

## Michele vandenHeuvel

Michele was born & raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico & holds a Master's Degree in Art Therapy from the University of New Mexico. Michele says, "I have been sculpting since I was able to hold a piece of clay in my hands...or so I've been told!"

As a child, her parents provided a loving, nurturing environment for her that fed her burgeoning interest in sculpture. Her mother was a potter, so she always had easy access to clay & her father took her to numerous galleries & openings. One of her favorite places was Shidoni Foundry & Sculpture Garden. Michele says, "It was there that I realized that this is what I would like to do: become a sculptor."

A majority of Michele's work in the past several years has been as a public art artist. She has won competitions to design & create bronze sculptural pieces for cities & communities. She has public art pieces around the country, most notably in Longmont, CO, Gaitherburg, MD, Park City, UT, Peoria, AZ & Louisiana, MO. You can also see some of Michele's favorite pieces here in Albuquerque at our County Courthouse. "Fridolin" the life-size bronze bear sits on his bronze "bird/snail" bench in the Family Court waiting area. His tummy is shiny and golden from all those who wish a bit of good luck!



"Papa Jan" the life-size bronze giraffe waits on his bench in the records section.

In addition to the more "whimsical" bronzes she creates, Michele is also a liturgical sculptor, designing works for churches & homes. She says, "I strive to create pieces that are *touchable* and take on a life of their own, literally becoming "real" for the viewer. Allowing the visitor (particularly children) to touch my work with their hands is extremely important to me. To see well-worn areas on my bronzes tells me that the piece is being loved & explored. I am especially honored to be an artist at such a prestigious gallery as Weems."



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