

**Andrew W. Mellon Memorial Fountain  
Fact Sheet**

- Location:** Constitution Avenue at Sixth Street, NW
- Dedication:** May 9, 1952
- Sculptor:** Sidney Waugh (1904-1963)
- Architect:** Architect Otto R. Eggers, who had worked with John Russell Pope on the design of the West Building.
- Landscape architect:** 1952 Clark, Rapuano & Holleran  
Four large elm trees dominated the site design. Extensive ground cover made the site attractive even in winter when the fountain is not operating.
- 1961 National Park Service completed a major replanting.
- 1965 National Park Service completed a major replanting.
- 1984 Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation completed a major replanting.
- 2016 National Gallery of Art Division of Horticultural Services  
Around the fountain, the Gallery planted *Taxus baccata* 'Repandens,' which is also used on the West Building and Sculpture Garden grounds, making a connection with other outdoor Gallery spaces. *Ophiopogon japonica* 'Nana' or dwarf mondo grass is the ground cover for the site.
- The Gallery replaced one aging elm with an eight-inch caliper *Ulmus americana* 'Princeton.' 'Princeton' is a deciduous tree that typically grows to 60 to 80 feet with a broad, rounded crown and is native to eastern and central North America. The Gallery also replaced two *Quercus phellos* willow oaks that had declined in the sidewalk along the Pennsylvania Avenue sidewalk.
- Construction:** 1952 John McShaine  
Structural engineers: Tuck and Eipel  
Mechanical engineers: Edward E. Ashely Associates
- 2016 National Gallery of Art Division of Facilities Management  
National Gallery of Art Division of Horticultural Services  
Service Mechanical, Inc.  
Conservation Solutions, Inc.  
John Shorb Landscaping

**Medium:**

Bronze fountain and granite pool

The lowest basin is concrete pebbled with quartz stones.

It is thought that this was the largest bronze fountain known at the time of construction.

No bronze formula located.

2016 Extensive analysis performed on different parts of the fountain by the Gallery's object conservators revealed distinct alloy compositions for the zodiac reliefs, basins, and rim. They vary in their amounts of copper, zinc, and lead depending on if they are decorative or functional.

The basins were first modeled in clay by the sculptor, then cast in plaster.

The final bronze casting has a statuary finish. The zodiac figures and the basin have slightly different patination.

Uppermost basin measures 4 feet, 6 inches in diameter; the second basin measures 15 feet; and the main basin, 38 feet.

The bronze baffle, which ensures a smooth flow of water over the lip, is placed about seven feet from the rim.

Granite plaza surrounding the fountain is seven-feet wide, and an unpolished granite bench bears the inscription to Mellon:

1855 Andrew W. Mellon 1937  
Financier Industrialist Statesman

Secretary of the Treasury 1921–1932  
Ambassador to Great Britain 1932–1933  
Founder of the National Gallery of Art–1937  
This fountain is a tribute from his friends

**Base:**

Swenson Pink Granite with eight-cut finish

Inspired by a bronze fountain in Genoa, Italy, that Eggers had seen in one of the city squares in 1938, he adopted the concept of a smooth, sparkling, curtain of water, cascading down from one level to the next.

Two centrifugal pumps run the fountain. Pump #1 drives the central jet of water out of its 2 ½ inch supply pipe to the height of 15'–18' feet, as specified by the designers. Pump #2 fills the lower two bronze basins and maintains the water level by recirculation.

To avoid an “umbrella” effect from the main supply pipe on pump #1 and to drive this jet straight up so that the desired “plume” effect was achieved, 12 secondary high speed nozzles placed around the main nozzle support the jet of water.

**Foundry:** Roman Bronze Works and General Bronze Corporation

**Stoneworks:** Not located

**Quarry:** Not located

**Funding:** 1952 Private funds came from The Andrew W. Mellon Memorial Committee Congress authorized this project on July 16, 1947, with Public Law 80-194, establishing a group of private citizens led by Gulf Oil chairman, J. Frank Drake.

2016 The Richard King Mellon Foundation

**Authorization:** Public Law 80-194, July 16, 1947

**Specs/Drawings:** Location of specs unknown

**Model:** Unknown.  
Contract for model awarded to Rochette & Parzini, December 8, 1949.

**Renovation/  
Repairs:** 1955 National Park Service  
Installation of dehumidifier and recaulking required at granite and bronze joints.

1957 National Park Service  
Additional metal grates added to shield the entrance to the underground pump room.

1984 Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation  
Site dimensions altered, disability access ramp added, and new plantings installed.

2016 National Gallery of Art Division of Facilities Management

**Bronze Restoration:** 2016 National Gallery of Art Department of Object Conservation with Conservation Solutions, Inc.

**Maintenance:** 1952 National Park Service  
2016 National Gallery of Art

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