

Hans Christian Andersen Window

Designed by Marie Herndl

Central Library

Betty Brinn Children's Room

Milwaukee Public Library

Marie Herndl was the only woman in her time to succeed as an artist in stained glass. Born in Munich, Germany in 1859, she came to Milwaukee in 1899. Although she chose to pursue an artistic career in painted glass, she admitted it was a difficult profession. In a *Milwaukee Journal* article in 1911 she said, "For a long time I had a hard time; the ways of the artist are not always bright, nor is the work as easy as some imagine...The work is so hard that unless one is determined and diligent as well as in love with it, failure is certain." Herndl died at her home in Milwaukee on May 14, 1912 at the age of 53.

The Hans Christian Andersen window was completed in 1896. It was a gift from the artist to the library in 1903 and was hung in the original children's library in the Central Library building. The window was restored by Conrad Schmidt Studios for the grand opening of the children's room in 1998. The Latin phrase "exegi monumentum aere. Perennius," which appears at the bottom of the window, is a quote from the odes of the Latin poet Horace when speaking of his writings. It is translated: "I have erected a monument more lasting than bronze," a fitting comment on Andersen's work as well, which is still cherished by millions.

Herndl's "Queen of the Elves" received a bronze medal at the Chicago World's Fair in 1893. It was given to the Milwaukee Arena-Auditorium Board in 1912 and now is housed in the Smith Museum of Stained Glass Windows in Chicago. After Herndl won gold medals at the St. Louis World's Fair in 1904, the government commissioned two skylights for buildings in Washington, as well as a skylight 13 feet in diameter featuring the seals of the original 13 colonies for the United States senate building. Herndl also created a skylight portraying the Statue of Liberty for which an unnamed Milwaukee society woman served as a model.

Locally, Patrick Cudahy commissioned a three-panel colored glass window in 1911 for the staircase of his daughter's home. The panels represented spring, summer and fall, scenes from the Cudahy summer home at Pine Lake. Six of Herndl's windows depicting the life of Christ are in Christ King Chapel at St. Francis Seminary.

