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Benediction

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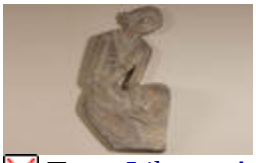
Sylvia Shaw Judson (American, 1897-1978)
Benediction, ca. 1950s
Sand cast plaster bas relief
61 x 36 ½ x 5 ½ in.
Gift of the artist in 1974

Sylvia Shaw Judson grew up in Lake Forest and was the daughter of well-known architect Howard Van Doren Shaw and the poet Frances (Wells) Shaw. Judson studied at The School of the Art Institute in Chicago on and off between 1915 and 1918 and later in Paris at the Académie de la Grande Chaumière. Her works have been exhibited in museums, at Chicago's Century of Progress Exposition (1933), and at the New York World's Fair (1939). Shaw's work can be found in the collection of the White House, in the offices of the President of the Philippines, and at the Massachusetts State House.

Sylvia Shaw Judson received much posthumous attention in the late 1990s when her *Bird Girl* sculpture (1938) appeared on the cover of the book "Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil," by John Berendt. The sculpture also appeared in the opening scene of the movie with the same title.

Benediction is located over the doorway leading to the Adult Services Department. The relief is an image of a woman and was originally made as a prototype for a stone angel that Sylvia Shaw Judson created for the Presbyterian-St. Luke Church in Downers Grove in 1951.



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