



The Dignity of Work Mural

The name of this mural by Alfred Smith is *The Dignity of Work*. It is located on the corner of W Street and Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue, S.E. In this mural, artist Al Smith illustrates the lives and work experiences of known and unknown heroes in African American history. You can see images that discuss the U.S. Military, the **Great Migration** of African Americans to the North, athletics, religion, and Washington's own Frederick Douglass. The images of the construction workers were inspired by those who worked on the District's streets.

Helping to paint this mural were several junior and senior high school students who were a part of the city's summer job program for youth. They brought different skills to the project. Some of the students were good at drawing from grids, or patterns. Others helped by mixing the **acrylic paints**. Special **scaffolding** was used, which allowed them to reach high areas on the brick wall. This project was supported with funds from the D.C. Arts Commission in 1989.

Al Smith has created other paintings that show city life in the District of Columbia. The artist teaches at Howard University, which is also located in Washington, D.C.

Information provided by Alfred Smith

A Community's Public Art

(Place a photograph or drawing, here.)

Search your community for a mural or sculpture that is displayed in a public area including on the side of a building, in the lobby of a building, in a park, or in a shopping mall.

Why did you choose this work? _____

Who created it and when? _____

What inspired this work? What is its meaning? _____

Identify the materials used and the means of construction. _____

