THE DEDICATION OF THE
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN STATUE

Friday, October 24, 1986
Franklin and Marshall College
THE BENJAMIN FRANKLIN STATUE

In 1983, the alumni of the Philadelphia Regional council of Franklin and Marshall College commissioned the creation of a statue of Benjamin Franklin which would be dedicated to honor President Emeritus Keith Spalding and his late wife, Dorothy Spalding. The competition stipulated that the sculpture “should project a recognizable image of Franklin seen from a contemporary perspective,” and that it should be “humane, engaging, evocative and imaginative.”

Of the 70 submissions received from artists nation-wide, the one that clearly met the stipulations was that of Arlene Love. The work wedds the normally antithetical aspects of traditional and modern form. To the extent that it is clearly recognizable as an image of Benjamin Franklin, it is traditional. But in its combination of a human figure fused into and emerging from a bronze slab, it develops a context that is abstract and modern. Franklin remains approachable. His sprightly gait and diagonal movement impart a liveliness. The slab through which he passes also provides a context for his action and gives meaning to his movement.

THE ARTIST

Arlene Love was born in Philadelphia where she still resides and works. She graduated from Temple University’s Tyler School of Art with a Bachelor of Fine Arts and Bachelor of Science in Engineering.

Love served as a sculptor instructor at the Philadelphia Museum of Art from 1969 to 1976. She has participated in well over fifty solo and group exhibitions throughout the country. Love’s “Bondage Series,” which was a solo exhibition, won particular acclaim. The exhibition included 22 pieces which addressed the issue of women as a captive object. The Bondage motif is common in Love’s work reflecting her interest in feminist literature.

Love has received numerous commissions and her work is included in many collections, particularly within the Pennsylvania area. The majority of her commissions has been for outdoor sculpture and bronze figures similar to her piece designed for Franklin and Marshall’s Bicentennial.

THE DEDICATION OF THE
BENJAMIN FRANKLIN STATUE

James L. Powell
President of the College

Michael J. Lamond
Class of 1974
President
Philadelphia Regional Council

Arlene Love
Sculptress

Aaron J. Martin
Class of 1950
Chairman, Board of Trustees

Keith Spalding
President Emeritus