

Waiting for a Date Public Art Project Fact Sheet



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Photo: Craig Smith

Title: Waiting for a Date

Location: North side of University Drive just west of College Avenue

Artist: Joe Tyler

Completion: 1995

Medium: Brick, flagstone, river rock, powder-coated steel and lighting.

Description: This transit shelter has a circular bench made of brick and flagstone that appears to have date palms growing from it. The trunks are composed of river rock. Welded steel with powder coating is utilized for the palm fronds and lighting represents the dates. The flagstone seating was crafted from the neighboring historic church's original flooring, which was removed during remodeling. The title is a play on words referring to how as passengers wait for their ride, they may meet someone new, as

well as enjoy the steel palm above. Tempe's goal with its Artist Designed Transit Shelters is to encourage people to use the public transportation by making it attractive, innovative and functional

Funding: The project was funded through city of Tempe Capital Improvement Project Percent for Art Funds made available through the Tempe Transit Tax.

Artist biography: Joe Tyler was born and raised and lives in Arizona. His work is inspired by the horticultural landscape of the Sonoran Desert. In 1972, Tyler received his Bachelor of Science degree from Arizona State University in Horticulture. He earned his Masters of Environmental Horticulture at ASU in 1974. Tyler's works can be seen all over Arizona as well as in Germany, Japan, California, New Mexico, Texas and Nevada. Tyler has received many awards for his work and has held several professional positions in the field of horticulture and education. He has created public art for the cities of Tempe, Scottsdale, Chandler, Tucson and Yuma and public art for major business corporations. He lives and creates his art in Surprise.

Artist statement: I wanted to pay tribute to the historical facts surrounding date palms in my design of this transit shelter. Around the mid 1880s the first date palm trees were imported to the United States from the Middle East. The former University of Arizona Citrus Experimental Station, located where Arizona Mills Mall now stands, was the first place to grow dates for cultivation in the U.S. It was important to make historical references to Tempe by utilizing local materials. I used river rock from the nearby bed of the Salt River, brick from the Phoenix Brickyard dating back to the 1920s and flagstone from the original flooring of the historic St. Mary's Church east of the transit shelter.