

GSMT News

The Newsletter of The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen

Founded in 1785, The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen is dedicated to improving the educational and cultural opportunities for people in the City of New York • Spring 2018

GSMT Celebrates Annual Craftsmanship Awards



Edwin L. Christian, Victoria Dengel, Dan Holohan, and Gerard Drohan, Jr.,

The sweet wail of bagpipes welcomed our guests into the Society's historic Library as we gathered to celebrate the important contributions of our 2017 Craftsmanship Award Recipients to the building and construction industry. **President Gerard Drohan, Jr.**, thanked supporters for their contributions to the Mechanics Institute, which has been offering tuition-free programs to workers in the building trades since 1858. Executive Director and GSMT **Past President, Victoria A. Dengel**, introduced our Craftsmanship Award recipients: **Edwin L. Christian** and **Dan Holohan**. Both have had a long history of service to the construction industry, and both are, indeed, craftsmen. **Eddie Christian**, Business Manager of **International Union of Operating Engineers Local Union 14-14B** is the leader of a Union that is at the core of every major construction project in our great City. Victoria Dengel said it was a particular honor for her to present this Award on behalf of the Society because she grew up as the daughter of a Local 14 Operating Engineer and is forever grateful for what it meant to grow up in a Union household and be part of the Local 14 family. She said, "that the experience was formative." She went on to say that Mr. Christian has been an active member of the I. U.O.E. Local 14-14B for 31 years; served as Business Manager of the Local for the past 12 years and held the office of President for nearly a decade. He is also a Trustee to the Local's funds; and previously held the positions of Business Agent, Treasurer, Executive Board member, Examining Board member and Union Trustee. In accepting his Craftsmanship Award, Eddie Christian applauded the leadership of the General Society over its 232 years recognizing the Society's "commitment to advancing vocations that all of us in this room here tonight are so proud to be a part of," and added, "We are all better for it."

Gerard Drohan, Jr., Edwin L. Christian and Victoria Dengel

He pledged his continuing support for the work of the Society. In describing the work of Local 14, Mr. Christian said, "What we do is not just a job, but it's a way of life, and the fruits of which resonate through genera-

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GSMT Lectures Past and Future

Our 2017/18 Labor, Literature, and Landmark Lecture Series and Artisan Lecture series began in the Fall. The first "Labor" lecture in our 24-lecture series opened on October 3rd with a screening of *Heads, Hands and Heart – Craftsmanship at Work*, a documentary about the lives and skilled work of the union workers who built one of the tallest buildings in the United States.



Kelly Candaele, the journalist who produced the project, documented the 40-plus months it took to complete the 73-story Beverly Wilshire Hotel in Los Angeles. Our first lecture in the 2017/18 Artisan Series featured **Paul Gunther**, Gracie Mansion Conservancy Executive Director, talking about the history of Gracie Mansion, the Mayor's residence. On December 11, the General Society held a special screening of *Visions of Mary Frank*, by filmmaker **John Cohen**, which celebrated the work of artist **Mary Frank**, a contemporary sculptor, painter, illustrator and printmaker. The 2018 Lecture Series began with a rare lecture by the visual artist, **Taub Auerbach** on January 16th. This program was presented in Partnership with MOCA, Museum of Contemporary Art, Cleveland. Ms. Auerbach is one of the most influential and distinctive voices in contemporary art. Her work has been featured at such institutions as the Institute of Contemporary Art, London (2016), Kunstmuseum Bonn (2015) and MOMA (2013). Her work engages deeply with craftsmanship, ornamentation and design, specifically as it related



Paul Gunther



John Cohen

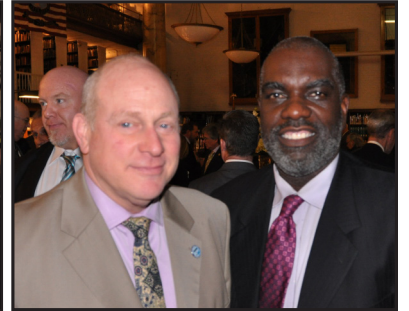
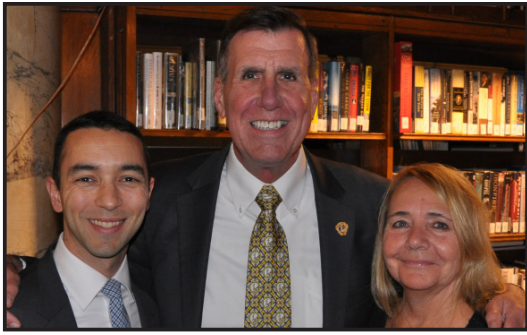


Mary Frank

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Spring Programs at Mechanics Institute

The Spring 2018 semester got underway on Monday, January 29 and Tuesday, January 30. Over 300 students enrolled in the Mechanics Institute's programs, which include Electrical Technology, HVAC/R Systems Design, Plumbing Design and Construction Project Management and AutoCAD.

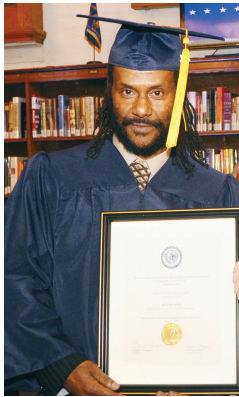


Guests Enjoying the 2017 Craftsmanship Gala



Driven to Succeed

Electrical Technology graduate **Alrid Reid** won multiple academic awards upon completing three years of study at Mechanics Institute. This is his story in his own words: "I am Alrid Reid. I went to Primary School in Jamaica, and from there to a technical high school, and on to the College of Arts, Science, and Technology. My wife, children and I arrived in the U.S. in 2005 and I took a seasonal job with UPS, but my passion was electricity. I left UPS and took a job with a pool company, doing their electrical work. I knew that this is what I would do with my career, but I needed to learn more. The schools



Alrid Reid

I looked at were expensive and I could not afford these. In 2011, I was working as an Electrical Mechanic and my helper asked me for a ride to Manhattan. I asked him where; he said 20 West 44th Street. I asked him what this place was and he explained the Mechanics Institute to me, and he showed me the Mission Statement. The part that read, **'We are dedicated to preparing the foundation for those willing to rise, providing the ladder for those willing to climb, and fueling the spirits of those willing to soar'** called to me, and I answered that call. It was the first night of classes, and in a completely spontaneous move, I signed up for the Electrical Technology courses, remembering what my father had said to me as I was growing up: 'Education is the key, my son. Knowledge is better than money. Get knowledge and you will have everything.' These words are so true. I went on a roll, and when I am on a roll, I just drive it. Sadly, my helper dropped out before finishing his courses. I advised him to persevere and have self-will, but he said that at the end of the work day he just wanted to go home. I told him that I also wanted to go home to my family, but this is a free education and I decided that I'm not going to let one day pass that I'm not here. I came early and I stuck around. It all paid off in the end. I graduated at the top of my class. It was not easy to attend classes after working all day, but to get ahead in life you must be courageous and bold, and you must learn from excellent teachers who are there to impart all the knowledge they have to you. The teachers never refused my questions. Mechanics Institute has affected my career. The first year I was there, I got a promotion and a pay raise. I received several better job offers when I graduated, and I accepted a job at MTA and became a member of Local 3. I work in the Signal Department and I love my job. I see many former classmates at MTA and I will someday be a supervisor. I am driven to succeed! My advice to new students would be to aim high, be brave, and be bold. Study. Put in the time it takes to learn. It pays off in the end. And do what you love. If you don't love your job, stress is gonna kill you. And this is true. Thank you for reading my story."

GSMT Celebrates Craftsmanship Awards

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tions." He thanked his family, the Operating Engineers, Officers and Executive Board of Local 14, and accepted the award on the Union's behalf. He said, "It is the most privileged part of my life to represent such a great organization."



Gerard Drohan, Jr., Dan Holohan and Victoria Dengel

Ms. Dengel then introduced **Dan Holohan, Author and International Authority on Steam Heating and Hydronics and Founder, Heatinghelp.com**. Mr. Holohan began his love affair with heating systems in 1970 by going to work for a New York-based manufacturer's representative that was deeply involved in the steam-and-hot-water heating business. He studied hard, prowled many basements and attics with seasoned old-timers, and paid close attention to what they had to say. In 1989, he left that company and began a journey as a writer that would lead to his becoming the international authority in steam heating and hydronics. He has written hundreds of columns for many heating industry trade magazines, as well as 22 books on subjects ranging from steam- and hot-water heating, to teaching technicians. He has taught more than 200,000 people at his seminars. He has been responsible for helping many people solve tough heating problems in 19th Century buildings, such as The Dakota on W. 72nd St, and our own General Society building on West 44th Street. Mr. Holohan accepted his Craftsmanship Award in the names of the Mechanics Institute teachers, past, present, and future. Mr. Holohan added, "they are making our City better, along with this man over here, Eddie Christian." He saluted Local 14 acknowledging their major contributions to our great City.

BUILD YOURSELF • BUILD NEW YORK

The Mechanics Institute has focused on workforce development in New York City ever since its founding in 1858. Tuition-free evening instruction in trades-related education has provided many students with the skills needed to improve their job opportunities. Our programs continue to serve those employed in the building-and-construction trades, who are striving to improve their skills and expand their knowledge to improve their career opportunities. Each fall, over 300 students enroll in Mechanics Institute's educational programs, including Plumbing Systems, HVAC&R Systems, Electrical Technology, Construction-Project Management, as well as AutoCAD and Building-Information Modeling (BIM).

MECHANICS INSTITUTE

Workforce Development Since 1858

an educational program of
**The General Society of Mechanics and
Tradesmen of the City of New York**

GSMT Lectures Past and Future

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Tauba Auerbach

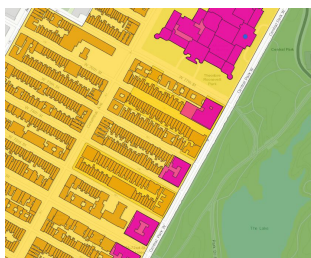
to mathematical theories. Her talk explored a captivating taxonomy of ideas and forms that inform her work such as topology, gesture, traditional Chinese medicine, architecture, molecular science and asymmetry. During the program, the artist reflected on her expansive practice using the framework of her upcoming exhibition at MOCA Cleveland and her newest book, *A Partial Taxonomy of Periodic Linear Ornament*.

The Landmark Lectures 2018

The "Landmark" Lectures, a series of four lectures, presented in partnership with The New York Landmark Conservancy, will begin in March. The Landmark Lectures focus on the origin, development, and restoration of New York City's built environment, and celebrate the art and architecture of the City. **Lisa Easton**, a partner in the New York City-based architecture and historic preservation firm, Easton Architects, will curate the series. On Tuesday, March 20th, **Professor Andrew Dolkart**, Columbia School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation will start the series. Professor Dolkart will speak about the creation of *New York's Garment District*, the subject of a book that he is writing. New York City is closely associated with garment manufacturing. This talk will explore how and why the Garment District settled in the Seventh Avenue area north of 34th Street and what characterized the industry and its architecture. Following this, on Tuesday, April 17th, we will welcome, **Lisa Kersavage**, Director of Special Projects and Strategic Planning, NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission, who will discuss the *LPC's Historic District Data Project* and enhanced web mapping. She will describe the project which includes detailed information on nearly 34,000 historic buildings within the City's 141 historic districts in an enhanced web map and will demonstrate how the public can use the information in the web map. Next, on Tuesday, May 15th, **Joan Berkowitz**, Senior Preservationist and **Carolyn Caste**, Director of Facade Compliance at Howard L. Zimmerman Architects will co-present *Reflections on 35 Years of Façade Inspections* based on the Façade Inspection Safety Program (FISP). They will describe how this law affects New York's historic building stock, as more than 12,000 buildings are impacted by NYC's façade ordinance. The speak-



Historic Photo of the Garment District



UWS Discover NYC Landmarks

ers, among other things, will explain how the FISP Program works and what an inspection includes. The series will conclude on Tuesday, June 19th with **Meisha Hunter**, Li/Saltzman Architects who will share her knowledge of *Repurposing Small Scale, Historic Infrastructure: The 119th Street Croton Aqueduct Gatehouse*. She will describe how once small scale, historic infrastructure loses its purpose-built use, the challenges of reuse become complex. Issues of balancing the preservation of historic fabric, while accommodating new programmatic uses, and other requirements, must be addressed sensitively. All lectures will commence at 6:30 p.m. Additional lectures for Winter and Spring 2018 will be added to the schedule. Please visit www.generalsociety.org for more information. These lectures are supported, in part, by public funds from the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, in partnership with the City

NYC Cultural Affairs Council.

How Interests have Changed Since 1837

Annals of The General Society of Mechanics and Tradesmen of the City of New York, published in 1882, describes the beginnings of our Lecture Series in 1837. Lectures were a popular diversion of the day, and many scholars and orators made a career on the lecture circuit. At the GSMT, the scheduled lectures became more than mere educational vehicles; they were highly coveted social events. It was an occasion for guests to show off their best, and the social elite took advantage of the occasion. Dignitaries arriving in carriages were dressed in festive attire. And 181 years later, we continue this tradition by bringing notable speakers to the citizens of New York City each year. More than a century ago, our lecture audiences had far different interests than those we pursue today. Back then, they would clamor to hear Professor Renwick speak about "Natural Philosophy," the precursor to Natural Science. In 1843, George Folsom covered "The History of the Magnet." And in the 1850-51 series, Rev. T. Starr King talked about "Thought & Life of Socrates." Some lecture titles in the late-19th Century included: "Heroism," "Wit & Humor," "Common Sense," "Courts & Jury, Working & Shirking," and "British Rule in India." Huge crowds gathered to hear these lectures and to listen to famous people such as the Hon. Horace Greeley, and the Rev. Henry Ward Beecher, brother of Harriet Beecher Stowe, who wrote *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Today, the **General Society's Lecture Series** focuses on a range of topics related to design, craftsmanship, labor, literature, and landmarks, encompassing history, culture, methods, and operations. The **Society's Artisan Lecture Series**, now in its eighth season, promotes the work and art of skilled craftsmen to ensure that both historic traditions and modern techniques are understood and valued so that they may be transmitted to future generations.



Facade Inspection

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119th Street Gatehouse in 1908

NYC Cultural Affairs Council.

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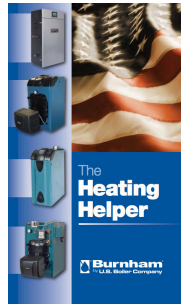
Third Generation Master Licensed Electrician Joins Faculty



Warren Dondero

You can just imagine the holiday conversations around Warren Dondero's dinner table as he grew. Talk about sparking a conversation! Warren Dondero is a 3rd generation Local Union #3 electrician. His grandfather, father, uncle, brother and four cousins were all Local Union #3 members. He entered the Local Union #3 Apprenticeship training program in March of 1982. The program consisted of working as an electrician apprentice during the day and attending electricians school and SUNY Empire State College for four years at night, earning his Associate's Degree in Labor Studies. He spent the following 18 months as a "MIJ" Electrician. He received his A-Journeyman card in 1987. He worked his way up from Journeyman, to sub-foreman, to Foreman, to General Foreman, and then finally to Superintendent. After studying for two more years, he passed his written and practical exams and reached the summit of Master Electrician in 2005. He founded Broadway Electric that same year and grew that business from a two-man shop to a 90-man company in just 10 years. He closed the company in 2015. He is presently working for Robert B. Samuels Inc (Local Union #3 contractor) heading up their Business Development, which is fortunate for Mechanics Institute because it now allows Mr. Dondero the time to teach the next generation of electrical professionals. He humbly says, "I love teaching because it makes me a better student of the trade." Mr. Dondero has been married to his amazing wife, Carolyn Dondero Rodriguez, for 27 years. They have three wonderful daughters, Michelle, Nikki, and Alexis. He enjoys travel, hiking, fitness, and working on cars and motorcycles in his shop. We are so fortunate to have Instructor Warren Dondero on the faculty of Mechanics Institute.

A Thank You To U.S. Boiler



Burnham, a Lancaster, PA, company that has been in business for more than 125 years, changed their name to **U.S. Boiler** in 2009. They're a well-respected company that also does a lot of contractor training at their facility. **Mike Hook**, at U.S. Boiler, was approached to see if he would donate a few dozen copies of their *Heating Helper Handbook*, which is loaded with information valuable to

heating contractors for use by our HVAC/R Program at the Mechanics Institute. Mike Hook generously donated the handbooks and followed up by offering to also give us boiler displays that they no longer use at trade shows. Most of these displays are cutaways, which make them perfect instructional tools. We accepted, of course, and the displays are on their way to the Mechanics Institute. There's nothing like visual displays when it comes to teaching people who work with their hands. Thanks to our friends at U.S. Boiler.

General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen, 20 West 44th St, 1901.

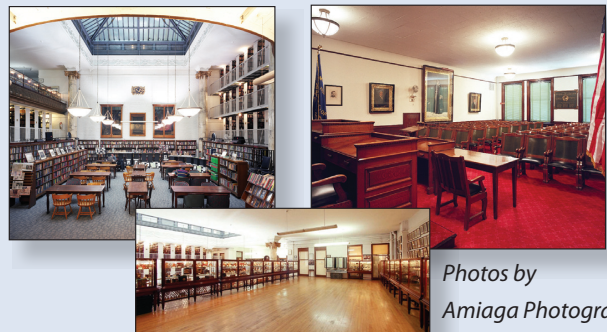


Please Help the General Society Support Our Programs

The historic GSMT building has space to rent for programs and special events.

- Our grand three-story library
- Balcony/Museum
- Conference Rooms for smaller meetings
- Classrooms available for regular daytime use or evening lectures, classes, receptions and more

For more information, call The General Society office, (212) 840-1840 ext. 2, or visit our website at www.generalsociety.org and click Rent Space.



Photos by
Amiaga Photography

Thanks to General Society interns, Victoria Herlocker and Oraline Wiart



Victoria Herlocker just finished her sophomore year at The College of New Jersey, where she is studying journalism and professional writing. She spent the summer working with our veteran Newsletter Editor and incomparable mentor, **Penny Speckter**. Together, they

made the fall GSMT News a stellar issue. Ms. Herlocker showed great skill at cropping photos, editing headlines and copy, suggesting story ideas, and helping with production. We are grateful for her excellent work. **Oraline Wiart**, who is a first-year law student from Cambrai, France, was visiting her uncle, GSMT member, Jean Wiart. Ms. Wiart spent three days a week at the General Society, and was a magnificent contributor to our archival



Here's Victoria introducing Oraline to her first piece of New York City pizza. Of course she loved it!

work. During Ms. Wiart's free day, **Carol Lilienfeld, Esq.**, introduced her to Monday Night Law, which is a volunteer advisory service at the New York Bar Association. Ms. Lilienfeld also took Ms. Wiart with her to the Civil, Supreme and Criminal Courts, and because of this, Oraline got a first-hand look at how the New York court system works. It was a wonderful opportunity for our intern from France to see New York City law in action. Thank you,

Victoria Herlocker and Oraline Wiart for your wonderful contributions to The Society! We miss you and look forward to your return.

The 22 Founders of 1785

Those 22 men, the founders of our General Society, gathered in a tavern to talk things over. There were six Johns, two Henrys, two Williams, and two Roberts. There was also a Dennis, an Isaac, an Edward, an Anthony, a George, an Andrew, a Hugh, an Isaiah, a Joseph, and an Ebenezer. Their trades were: Shoemaker, Tanner, Cutler, Blacksmith, Hatter, Silversmith, Cooper, Tobacconist, Coachmaker, Carpenter, Tailor, Block-maker, Ship-joiner, Bricklayer, Tallow Chandler, Comb maker, Stonecutter, Ship carpenter, and Saddler. What did they have in common? A love of New York City, a deep belief in each other's skills and the resolve to work together in the spirit of brotherhood and practical philanthropy. And they did. And so we remember them 233 years later.

*"By Hammer and Hand
All Arts Do Stand"*

Lights, Camera, Action



Scenes from Steven Spielberg's award-winning and acclaimed new film, *The Post*, were shot at the General Society during the summer of 2017. The movie is a gripping drama about the partnership between *The Washington Post's* Katharine Graham (Meryl Streep), editor Ben Bradlee (Tom Hanks) and Post reporters, as they race to catch up with *The New York Times* to expose a cover-up of government secrets that spanned three decades. The General Society building was altered to stand-in as *The New York Times*; all *The New York Times* scenes in the film were directed by Mr. Spielberg at the Society. The photo above illustrates how the exterior of our building was transformed.

A Modern Touch for Our Radiators



Photo credit John Cataneo

The wind is howling and the temperature is plummeting, but our new thermostatic radiator valves (TRVs) are on the job and keeping the General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen building cozy.

The Tunstall Corporation very generously donated Macon thermostatic radiator valves that you will now see on our radiators. TRVs work without electricity. Each senses the air temperature in the room that it serves and keeps the radiators from overheating. And they can be adjusted to meet personal comfort levels. Just dial in the knob until the indoor weather is just right. It's a very modern solution to an age-old problem. No opening windows to let in the wind when you can just dial in the TRV. We also have a brand-new, central controller that is on guard in the basement. It's sensing the temperature outside 24/7, and it will turn the steam on and off as needed. This gives us even more control over the temperature inside. Heat-Timer very generously donated that control. We are so grateful for to Heat-Timer and the Tunstall Corporation for their kindness to GSMT.

Hammering On...

American Society of Sanitary Engineers Awards MI Students



Joe Munafo, Tom DiPietro, Brawn Abdelmaseih and Beverly Adjokatcher

Congratulations to Mechanics Institute Plumbing Systems Graduates **Brawn Abdelmaseih** and **Beverly Adjokatcher** on receiving Scholastic Awards for Excellence from the American Society of Sanitary Engineers (ASSE). We are grateful to our friends at the ASSE for their continued support and fellowship.

Horological Society of New York

The Horological Society of New York (HSNY), a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to advancing the art and science of horology, has now moved its headquarters to The General Society building. The Society's Library has played host to HSNY educational sessions, including their popular watchmaking classes, for the past two years. Members are a diverse and passionate mix of watchmakers, clockmakers, executives, journalists, auctioneers, historians, salespeople and collectors, reflecting the rich nature of horology in New York City.

44th-Street Window Displays

GSMT member and Artisan, **Thomas Donohue**, continues his inspiring creations in our 44th-Street windows that tell the tale of our educational and cultural programs. Over the past several years, Mr. Donohue has created more than 60 window designs.

By Hammer and Hand All Arts Do Stand

The slogan of the General Society since its inception traces its roots back to the early 17th-Century Coat of Arms of the Ancient British Trade Guild known as "The Worshipful Company of Blacksmiths." The strong, raised arm in our logo holds the tool that inspired our founding President, **Robert Boyd**, himself a blacksmith, to appoint this powerful symbol and motto as a fitting description of our Society, when the Artisans of the new American nation applied their talents and effort to shape early New York City. This work continues today as the built environment of New York continues to evolve and thrive.



400 First-Time Visitors

Open House New York brought a sea of new faces to our historic building. Some 400 visitors explored our Library, the Assembly Room, and The Mossman Lock Collection on October 14. We look forward to welcoming visitors again in fall 2018.

General Society Library Book Group

The Library Book Group meets on the first Thursday of the month at 1pm in the Library. The reading list is as follows: February 1: *Framley Parsonage* by Anthony Trollope, March 1 – E.M. Forster – *Where Angels Fear To Tread*, April 5 – Arnold Bennett – *Anna of the Five Towns*. New Members are welcome. For more information on future titles and how to join the group, please email karin.taylor@generalsociety.org.

The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen of the City of New York

"By Hammer and Hand All Arts Do Stand"

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News, photos and editorial suggestions from members are welcome and can be sent to pennspec@aol.com

The General Society of Mechanics & Tradesmen

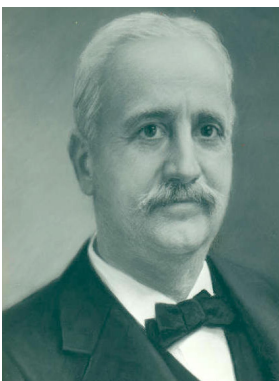
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*For GSMT Event Calendar, visit the
General Society website at
www.generalsociety.org*



The General Society of
Mechanics & Tradesmen
20 West 44th Street
New York, NY 10036

Check our website for current updates on GSMT Events and send us your e-mail to receive event information: www.generalsociety.org



Objet d'art at the General Society

Stephen M. Wright (1841-1906), descended from a prominent Oyster Bay, Long Island family, and became a member of The General Society in 1878, signing the membership register with his trade as "Locksmith." He was elected President of The General Society in 1900, with previous service as Vice President, and for twelve years as Secretary. Additionally, Mr. Wright was the longtime Secretary of The Building Trades Club of New York, which honored him for his service in 1894 with a personal gift of a 28-inch, bronze statue: *Duo Difficile*, by the popular French sculptor **Adrien Étienne Gaudéz**

(1845-1902). The statue delicately depicts two young boys learning to play a violin and a flute. As shown, a 3½-inch decorative bronze cartouche on its base is signed, "Duo Difficile Par A. Gaudéz." His earlier work was mostly of a classical nature, but in his later career, he produced some sculpture that could be categorized as art nouveau. In 1908, after Mr. Wright's demise, six General Society members purchased the statue and contributed it to The General Society as a Perpetual Memorial in his honor, where it remains on display in our Executive Offices.

