

BULLETIN OF THE MILWAUKEE ART INSTITUTE

VOLUME 10

JULY, 1936

NUMBER 11



In Memoriam
Adolph Finkler
1867-1936

ISSUED MONTHLY TO JUNE

::

::

::

PRICE FIVE CENTS

ADOLPH FINKLER

1867 - 1936

The time is November ninth, 1867. The mists creep up from the rivers Wertach and Lech; the autumn sun clings for a moment to the spires of the cathedral, whose glorious bronze doors are already deep in shadow.

Through the eleventh century stained glass windows a last gleam of light falls upon the ancient tombs and history rises in all its silent song.

There are the Fuggers and the Welsers, great merchant princes of medieval Germany; Maximilian I; Luther in the old St. Anna Kirche defying the papal legates; Holbein the Elder and Hans Burgkmair; Gustavus Adolphus; the Dukes of Swabia; Tassilo III of Bavaria; Charlemagne; the Frankish kings and the Huns before them.

The place is Augsburg — Augusta Vindelicorum, founded 14 years before Christ in the name of the Roman Emperor—and yet the time is November ninth, 1867.

On that November evening, Adolph Finkler was born in the city that had once been a center of trade between the north and south of Europe; that has always been steeped in history and in art.

His father, Col. William Finkler, a resident of Milwaukee and a soldier in the Civil War, was American consul at Augsburg; his mother was Johanna Kroener, a native of the ancient German city. While still a child, Mr. Finkler and his parents came to Milwaukee, where the lad attended the old Peter Engelmann school (later the German-English academy and today the Milwaukee University School).

When Col. Finkler died, his widow and young Adolph returned to Germany and the boy continued his education at Augsburg, later taking up architecture at Munich. After his graduation at Munich, where he took part in all the student activities, Mr. Finkler returned to America and started his profession in Chicago.

In 1894, he married Ida Trostel of Milwaukee and three years later entered the leather business of his wife's family,

eventually becoming secretary-treasurer. While he never again took up the practice of architecture, his early European environments and the innate charm of ancient Augsburg somehow played a vital part in Adolph Finkler's existence.

One of the few business men in Milwaukee who ever took a continuous interest in the finer things of the city's life, in art, music and the drama, Mr. Finkler was president of the Milwaukee Art Institute for seven years since 1924, when he succeeded Samuel O. Buckner, founder and patron.

The tall figure of kindly Adolph Finkler, with his low voice, his word of greeting to everyone, was long a part of the Institute. In its minor problems as well as in its major relationships with the city, he always did more than his part.

He was never too busy, even in the latter period of declining health—to come to trustees' meetings, to give his counsel in committees; to discuss the details of heating and lighting, and many little things which most business men would have been too busy to talk about even on the telephone.

Longer than anyone else, he served as trustee from 1913 until the time of his death. As one of the directors of the old German stock company, he gave freely of his time and money. His interest in literature and music carried him into the meetings of various societies here which sponsored the culture of Germany. His collection of autobiographies, histories, story and legend—a kind of living library of his beloved Augsburg,—was as much a part of him, perhaps even more a part of him than the plain pursuit of business, shorn of all the finer things of life, which is so much a part of the hurried American scene today.

For some reason, the tall figure in its greatcoat, standing in front of the Art Institute of a November evening, stalking through its galleries with that funny chuckling laugh, will never vanish for those who knew and could not help but love Adolph Finkler. Gustave Pabst, Jr.

**In Memory
of
Adolph Finkler**

At the time of his death on May 28, 1936, Adolph Finkler had completed almost twenty years of faithful service as a member of the Board of Trustees of the Milwaukee Art Institute. During those years he was Vice-President of the corporation from November, 1924, to October, 1925, and its President from December, 1926, to October, 1929, and again from October, 1931, to January, 1933, besides accepting for varying terms important and arduous committee assignments. Though he was ever ready to step out of office if it seemed desirable to have rotation in office, it was felt again and again that he could not be spared even when his health began to fail, so that in later years he generously allowed himself to be drafted though at personal sacrifice. This willingness to serve the Institute followed from his strong sense of public obligation, but quite as well from a native and genuine love of art. For Mr. Finkler was a cultivated gentleman, a cosmopolitan, an architect by training, and a lover of the fine arts. As he was at the same time a successful man of large affairs, his idealistic approach was tempered by a realistic sense of what was practical in given circumstances. Hence his judgment combined urbanity and breadth with sagacity and wisdom. But beyond all that shines the cardinal fact, that his lovable personality, his tact, and his spontaneous human sympathy and understanding won from his co-workers, both on the Board and on the Staff, a willing co-operation and a true affection. All of them now feel that they have lost a friend.

In view of the foregoing,

BE IT RESOLVED that the Board of Trustees of Milwaukee Art Institute hereby express their sense of loss upon the death of Mr. Adolph Finkler, that the foregoing memorial and this resolution be spread upon the corporate records, that they be printed in a special number of the Bulletin to be sent all members of the corporation, and that a copy hereof be transmitted to Mr. Finkler's family with respectful expression of sympathy.

FINKLER MEMORIAL FUND

There are benefactors who, through philanthropic bequests, endow institutions of learning, hospitals, museums, art institutes, etc., and who, through this munificence, add to the sum total of human happiness.

To those who have the financial resources it is not an undue hardship or sacrifice to make important gifts to already well established and successful institutions. Some of the greatest and most lasting memorials to man have been perpetuated because of this altruistic and unselfish generosity on the part of donors.

However, when a man gives unstintingly of his time and energy to the detriment of his own health for a cause in which he believes heart and soul, often under the most adverse and trying conditions, that man is as great a benefactor as the donor who makes an outright gift or bequest.

The Director and the Staff of the Milwaukee Art Institute will miss the kindly interest and constructive help which were manifested in the many visits which Adolph Finkler made to the Art Institute over a long period of years as Trustee, President, and as a member of numerous committees.

His sincere regard for the Art Institute and his interest in the educational work with children and adults led him to constantly endeavor to improve and broaden our scope of influence in the community and to this end he enlisted many of his friends and acquaintances to support the Art Institute by becoming members.

Others, who like Mr. Finkler, believed in the need for an art institute in Milwaukee, came to our support in our most difficult and trying period largely because of Mr. Finkler's able and wise guidance.

When a man has given so unstintingly of himself as has Mr. Finkler, resolutions and words seem hardly adequate to express fully the esteem in which he is held by his friends and co-workers. With this in mind, a small group of his friends who believe that a more fitting memorial in honor of Mr. Finkler would be the acquisition of a work of art for the Art

Institute have started a fund for this purpose.

This fund is quite small and so far inadequate for a fitting memorial. It is the belief of the Trustees that there are many friends and admirers of Mr. Finkler who would be glad to contribute to such a fund. Any amount large or small will be gratefully accepted and should be sent to Miss Marion Burnham, Secretary of the Milwaukee Art Institute. The list of donors will be perpetuated on a suitable scroll or manuscript to accompany the Adolph Finkler Memorial Acquisition.

A. G. P.

BULLETIN OF
THE MILWAUKEE ART INSTITUTE
(Incorporated)

772 N. Jefferson Street,
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Entered as Second Class Matter, October 5, 1926, at the Post Office at Milwaukee, Wisconsin, under the act of August 24, 1912.

OFFICERS OF THE CORPORATION

<i>President</i>	Edward A. Bacon
<i>President Emeritus</i>	Samuel O. Buckner
<i>Vice-President</i>	Harry Bogner
<i>Secretary</i>	Marion L. Burnham
<i>Treasurer</i>	Joseph W. Simpson, Jr.

MILWAUKEE ART INSTITUTE TRUSTEES

<i>Term Expiring 1936</i>	<i>Term Expiring 1938</i>
Edward A. Bacon	Max E. Friedmann
Eliot G. Fitch	William C. Frye
Francis McGovern	Guido Scheffer
Gustave Pabst, Jr.	Carl W. Eberbach
Oscar Stotzer	Irving Seaman
<i>Term Expiring 1937</i>	<i>City Appointees</i>
Mrs. H. E. Judd	Harry Bogner
Edmund B. Shea	Mrs. William M. Chester
*Adolph Finkler	Fred H. Dörner
Carl W. Schuchardt	Erich C. Stern
Douglass Van Dyke	Mrs. Meta Berger

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Edward A. Bacon, Chairman	Joseph W. Simpson, Jr.
Douglass Van Dyke	Harry Bogner
Francis McGovern	Eliot G. Fitch
*Adolph Finkler	Max E. Friedmann

STAFF OF THE ART INSTITUTE

<i>Director</i>	Alfred G. Pelikan
<i>Membership Secretary</i>	Marion L. Burnham
<i>Secretary to the Director</i>	Alice B. Mueller
<i>Membership Assistant</i>	Pearl M. Greenbaum
<i>Cashier</i>	Ruth E. Norton
<i>Registrar and Librarian</i>	Louise J. Riesch
<i>Radio and Publicity</i>	Harold R. Wilde
<i>Superintendent of Building</i>	John Harting

*Deceased