



Herman Wald

1906 - 1970

Natalie Knight

Herman Wald was well-known in South Africa for his monumental and commemorative sculpture. He was the sculptor of the ten foot "Kria" which stands outside the Sandringham Old Age Home, a monumental figure mourning the lost Jews of Europe. (In "Kria's" rending of the garments Wald represented not only the traditional act of mourning but went beyond this by representing what modern psychologists have recognised as an act of catharsis — the re-establishment of contact by the mourner with the outside world. Wald was also the creator of the group of eighteen impala which vault the Oppenheimer Fountain; the colossal "Monument to our Martyrs" (dedicated to the six million martyred Jews) and the over life-size portrait of Albert Schweitzer in one of Johannesburg's medical centres as well as many other public works.

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Wald was a versatile artist and worked in wood, bronze, marble, fibreglass and ceramic. His figures range from the eighteen foot diamond diggers supporting a sieve over a fountain at the Kimberley Civic Centre to an eighteen inch ceramic piece in which a mother mourns the death of her son.

What is Unity? Herman Wald gave two different interpretations. In one, 'Unity is Strength', is represented by three large, square figures who link arms in the foyer of a building society. In contrast is a small bronze piece, "The Embrace", where the softly rounded forms of man and woman unite, encompassing the affection and companionship between the sexes. This was the varied world of Herman Wald.

Herman Wald with his monumental sculpture "Unity".

