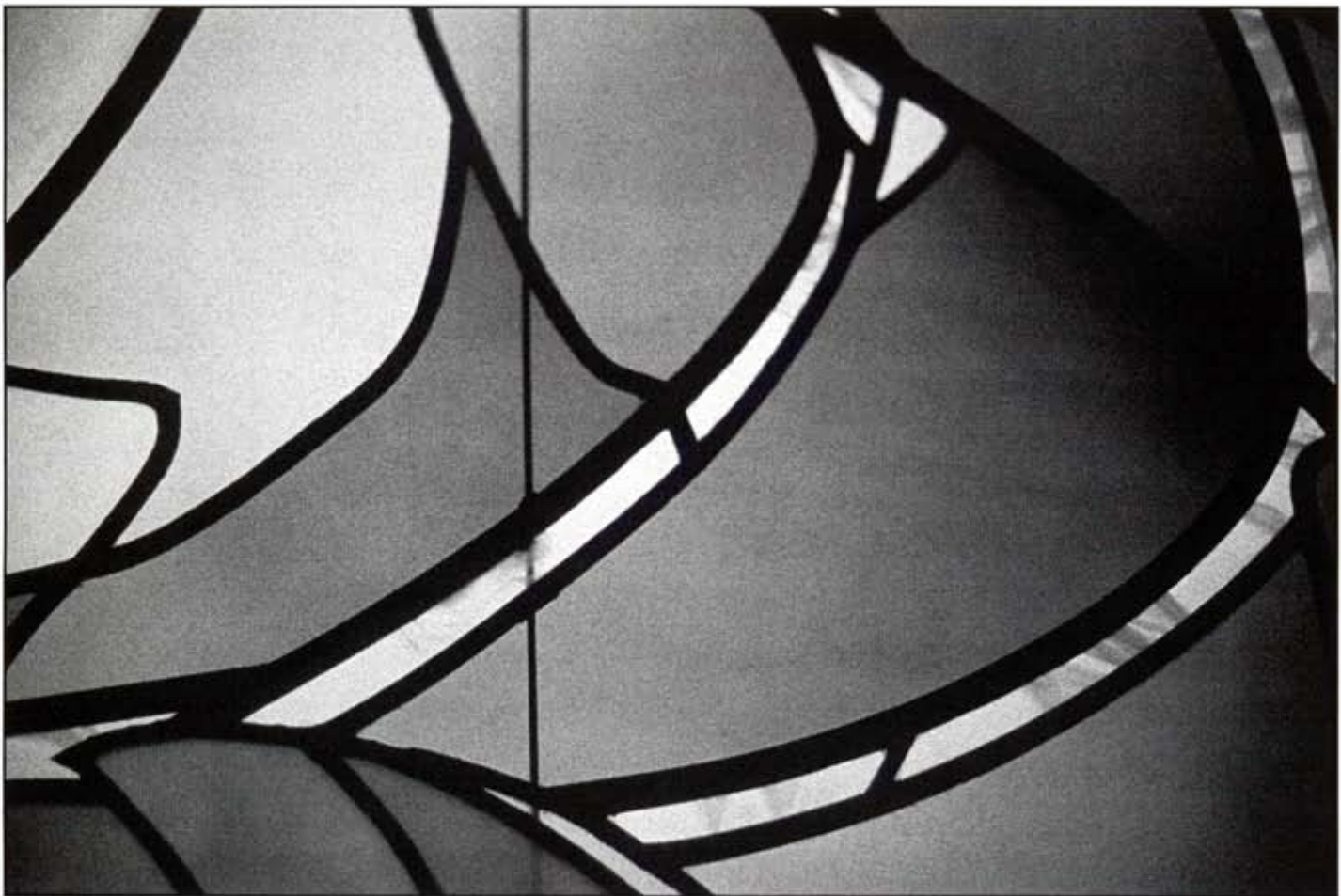
*Above: "Healing"
Opposite: "Hope"*

and these themes resonated for him.

There are times when themes, plans and organization fall into place without a struggle. The end product is the result of taking into consideration what the art committee will deem appropriate and what I think is needed. My brother, by staying out of the process, eased the struggle, but also gave me cause for concern. He was the donor. Suppose he didn't like my plan.

This was some of my thinking: The Hudson River can be seen from the hospital. From one of the higher floors there

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Jersey City Medical Center

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is a spectacular view of the Statue of Liberty and Ellis Island. The 66"-diameter circular windows we chose for the stained glass are on the ground floor with southern exposure. They are not within sight of each other. One window is very near the non-denominational chapel. Nearby is a fountain with a curtain of water. The halls were painted china white, and some walls were painted a sea foam green. The floor in the area echoed the same colors with some peach tone. Since the colors were determined, by default, I went with the existing palette, which I liked.

The theme ideas easily flowed in my mind. There was no problem at all. As I said, I've always been attracted to the spiral. I'd read about the chambered nautilus and own several nautilus shells

Detail from "Healing" illustrating the vertical reinforcement.

and fossils that I'd been looking at for years. Now there was the opportunity to use these marvelous shapes in a hospital setting. I would name one window *Healing* and the other *Hope*. The *Healing* window would be dedicated to my parents using the interior of the chambered nautilus as inspiration, and the *Hope* window would be dedicated to Senator Menendez, using the exterior of the nautilus as inspiration.

The measurement of the spiral in the Nautilus shell is an example of the Divine Proportion, a proportion that can be found throughout the human body and nature. It is common throughout the plant and animal kingdom, in cloud patterns, the spiral nebulae and whirlpools. The Divine Proportion was closely studied by Phidias, an ancient Greek sculptor, and as a result, it took on the name of Phi. It is also called the Golden Mean and car-

ries other names as well. Stated simply, the Divine Proportion is this: "For three magnitudes, the greatest (AB) is to the mean (CB) as the mean (CB) is to the least (AC)."

The shell of the Chambered Nautilus is a symbol of beauty and proportional perfection. I associate *The Chambered Nautilus*, the famous poem by Oliver Wendell Holmes, with healing and the fact that "healing" and "getting well physically" are not necessarily synonymous. "Healing," in the deeper sense, is about soul growth through experience, no matter what the outcome. *The Chambered Nautilus* is the record of that journey of growth. "Build thee more stately mansions, O my soul."

I have been working for several decades in the field of stained glass so I knew well that I was asking for trouble when I insisted these windows not have an internal structure that would

detract from the simplicity of the spiraled nautilus. One studio insisted upon it, another could do it with a huge budget. I carried on my search till I found Rohlf's Studio, who was willing to agree to my nasty challenge. They said the reinforcement I designed would work. That was at the start of our collaboration.

There was a Plan B that was established as the project progressed. Peter Rohlf felt four vertical reinforcing bars would work aesthetically (from the back), and he also reinforced the bottom of the circle. I had to promise never to design another window that would make him so nervous. The Rohlf Studio was good to work with. They had an extraordinary selection of glass, and the Fremont glass I chose to work with had a marvelous liquid quality essential to a watery project.

There is an interesting end to this story: a drama that arose during installation. Since we were anxious that the windows be transported intact and installed without mishap, much care was taken with the time of day, the weather, the parking and the kind of bustle a hospital presents. No one anticipated that there would be a fire alarm as the first window was about to be hoisted in place. I hoped it was a false alarm and we could go on working.

However, the hospital workers rushed through the corridor and prodded us toward the exit. How could we leave the glass just leaning on edge as the hoards of people came through? We held our breath and left with the rest. It wasn't too long before we learned that a steam pipe had burst a few stories up, and we were able to return. Fate smiled on us, and everything was as we had left it.

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Jewels of Light

*an Exhibition sponsored by Kokomo Opalescent Glass
open to all Members and Affiliates of the
Stained Glass Association of America.*

Call for Entries

Designer Challenge: Each entrant will receive 4 (four) ornamental components from our sponsor Kokomo Opalescent Glass. All components must be used in the panel design. More components, ornaments, glass or painting may be added. These restrictions are intended to bring out the ability to design creatively within set limitations.

General Information: The exhibit will be on display for the 2007 SGAA Summer Conference and will be open and publicized to the public. Exhibition winners will be featured in *The Stained Glass Quarterly*.

Cash Prizes: 1st Place, \$1000; 2nd Place, \$500; 3rd Place, \$250.

Product Prizes: 1st Place will include an Evenheat Hot Shot kiln. Other product prizes will include gift certificates from DHD Metals. More to be added as donations are made available.

Eligibility: Open to all Affiliates and Members of the SGAA in good standing.

Sales: *Sales are encouraged!* With permission of the artist, panels on display will be offered for sale with 25% to be retained by the SGAA. Prize-winning panels, with the permission of the artist, will be auctioned for the highest bid above the set sale price. Artist may elect to donate all proceeds. Retained proceeds will fund programs of the SGAA.

Fees: The entry fee is \$65 and includes four ornamental components; one entry of original work per artist. Shipping and insurance are the responsibility of the artist. Once registered, the artist will receive design components and shipping and packing instructions. Entry fee may be paid by check, money order, or by Visa/MasterCard or American Express.

Deadlines: Entries will be accepted through April 1, 2007. Panels may be shipped to A & H Art & Stained Glass Co., Inc. through June 15, 2007. Panels may be carried into the hotel for hanging until 9pm on June 20, 2007. Any panels shipped to the hotel may be charged a hotel handling fee that will be the responsibility of the artist.

Size Limitations: The maximum size for any panel is four square feet with 24" as a maximum for any one side. Panels must have two eyes for hanging system. 3D designs will be allowed, but the parameters of the piece must still be within the 2' x 2' x 2' limits. Weight limit of 30 lbs. *Larger pieces will not be accepted.*

Media: Any use of actual art glass in traditional, painted, enameled or new techniques is acceptable as long as it is within the size limitations. The theme of this contest is creative use of given materials. Four glass ornamental components (bevels, jewels, rondels) will be included in each entrant's package. These components *MUST* be included in the piece.

Judging: All panels will be judged by popular vote of Conference registrants.

Awards: Winners will be announced at the Second General Business Meeting during the Conference and awards made at the SGAA Awards Banquet at the Marriot Charlotte City Center hotel.

**For entry forms, visit
www.stainedglass.org, call the
SGAA Headquarters at
800.438.9581 or email
sgaa@kcnet.com.**