

# Connick Windows

Winter, 2009 - 2010

---

*Thoughts, news and comments concerning the art and craft of Connick stained glass, published periodically by...*  
**The Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation, Ltd.**, Orin E. Skinner, Founder Marilyn B. Justice, President  
Directors and Officers: Jonathan Ambrosino Theresa D. Cederholm Peter Cormack (Honorary) Judith G. Edington  
Jonathan L. Fairbanks Robert E. Reber Albert M. Tannler

---

## ***Preserving Light and Color: Working with MIT's Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation Collection***

Jeremy Grubman, Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation Collection Processor



*Sir Bors panel (1919) given to MIT's Rotch Library as part of the Connick Foundation Collection  
Photograph by Ian Justice*

As a new professional to the field of archival and library sciences, I began work in April 2009 processing the Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation Collection for MIT's Rotch Library of Architecture and Planning. While I was unfamiliar with Connick's work and the world of stained glass art, I quickly became immersed in the light and color of Connick art through the windows, designs and cartoons, and the history of the studio and foundation through their documents.

My first step was to understand exactly what materials were contained in the collection. We have approximately 50 glass items and 100 paintings and designs. I meticulously measured every window, cartoon and framed painting; and examined the items for damage. Thankfully, our artwork is in excellent condition. I then opened each of the nearly 250 boxes that contained photographs, job details, correspondence, financial records, glass fragments, tools, personal effects, and other materials from both the studio and the Connick Foundation. This work culminated in a detailed inventory of our holdings. Next, I conducted surveys of special materials for preservation and conservation needs, including a small number of old architecture books, and reels of 8mm film.

Currently, I have been re-housing the documents of the collection. In the library world, "housing" refers to the containment of materials. In this case, the process involves replacing damaged or old boxes, organizing documents in acid-free envelopes and folders, and surrounding photographs, fragile documents and small artwork with acid-free paper.

In the near future, we will develop a webpage as a public point of entry for the collection. We hope to digitize certain elements of the collection, including high quality images of our windows and designs, as well as job information for reference purposes. In 2011, you may expect an exhibit on "Glass at MIT" including materials from the collection.

At MIT's Rotch Library, we welcome your questions and support. We expect to answer specific reference questions within one week, and are happy to answer any other questions you may have about the collection in general. Please email us at [rotch-ref@mit.edu](mailto:rotch-ref@mit.edu). We thank you for your interest.

- Jennifer Friedman, Rotch Library Collections Manager and Public Services Librarian  
- Ann Whiteside, Rotch Library Head.

## ***Charles Connick in Pittsburgh: A Series of Lectures and Tours in 2009***

Albert M. Tannler, Historical Collections Director at PHLF\*  
and Louise Sturgess, Executive Director of PHLF

*Charles J. Connick was ... a leading creative force in a fascinating—although still neglected—cultural phenomenon, modern America's exploration and development of the Gothic tradition in art and architecture. The city of Pittsburgh is fortunate to have some of the very best Modern Gothic buildings in the USA ... whose architecture is illuminated (in every sense) by Connick's stained glass.*

This excerpt from Peter Cormack's "Foreword" to *Charles J. Connick: His Education and His Windows in and near Pittsburgh* encapsulates the purpose of **Charles J. Connick: World-Class Stained Glass in Pittsburgh**, a six-part \*Pittsburgh History & Landmarks Foundation program held between May 24 and October 25, 2009. It was most appropriate, therefore, that on May 24, 2009, Peter Cormack gave the keynote address—the first event in the series—before 120 attendees at **Calvary Episcopal Church**. Mr. Cormack is the premier Connick scholar and a leading historian of the work of William Morris, the English Arts & Crafts movement, and British stained glass. Calvary Church (Ralph Adams Cram, architect; designed and built 1905-07) co-sponsored the event. (This program and subsequent programs were funded by donations from The Charles J. Connick Stained Glass Foundation Ltd., Boston, several individuals, and event fees.)

On June 21, Al spoke at **First Baptist Church**, designed by Cram's partner Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue (1909-12). "Classical Perspective, Industrial Art, and American Gothic" explored the American glass world that Connick entered in 1894 and how that world changed and was refocused. Reverend Gary Denning discussed the symbolism of the windows, designed and made by Connick in 1911-12.

On July 12, curator and museum director Anne Madarasz gave an illustrated talk, "Pittsburgh Glass—1797 to the Present," at the **Heinz History Center**, followed by a gallery tour of the Center's glass exhibit.

Nick Parrendo, the dean of Pittsburgh glazers, who with his family own and operate **Hunt Stained Glass Studios**, led a tour of the studio—from the basement to the rooftop—on September 4, so participants could see how stained glass windows were designed and made.

On September 27 Nick and Al lead a tour of three churches containing glass by Connick's contemporaries. At **Church of the Nativity**, Crafton (O. M. Topp, 1908-10), participants saw two windows by William Willet and windows by three generations of artists from Hunt Studios. At **Sacred Heart Parish**, Shadyside (Carlton Strong, 1924-53), participants saw glass by George and Alice Sotter. John Kelly of Kelly Art Glass discussed the ongoing restoration of the windows, installed between 1930 and 1954. At **Church of the Redeemer**, Squirrel Hill (E. Donald Robb, 1936-37), participants saw windows (1939-62) by Howard G. Wilbert, a member of the parish. Wilbert was born and educated in Pittsburgh and apprenticed with Pittsburgh Stained Glass Studios. He became a partner and served as chief designer for 35 years.

The culminating event was the October 25 tour of the Cathedral of Learning campus, University of Pittsburgh (C. Z. Klauder, 1926-38). Participants saw secular and religious windows designed by Connick in the **Stephen Foster Memorial**, **Cathedral of Learning**, and **Heinz Memorial Chapel**. Joan Gaul, author of the Heinz Chapel guide book, and Ron Klebick, assistant director of the Chapel, told the story of Heinz Chapel's construction and described the 23 windows, among Connick's finest.

As a result of the lectures and tours, participants were able to more fully appreciate the pioneering work of Connick and his contemporaries who revitalized the medieval art of stained glass window making through Arts & Crafts principles. The tours also confirmed Peter Cormack's statement that "The City of Pittsburgh is fortunate to have some of the very best Modern Gothic buildings in the USA."