Inaugurating the Arboretum's 'New Era' in Art and Landscape

With the unveiling of Robert Engman's bronze "After B.K.S. Iyengar," and the flow of water for the first time in 60 years down the tiers of a restored Victorian step-fountain, Morris Arboretum abounded in symbols last week.

The 70-year-old yoga master whom Engman saw perform in 1976 was there, demonstrating through motion and stillness the "incredible control, wisdom and gentleness and concern for life" that inspired the lyric bronze that now crowns the step-fountain. The sculpture, on long-term loan from Marvin and Marian Garfinkel, stands where originally there was a chestnut tree that fell to blight.

The occasion was the first of several unveilings this fall in celebration of what the Arboretum calls its New Era—a program of outdoor exhibition made possible by the National Endowment of the Humanities' awarding, two years ago, a $25,000 grant that has helped research sites and settings for art outdoors. Both acquisitions and changing exhibits are selected by the Arboretum's Fine Arts Committee, headed originally by the late Henry P. McIlhenny and now chaired by Madeline K. Butcher (Mrs. W.W. Keen Butcher).

"Bringing art to the garden is a way of probing each generation's relationship to the environment," said Director William M. Klein. "We want to create a resonance between artistic and scientific ways of looking at the garden." Morris Arboretum is both a research station and a public garden, already dotted with sculpture and architectural forms dating from the world travels of founders Lydia and John Morris, with contemporary works donated by Philip and Muriel Herman and the late Dorothy Haas.

The stepped-up program in art and restoration came on the heels of the Pennsylvania General Assembly's adoption of the Chestnut Hill institution as the "Official Arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania."

India's B.K.S. Iyengar (above left, at 70) inspired the design of Robert Engman's bronze, shown in-progress above. Professor Engman, who is co-chair of fine arts and chair of the graduate program in sculpture at Penn, paid tribute to the "balance and strength" of the Yoga master, who is the author of Light on Yoga and the just issued The Tree of Yoga. Below, the Philadelphia landscape architects Coe Lee Robinson and Roesch integrated the Engman design with the setting, and landscape contractors N.V. Holmes Inc. donated their services to the project, in memory of the founder of their company.

Trustees: A Tribute to Philo at 175

On a motion by Dr. Gloria Chisum for the Trustees Committee on Academic Policy, the Executive Committee of the Trustees voted the following resolution on September 9:

On 23 November, 1813, the Trustees, upon the recommendation of Provost Frederick Beasley, sanctioned "the institution of a Literary Society" and stipulated that "a suitable room shall be appropriated for their use." This body, composed of undergraduate students, was subsequently named the Philomathean Society and is the oldest collegiate literary society in the United States. The Society's stated purpose is "to promote the learning of its members and to increase the academic prestige of the University." Its activities include lectures, poetry and fiction readings, art exhibits and concerts, held in its "suitable room" on the fourth floor of College Hall.

Philo's accomplishments over the years have been highlighted by the publication of the first English translation of the Rosetta Stone in 1858, recommendations that led to the founding of the Departments of History and Sociology of Science, Comparative Literature, and American Civilization, and the creation of The Daily Pennsylvanian. Its illustrious past augurs a bright future.

RESOLVED, that the Trustees extend to the Philomathean Society their heartiest congratulations on the occasion of its 175th anniversary and wish the society continued success as an institution fostering independent intellectual pursuits by students.