

Engineering for the Memory of Authors

An Interactive Qualifying Project Report

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By

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## **Abstract**

“The Literary Tour of Worcester Continues” is an IQP expanding on the work of WPI Alumnus Tim Adams’ project completed eight years ago commemorating local Worcester writers. The project has three main components: 1.) Obtaining the funding to commemorate the authors Frank O’Hara and Esther Forbes in such a manner, 2.) Designing and fabricating of plaques to be placed on the former home sites of so mentioned, and 3.) Holding an unveiling ceremony and reception which will stimulate public interest in these authors, increasing Worcester’s knowledge of its own cultural history.



**Photos of the finished plaque on the former O'Hara residence**



**Photos of the finished plaque on the former Forbes home site**

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Tom Thomsen, WPI Director of the International House, very kindly offered its usage for our reception. John Miller, WPI Head of Plant Services, helped the group with the placement and installation of the plaques. Our advisor, Professor Laura Menides, was wonderful. Her constant support and guidance every step of the way as essential for the accomplishment our goals.

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## **Executive Summary**

Worcester County has long permitted its rich literary heritage to go almost unrecognized. This project examines two of Worcester County's most renowned twentieth century authors and aims to increase cultural awareness of the area by placing commemorative plaques on their former home sites. Following up on an MQP done in 1997 by Tim Adams, these two authors were recognized through several means:

1) Bronze plaques dedicated to Frank O'Hara and Esther Forbes were placed on their childhood home sites, in recognition of their life and works. Unveiling ceremonies highlighting these authors were held with a reception afterwards. The plaque dedicated to O'Hara was placed on his former home, while the one for Forbes was placed on a boulder on the site where her home once stood.

2) Media coverage was given to this project in the form of the Worcester Telegram and Gazette. At the two unveiling ceremonies, a reporter and photographer from the T&G came and brought attention to the deserving authors through an article in the Gazette.

Many of the local foundations, societies, and museums such as the Worcester County Poetry Association, the American Antiquarian Society, the Worcester Historical Museum, and WPI attended the unveiling ceremonies.

Along with the accomplishment of these immediate goals, it is the intent of our project to create a foundation for even more future work recognizing the talent of Worcester-born authors.

# 1. Introduction

This project studies the importance of two acclaimed Worcester County authors, Frank O'Hara (1926-1966) and Esther Forbes (1891-1967), with the intention of increasing the awareness of these authors in their home towns and beyond. This project follows up on the recommendations of a project completed by Timothy Adams in 1997 for his Major Qualifying Project (MQP). It takes a similar approach as the previous project but has different methods of achieving its goals.

Just as Tim Adams did, our group constructed a plaque for each of the authors. Frank O'Hara's was placed at the site of his former home at 12 North Street in Grafton and Esther Forbes' at the place where her childhood home once stood, 23 Trowbridge Road. The Worcester application for funding was both denied because of the belief the project would not have a large enough impact on the community. The Grafton Arts Council did not reply to our application. In response to this, a number of other organizations were approached for support and we received approval from Worcester Polytechnic Institute (WPI) (\$1100), the American Antiquarian Society (AAS) (\$200), Maureen O'Hara (\$200), and Worcester County Poetry Association (\$500), totaling the \$2,000 necessary to complete the plaque fabrication and placement, and the purchasing of supplies for the unveiling.



## 2. Background

### 2.1 Esther Forbes

Esther Louise Forbes was born on June 28, 1891. Esther was the fifth of six children in the Forbes family, according to her descendent, Margaret Erskine. The Forbes family was a very old and respected one in the town of Westboro, MA. Esther's father, William Trowbridge Forbes, was a tall and thin man who wore a beard and was dreadfully near-sighted. He graduated from Amherst College and went off to Constantinople to teach mathematics at Robert College. He later returned to "read the law" and opened his own law office in Westboro in 1888. He was also appointed judge of the probate court in Worcester later in his life, and purchased the estate on Trowbridge Street in 1899. Forbes' mother, Harriette Merrifield, was small and very beautiful. She graduated from Oread Academy in Worcester. She traveled all around America and Europe before finally settling down and marrying William (Erskine 5).

Esther was a tall and robust woman, and very lively. Esther particularly enjoyed telling stories from the time she could talk. Even though her four older siblings were very bright and active in academics, Esther was indifferent to education. She had problems paying attention and never learned how to spell particularly well. At the age of ten, she suffered a severe case of rheumatic fever, damaging her heart and causing problems for the rest of her life. This caused Esther to stay at home for long periods,

away from her education at the Bancroft School. While at home, her mother encouraged her to read, paint, draw, and write stories (Erskine 7).

Esther's history tells us that when she finished the Bancroft School, she attended classes at the Worcester Art Museum and, in 1909, went to Bradford Academy. Here she wrote short stories and poetry, most of which she never revealed to her teachers. She constantly broke the rules and was considered to be "not cooperative" by the administration. Despite her atrocious spelling, Forbes' stories had great and unique content. Her professors would sometimes lose sight of this because of the spelling and the others who grasped the content would often accuse her of stealing the story from outside sources. Regardless, she graduated Bradford in 1912 but did not pursue any more education because of her lack of interest (Erskine 10-12).

In 1918, Forbes began working at the Houghton Mifflin Company in Boston reading unsolicited manuscripts. She would have worked as a receptionist or a typist, but, because her spelling was so poor, she was never given this opportunity (Erskine 13). However, her opinion soon became valued. She became confident in her writing and Houghton Mifflin agreed to publish her first novel *O Genteel Lady* in 1926. Even though she was a new author, her novel received favorable reviews and became a bestseller quickly. Following up on her success, Forbes wrote the deep and dark novel *A Mirror for Witches* in 1928, which also received much acclaim. *A Mirror for Witches*, a book about a witch's experiences, was narrated from the point of view of a Puritan defending the actions against the witch (Erskine 15-16).

Forbes married Albert Hoskins, a handsome and charming lawyer with a brilliant mind and a good education, in 1926 (Erskine 20). However, while both succeeded in

their professional lives, they began having marital problems as Forbes became more and more acclaimed. By 1933, they divorced and Forbes moved back to her childhood home on Trowbridge Street in Worcester to write. The result was *Paradise*, a long and complicated novel a book about the early settlements in New England, published in 1937. *The General's Lady*, published in 1938, was based on the real story of Bathsheba Spooner, who hired two men to kill her patriot husband in March of 1778 so she could run away with an Englishman. She was the only woman ever hanged in Worcester, for planning the murder of her husband. Her head is buried somewhere in Green Hill Park (Erskine 24).

Forbes then became very interested in the American Revolution and Paul Revere and did much research at the Massachusetts Historical Society and the American Antiquarian Society. Early in 1942, she produced *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* and won the Pulitzer Prize. This novel relied heavily on letters of correspondence from Paul Revere. She made her readers feel that they knew Paul Revere, and she depicted Boston realistically at the time of the Revolution (Erskine 25). Very soon afterwards, she wrote the children's story *Johnny Tremain* in late 1942 about a young boy during the American Revolution. The book won the Newberry Award for children's literature in 1943. *Johnny Tremain* was unique because it told the story of the American Revolution through the eyes of a boy, not a leader of the Revolution. Walt Disney even decided to make a movie of *Johnny Tremain* because of its great story line (Erskine 26-7). Immediately after finishing these works, she became sick and collapsed from exhaustion (Erskine 30).

Forbes would go back and work for Houghton Mifflin again from 1942-46 because of her love of work. She became the first woman elected as a member of the American Antiquarian Society in 1960, which is a great honor to be amongst such a scholarly organization (Erskine 33). Suffering from declining health and an irregular heartbeat, and Esther Forbes died on August 12, 1967. She left all of her literary remains to the American Antiquarian Society (Erskine 34-5).

### **2.1.1. Merrifield Estate**

Merrifield at 23 Trowbridge Road in Worcester, MA, was the estate established by Harriette Merrifield Forbes, Esther's mother, in 1899 and built on the site formerly occupied by the mansion of her father, William T. Merrifield. A more modern house than the original mansion, the new house was named Merrifield after Harriette's father and Esther's grandfather, and an industrial complex known as the Merrifield Shops. In October of 2003, the house named Merrifield (known to the Forbes family as "23") followed its predecessor on the site and was demolished after continuous occupancy by the Forbes family and their descendants since 1899. In the intervening years, the house had gone from being the largest house on a residential street to one of the few private residences remaining in the midst of the WPI campus. Following Merrifield's demolition the land was conveyed to Worcester Polytechnic Institute (Merrifield 3).

## 2.1.2. Commentary on writings

Esther Forbes used many descriptive passages with vivid and colorful images in her works to describe all that is life. She was a warm, clever, and very witty writer who used her talent to tell the history of America in a fictional manner. Her works described the past with a flare, telling the personal secrets and feelings of people during some of America's most fantastic times, like the Salem witch-hunts and the American Revolution.

She gained deep insight to every work she ever wrote, especially those about the American Revolution. However, her writings took place in a variety of settings. She spent many hours at the American Antiquarian Society learning all about the period and the personal feelings of great historic figures, like Paul Revere. A close relative of Forbes, Margaret Erskine, wrote, “[Forbes] wrote to express her own vision and would not compromise in the interests of making her works more salable. She was an accomplished writer, a careful scholar, and a person of great integrity” (Erskine 35). From these words come the essence of Esther Forbes; she was unwilling to change her unique ideas to please everyone.

“Books,” Forbes believed, “are only the shadow and life the real thing. I believe this as strongly as any belief I hold. I also believe that writing becomes worthwhile and vitalized only through a full and exciting life” (Repeat After Us). Forbes lived her life to the fullest, which is why her books become so worthwhile.

Esther Forbes' writings have profound impacts on generations of Americans with her unique and powerful writings. Her works combine the history of America along with a captivating story that entrances and excites. Forbes puts a lot of intense research into her works to make them more realistic and true to the period she writes about; her novels

on the American Revolution especially exemplify this quality in her writings. Forbes' writings, while keeping with the ideas of the era she writes about, hold many important ideas and themes applying to all of society. Her writings echo the greatness of American history in an original and thoughtful way.

Forbes' research covers many aspects of life but mainly revolves around the colonial period of America. She writes on many periods of early America, from the Salem witch trials through the American Revolution. Her work on the witch trials, *A Mirror for Witches*, goes into detail the hardships of life during this time as seen through the eyes of Doll Bilby, a witch. Forbes follows her life and the righteous judgment that befell her – her burning at the stake for her worship of demons and the devil. This novel reflects the ideas of passion amongst lovers as Doll refuses to renounce her faith to Satan and love of a demon and defiance of acceptance as part of society. The following passage tells of Doll's infatuation with a fiend and how she goes to his side this one night:

Her name was called by a thousand little voices. A million gleaming eyes watched her. At last she was thus conveyed to the fiend, who was seated upon a hillock, as on a throne. He raised her up when she would prostrate herself to him. He bade her have no fear, for, although in Hell he was indeed a great prince, upon earth he was as mortal man and her true love. (*Witches*, 130)

Doll illustrates a woman unwilling to compromise just because the masses do not receive her as an equal.

Moving away from the early period in American colonialism, Forbes focuses on the time when America defines itself as a nation, the American Revolution. Her biography *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* reconstructs the past through the eyes of one of America's greatest historical figures, Paul Revere. Forbes tells the story of this Boston blacksmith and the famous journey he took and the life he led. Forbes tells of one

of the most famous rides in history, Paul Revere's, with great detail and through the eyes of this great messenger just after his release from the English:

The mounted patrol drifted away. The four countrymen had already departed.... As he was less than a mile from Lexington, he decided to look in on Hancock and Adams and find out, as he would say, 'what was acting.' Fearing to be picked up again, he left the road and made his way cross-lots over stone walls and pastures.... He did not know the environs of Lexington, but when he found himself in a graveyard, stumbling over stones, he knew the parsonage was close at hand. (Revere 264)

Forbes constructs his life through the many correspondences of Revere to his family and to the many important figures of the times. Forbes paints a memorable portrait of American colonial history and of this most legendary of revolutionary heroes as not merely one man riding one horse on a certain lonely night of long ago, but a symbol to which his fellow citizens can yet turn.

The most lasting work in Forbes' legacy is her young adult novel *Johnny Tremain*. This fantastic work follows the life of fourteen-year-old Johnny Tremain and his ordeals through the American Revolution. Instead of through the eyes of an important historical figure (as in *Paul Revere*), the novel follows the actions of young Johnny and how he perceives the world in which he lives. Forbes writes in a powerful manner, illustrating the fire and passion of the colonial American's of the time, as seen in George Hewes' zealous call to arms of his countrymen:

Friends! Brethren! Fellow citizens! That worst of Plagues, the detested tea shipped for this Port by the East India Company, is now arrived in the Harbour: the hour of destruction, of manly opposition to the machinations of Tyranny, stares you in the Face; Every Friend to his Country, to Himself, and to Posterity, is now called upon to meet at Faneuil Hall, at nine o'clock this day, at which time the bells will ring to make united and successful resistance to this last, worst and most destructive measure of Administration. (Tremain, 107)

Also, the transformation from boy to man is so relevant to that of any young boy that the novel is still read amongst young adults today as an example of this coming of age at its finest.





## 2.2. Frank O'Hara

Frank O'Hara was born on March 27th, 1926, in Baltimore, Maryland. He spent his childhood in the house at 12 North St. Grafton, Massachusetts (although then the house was numbered '16'), attending elementary and secondary school in Worcester, and the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he studied piano. O'Hara lived in Grafton until he joined the armed forces in 1944 as a sonarsman on the USS Nicholas (Cain 1390). O'Hara considered his house in Grafton home until he moved to New York in 1950 after receiving an honorable discharge in 1946, and obtaining his bachelor's degree from Harvard.

Upon receiving a recommendation from John Ciardi, an instructor he had studied creative writing under at Harvard, O'Hara received a graduate fellowship in comparative literature at the University of Michigan (Milstead). A number of poems he wrote there, including "A Byzantine Place," and his play, "Try! Try!" won him the Avery Hopwood Major Award in poetry (Milstead).

After receiving his M.A. from Harvard in 1951, O'Hara moved to New York. He strove to discover life in the city and continued writing poetry that was often based on his encounters there. Here O'Hara began to realize himself, living openly as a homosexual and fully exploring his interests in writing and the arts. He tried out a number of temporary jobs, moving from place to place in an effort to obtain an occupation that would allow him to continue his poetry (Cain 1391). It was then, in December of 1951, that O'Hara was hired by the Museum of Modern art as a front desk attendant, selling postcards and publications. He frequently wrote poems while at work and made contacts

in the art world. He began writing for the *Art News* and soon became an editorial associate in 1953. Two years later, he returned to the Museum of Modern Art after being appointed Curator, and continued writing articles for the *Art News* (Milstead).

In O'Hara's writing, he strived to convey his appreciation and love for life, saying that poetry ought to be "between two persons instead of two pages." The first of his poetry to become well known was *Meditations in an Emergency*, published in 1957 (Milstead). Although at the time it received so-so criticism, it later became the collection he was most known for of his works (Cain 1391). However, O'Hara's most important publication was included in Donald Allen's publication *The New American Poetry*, an anthology of authors of a variety of different styles at the time. Fifteen of O'Hara poems appeared under the "New York School" section, naming him a major writer in the group. O'Hara published several more collections in his lifetime, including *Lunch Poems* in 1964, and *Love Poems* in 1965 (Milstead).

O'Hara's life was tragically cut short when he was struck by a vehicle on Fire Island beach, Long Island, New York, in 1966 (Cain 1391).

## 2.2.1 Commentary on the writings

Frank O'Hara's writings clearly reflect the manner in which they were written. O'Hara enjoyed writing poetry so that it became a habit and a routine in his day, meaning that his poems echo a plethora of emotions and thoughts flowing through his mind on any given day, in any given poem. In "To the Harbormaster, we see genuine, heartfelt passages; he is no doubt describing a past romance, comparing the turbulent and relentless sea, which many would rather face than suffering of loneliness:

"To you I offer my hull and the tattered cordage  
of my will. The terrible channels where  
the wind drives me against the brown lips  
of the reeds are not all behind me. Yet  
I trust the sanity of my vessel; and  
if it sinks it may well be in answer  
to the reasoning of the eternal voices,  
the waves which have kept me from reaching you"

We also see O'Hara's bolder side as he describes his nightlife in the controversial

"Homosexuality:"

"So we are taking off our masks, are we, and keeping  
our mouths shut? as if we'd been pierced by a glance!  
The song of an old cow is not more full of judgment  
than the vapors which escape one's soul when one is sick;  
so I pull the shadows around me like a puff  
and crinkle my eyes as if at the most exquisite moment  
of a very long opera, and then we are off!  
without reproach and without hope that our delicate feet  
"will touch the earth again, let alone "very soon."  
It is the law of my own voice I shall investigate.  
I start like ice, my finger to my ear, my ear  
to my heart, that proud cur at the garbage can  
in the rain. It's wonderful to admire oneself  
with complete candor, tallying up the merits of each  
of the latrines. 14th Street is drunken and credulous,  
53 rd tries to tremble but is too at rest. The good  
love a park and the inept a railway station,  
and there are the divine ones who drag themselves up  
and down the lengthening shadow of an Abyssinian head  
in the dust, trailing their long elegant heels of hot air  
crying to confuse the brave "It's a summer day,  
and I want to be wanted more than anything else in the world."

In addition, many of O'Hara's works, especially those found in "Lunch Poems," are written with as much comedy as poetry. "Lines for the Fortune Cookies" is an excellent example:

"Just as Jackie Kennedy has a baby boy, so will you—even bigger.  
You will meet a tall beautiful blonde stranger, and you will not say hello.  
You will take a long trip and you will be very happy, though alone.  
You will marry the first person who tells you your eyes are like scrambled eggs.  
In the beginning there was YOU—there will always be YOU, I guess.  
You will write a great play and it will run for three performances"

We see by these variations in theme that O'Hara is not only a talented but also versatile writer. His attention to detail is matched only by his very close observation of the city he loves, New York City. He tells in his poem written about Billie Holiday, "The Day Lady Died," of the hush that fell over the crowd when she began to sing, no matter how showy the band that played before had been.

"I go back where I came from to 6th Avenue  
and the tobacconist in the Ziegfeld Theater and  
casually ask for a carton of Gauloises and a carton  
of Picayunes, and a NEW YORK POST with her face on it  
and I am sweating a lot by now and thinking of  
leaning on the john door in the 5 SPOT  
while she whispered a song along the keyboard  
to Mal Waldron and everyone and I stopped breathing"

Looking closely, we can see that much of O'Hara's writing is in present tense, as he envisions what is happening in his poetry as clearly as he has just seen it, or imagined it.

## **2.3. Tim Adams' Commemoration Project**

The O'Hara / Forbes Commemoration project is a continuation of an earlier endeavor entitled "A Literary Tour of Worcester" which honored Charles Olson, Elizabeth Bishop, and Stanley Kunitz, three Worcester area writers. WPI student Timothy Adams, as a major qualifying project, completed the task in 1997. See appendix B for abstract of Adams' project.

## **3. Methodology**

### **3.1 Preliminary Planning**

The design and placement of a plaque and the organizing of an unveiling ceremony to commemorate it required a great deal of preparation and planning before any parties were contacted or any letters written. A number of factors had to be considered, the most obvious one being, will the respective property owners allow us to place these plaques? To answer this question, we first needed to figure out a way to sell the idea to the property owners. Since the two properties, 12 North Street in Grafton, and 23 Trowbridge Road in Worcester were under separate ownerships in different situations, we devised two distinct strategies to secure each owner's permission.

Considering the case of 12 North Street, owned by the Davis family, we noted that most individuals experience some level of uneasiness at the thought of a modification of their personal home, the place where they live and are, in a sense, stuck with. Expecting this, we conferred with one another and our advisor, and brainstormed a list of some inherent features regarding the project that could cause such anxiety. Then, we analyzed the list, and developed strategies detailed below to intercept those worries and alleviate them before they became a problem.

Getting permission of the owner of the 23 Trowbridge Road property was not as involved, as it is university owned property, and not someone's personal home. The only step necessary would be to contact Steve Hebert, Vice President of University

Administration and Business affairs, and present the details of our project to him. With his permission, we would be authorized to place the plaque.

After attaining authorization to place the plaques at their respective sites, our next step was to determine how the endeavor would be funded. A donor who wishes to remain anonymous had already contributed five hundred dollars to the project, but this was insufficient for what we wanted to accomplish. We needed to obtain enough money to pay for the creation and placing of two plaques, and an unveiling ceremony that the WPI community, the family members of the authors, and the citizens of Worcester would be invited to attend. Applying for arts grants, we decided, would be the best way to go about this. In addition, we also needed to form alternative plans in the case our primary grants were denied, as proved to be the case. Then, once funding had been secured, the details of the unveiling ceremony would have to be decided upon, including dates, provisions, and ways to publicize the event.

## **3.2 Gaining approval for the Project**

Gaining approval from the property owners was the most important part of our preliminary work. Without the success of this endeavor, we would have had to investigate other authors and other properties to accomplish our project.

### **3.2.1 O'Hara site, North Street, Grafton**

Matthew, Evan, and Professor Menides all agreed that the biggest potential deterrent to the 12 North Street property owners' inclination to agree to support the project was Matthew and Evan's status as being students, and would be perceived as

inexperienced with such work, and home ownership all together. This inexperience could have frightened the property owners into turning down the project based on fears that their home would be damaged, the plaque would be unsightly, and other similar problems. To contend with this, Evan and Professor Menides made a point to go out to the site and meet the Davis' personally. We shared a discussion with Mr. Randy Davis in the family's living room, divided the project into its components, and presented the details to him. Once we explained that this style of undertaking had been accomplished in the past under Professor Menides' guidance, and showed Mr. Davis models of previous plaques that had been placed at Elizabeth Bishop's former home, his hesitance in the project immediately vanished. He then put his full support behind us and composed the letter furnished in the appendix C of this report giving us permission to place the plaque on his residence.

### **3.2.2 Forbes site, Trowbridge Road, Worcester**

23 Trowbridge Road, after being torn down and destroyed by the Erskine family, exchanged hands and became a part of the WPI campus. In order to construct a plaque the permission of WPI was needed, more specifically the permission of Stephen Hebert, the Vice President of Administration and Business Office.

Over the course of several weeks the permission of Stephen Hebert was obtained via email and a signed letter stating his and WPI's approval of the placement of a plaque on the property. Mr. Hebert and Professor Menides had been in contact before and this email just reminded him of what they talked about. With Mr. Hebert's support, the portion of the project to place a plaque on the site of Esther Forbes' former home at 23



Trowbridge Road in Worcester was on its way to completion. This letter of support was the first step of obtaining support from WPI – the owner’s support. See Appendix A for the conversation with Stephen Hebert.

### **3.3 Composing Grant Proposals**

Our first attempt to obtain funding for our project was to apply to the arts councils with jurisdiction over the areas in which our project would take place. This turned out to be the Grafton Arts Council, and the Worcester Cultural Commission. These organizations are a part of a greater group of arts councils in Massachusetts called the Massachusetts Literary Cultural Council. These groups are composed of varying numbers of voting members that review all incoming grant applications, and determine in which amounts and to which projects that chapter’s available funds are awarded. The items that should be included in a grant proposal are listed clearly on their website, <http://www.massculturalcouncil.org>, as well as the grant application itself.

After ascertaining the organizations to which we would be applying, and their application requirements, our next step was to gather the necessary information to complete the respective applications. First on the agenda was to decide the amount to apply for. In determining this number, we considered the following factors:

- Plaque fabrication costs
- Plaque support and placement costs
- Advertisement and printing costs for the unveiling ceremony
- Food and entertainment costs for the unveiling ceremony

- Travel expenses

We consulted Olympic Trophy Company on Main Street in Worcester for an estimate of plaque fabrication costs. The number they provided was in the range of six hundred to eight hundred dollars per plaque. Our advisor then made us aware that we could probably have the plaques placed for a very low cost or free through WPI's plant services department. To investigate this option, we contacted John Miller, head of plant services. Correspondence with Mr. Miller is provided later in this report in Appendix A11. We estimated printing and advertising costs for the project to be approximately six hundred dollars, and allowed two hundred dollars for food and entertainment at the unveiling ceremony. Fifty dollars was allotted for gasoline and travel expenses.

This totaled to a request of \$2,000 from the Worcester Cultural Commission, and \$1,800 from the Grafton Arts Council. All of the determined numbers are rough estimates, as applying for grants is not a very exact science. Often, the monies requested are only partially awarded, and any excess monies are returned at the end of the project, so precision was not a very significant concern for us. Our goals were simply to obtain enough money to get the plaques created, and we would work with anything extra to hold an enjoyable unveiling ceremony for the families and citizens of Worcester.

### **3.3.1 Obtaining letters of support**

After forming our final estimates for the grant applications, we next needed to gather written permission from the respective property owners and letters from other parties involved, to show the application committees that our project boasted a significant amount of support.

### **3.3.2 Correspondence with Maureen O'Hara**

Maureen O'Hara is Frank O'Hara's sister and executor of his estate. She At first hesitated to put her full support behind the project, but after a couple of phone conversations with Professor Menides, and email correspondence with Evan, Ms. O'Hara agreed the commemoration was a good idea, and offered to help in any way possible. As executor of Frank O'Hara's estate, she insisted we confirm any facts presented at the unveiling ceremony or in our report with her before releasing them, as inaccurate accounts of Frank O'Hara's life had been discovered in the past, and she wished to avoid any further occurrences of these misrepresentations. Documentation of emails to and from Maureen O'Hara can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.3.3 Correspondence with Phil O'Hara**

Phil O'Hara, Frank O'Hara's brother, a significant supporter of the commemoration project. He had communicated with Professor Menides in request for a group of students to complete this project before Evan and Matt had even signed up for it and contacted him. Evan spoke with Mr. O'Hara by phone in October of 2004, and Mr. O'Hara immediately put his full support behind the group and offered any assistance he

could provide. He also responded with a letter of approval to submit with the primary grant applications. Unfortunately, the applications had already been mailed by the time the letter arrived, but it is included in the Appendix A.

### **3.3.4 Letter of support from Carle Johnson**

Carle Johnson of the Worcester County Poetry Association decided to meet and agreed to support this project with a letter of approval. His letter, furnished in Appendix A, discusses how this project will benefit and develop the community around WPI as well as the city of Worcester by honoring such renowned authors as Esther Forbes and Frank O’Hara.

### **3.3.5 Letter of support from Patrick Quinn**

Patrick Quinn, the head of the Humanities and Arts Department at WPI, similarly supported the placement of these plaques at the homes of Forbes and O’Hara. His letter provided the necessary support from the faculty of the Humanities and Arts Department of WPI. This letter allowed the Worcester Cultural Commission and the Grafton Arts Counsel know how much support WPI (other than allowing for the placement of the plaque) was willing to provide to this project. Patrick Quinn’s letter can be found in Appendix C

## **3.4 Initial failure to receive funding**

The Worcester Cultural Commission and the Grafton Arts Council organizations that were to be the main source of funding for this project, denied requests for supporting this project. The project now required outside support to fund its completion.

### **3.4.1 Worcester denial letter**

The Worcester Cultural Commission (WCC) replied to the grant package for honoring Esther Forbes with negative remarks. The WCC has limited funding and often does not support the many worthwhile projects they receive. The WCC carefully considered the application on its own merit and in comparison with others and denied the application because it chose to fund other proposals with a stronger community benefit component than this project contained. The option for reconsideration was available for this project, but based on the comments for denial and the fact there was no grounds for the WCC to reconsider, this aspect of the project needed to find other types of funding.

### **3.4.2 Grafton's failure to respond**

The Grafton Arts Counsel never responded to our proposal for funding the placement of a plaque on the former residence of Frank O'Hara. This left the project with only the \$500 from donated from the WCPA. We required outside support.

## **3.5 Alternative methods to obtain funding**

After being denied the largest portion of funds required for this project, alternative methods were necessary to proceed with honoring Forbes and O'Hara. Through research at the Worcester Public Library and from advice from Professor Menides, several options were discovered: the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, the American Antiquarian Society, and WPI.

### **3.5.1 Greater Worcester Community Foundation**

In the search for alternative funding, the Greater Worcester Community Foundation was the first of several organizations from where we tried to obtain contributions for the project. This is a charitable organization with a mission to increase philanthropy and build healthy and vibrant communities throughout central Massachusetts. It focuses on the entire community instead of any specific issue. This idea, unfortunately, was the reason the foundation denied the request of this project; it does not have a large enough community impact for sponsorship.

Debra Medeiros, the Program Officer of the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, was contacted for possible funding opportunities for this project. While she believed the project to be worthy and a wonderful effort, the foundation does not support this type of project, as the community does not benefit in the way they try to help the area by bettering all aspects, not just the academic/literature community. Correspondence with Debra Medeiros can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.5.2 Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities**

The Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities was the next organization tried for obtaining outside resources. This foundation develops initiatives aimed at increasing program activities in certain aspects of humanities and arts. The foundation mainly uses its resources to reach underserved communities, collaborate with community organizations, and develop connections between the people and the place they live. While this project does meet the last priority of the foundation to some extent, the foundation refused to give funding because it does not support this type of product.

The project advisor Professor Menides, when learning about its failure to obtain funding, referred the project to Associate Professor Ruth Smith of the Humanities and Arts Department of WPI because of her past connection with the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities. However, she doubted that this project research would qualify for such funding, but was willing to talk about other funding possibilities.

After talking with Kristin O'Connell, the Assistant Director of the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities, hopes of receiving funding from this organization were diminished. In her email, she said exactly what Professor Smith said that the foundation does not award grants for historical marker projects or historic preservation activities. However, she did give advice on whom to contact next about acquiring money, the Worcester Historical Museum. Correspondence with Kristin O'Connell can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.5.3 Worcester Historical Museum**

The most helpful organization contacted when searching for alternative funding was the Worcester Historical Museum. The museum is a unique organization dedicated to collecting, preserving, and interpreting Worcester's history in all time periods and subject areas. The museum had recently exhibited the Forbes' household after it had been torn down by the Erskine family. The exhibit featured three generations of female authors, including Esther Forbes, who lived at 23 Trowbridge Road, the main reason the museum was contacted. While no monetary aid was given, its executive director William Wallace established a number of possibilities to acquire finances.

The Executive Director of the Worcester Historical Museum, William Wallace, was the largest aid in obtaining solutions to the financial difficulties of the project. A meeting with Mr. Wallace soon followed, after a few email conversations, where a number of funding possibilities were established.

He suggested we contact Patty Clarkson at the Local Arts Lottery Council where excess funds are distributed in a lottery-style fashion. The aforementioned Greater Worcester Community Foundation was mentioned but not tried, as discussed previously. The Erskine Family owned the property at 23 Trowbridge Road prior to WPI's acquisition of the land. They tore down the house and sold the area to WPI after many arguments involving students around their property. Despite their relatively recent link to the area, the Erskines were not contacted because of their poor relations with WPI. Houghton Mifflin was another possibility, Esther's publisher and former employer, but we chose not to pursue this option as we had already required the funds necessary for the



project. The American Antiquarian Society was the most promising possibility as Forbes did most of her research for her novels there and she left the rights to her novels to the society after she died. Therefore, this seemed like the most logical place to start; we ended up receiving 200 dollars from this organization. Correspondence with William Wallace can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.5.4 American Antiquarian Society**

While searching for alternative methods of funding, the American Antiquarian Society (AAS) became one of the premiere places to ask as Esther Forbes, as well as her mother, did much of their research and writings in this building. The AAS also receives great amounts of royalties from some of Forbes' writings, including the immensely popular *Johnny Tremain*. The hope was the AAS, because Forbes provided (and still provides) the AAS with money, would provide a small portion of the money so the project would be implemented successfully.

Ellen Dunlap, the president of the American Antiquarian Society, generously received the idea of erecting a plaque to honor Esther Forbes. In her emails, she mentioned four possible supporters for the project, including WPI, the AAS, the city/community of Worcester, and the Erskine family (relation to Forbes who sold the house). Ellen then expressed an interest to have the AAS support part of the expenses for the Forbes part of the project (one quarter or possibly more of the cost). However, WPI (another alternative donor) had already graciously sponsored a good portion of the project and the AAS was only asked to provide \$200 for support. The AAS remained a part of this project mainly to help the project reach more of the Worcester community as well as

the literature community. Correspondence with Ellen Dunlap can be found in Appendix A.

### **3.5.5 Worcester Polytechnic Institute**

After failing to receive financial support from both of our primary sources, significant efforts were made to locate all other sources of funding available. The most logical, although not quite as accessible opportunity was WPI. The large structure and dispersal of WPI's budget was a daunting obstacle to overtake. We conferred with Patrick Quinn to determine the best ways to approach WPI for such a request, we decided the best method of action would be to contact Lance Schachterle, the Associate Provost, who oversaw a large portion of WPI's spending, and could possibly assist us.

Lance Schachterle was quite prompt in responding to our initial emails, and agreed to meet with us to discuss our options. At the conference, he made it clear that he oversaw money that was to be used only to pay the faculty, so he would be unable to offer us any support directly. However, he presented the idea of contacting John Heyl, Vice President of University Relations, who controlled WPI's project budget, and would be able to provide the funding for our IQP if any was available. At Mr. Schachterle's request, Evan compiled all available information on the project, composed a cover page, and forwarded the packet to Mr. Schachterle via email, who in turn sent it to Mr. Heyl for consideration.

A confusion of events occurred during this period of acquiring the funds for the plaques. Mr. Heyl had sent Evan to Amy Dean, the person he thought to be in charge of the budget for this project. However, Amy Dean insisted that Mr. Heyl was the person to see. What had happened was the budgets for several administrations were transferred

amongst several departments as employees transferred job status and responsibilities. After several phone calls and meetings to clarify the issue, it was determined that Amy Dean was the person in charge of the funds required. After confirming this, Evan submitted the appropriate paperwork to her department.

## **3.6 Plaque Design and Placement**

### **3.6.1 Design**

The design of the plaques followed what Tim Adams did in his MQP in 1997. They displayed the name of the author, the birth and death dates, a brief description of why the plaque is there, who placed the plaque, who supported the plaque, and the placement date.

#### **3.6.1.1 Olympic Trophy**

Again, following the procedure of what Tim Adams did for his MQP, Olympic Trophy (located in Worcester) provided the layouts and actual manufacturing of the plaques. Initially, the plaques were to range in price up to \$800, depending on the size, the material, and the inscriptions. While the cost was unknown, an estimate of \$1,500 was used as a starting point for acquiring funds based on the original estimate and Tim Adams project (estimations were made as to the increase in cost as well as one fewer plaque being placed). After the size, material, and design of the plaques were finalized, the cost came to, \$1100 which well under the estimated budget of the project. After a four week wait period, the plaques were finished. However, several errors were later

discovered, including a date on the O'Hara plaque Maureen O'Hara disputed, and a mistake on the part of the foundry that produced the plaques, omitting the letter "d" on the word "placed," causing a rather significant error on both plaques. The decision was to have the plaques remade to ensure that they were accurate in the long run. Since the error was on the part of the foundry, the group negotiated to have the plaques remade for only an additional 400 dollars.

### **3.6.2 Placement**

Now that the team had the plaques in its possession, it needed to go about determining how they would be placed at the respective sites. Upon the advice of Professor Menides, the group contacted John Miller, Head of WPI Plant Services, for assistance in placing the Forbes plaque. The group also contacted an independent carpenter for placement of the O'Hara plaque.

John Miller offered to find a mason and work with him to place the Forbes plaque on a stone on the property. The complete correspondence record with John Miller is featured in the Appendix A.

The team hired Dave Goyette, an independent carpenter, to place the O'Hara plaque. He offered to do so for a cost of thirty five dollars.

## **3.6 The Unveiling ceremony**

The group, meeting with Professor Menides, decided to set the date for the unveiling ceremony for Monday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, at 2pm. The ceremony would involve each group member heading to his respective author's site, and each would be responsible for that section of the ceremony. In addition, a reception which was funded by Maureen

O'Hara's generous contribution would be held at the International House across from the Forbes site. The director of the International House, Tom Thomsen, was approached on this matter and he eagerly supported the idea. Early in the morning on the day of the ceremony, we went to a local supermarket and purchased all the food, beverages, and utensil items needed for the event.

The procession started in Grafton, where Evan welcomed guests including representatives from the WCPA, neighbors, and family members of Frank O'Hara, members of the press, and other parties who had arrived for the event. Using a PA system borrowed from WPI's Academic Technology Center, Evan read his prepared speech which is featured in the results section, and unveiled the O'Hara plaque to the applause of the audience. Maureen O'Hara then was invited to read a few of her favorite O'Hara poems.

After the ceremony in Grafton had finished, those who attended were welcomed to follow Evan and Professor Menides back up to Worcester for the Forbes procession, and the reception to follow afterwards. There, Matthew read his own prepared speech also featured in results, and unveiled the Forbes plaque.

## **4. Results**

### **4.1. The plaques and unveiling ceremonies**

The following pages show photographs taken of the plaques we produced, and also of the unveiling ceremonies held at the site of each respective plaque's placement. In addition, the speeches read at each unveiling ceremony have been included.

## 4.1.1 Pictures of the plaques

### 4.1.1.1. Esther Forbes



## 4.1.1.2. Frank O'Hara





## **4.1.2. Pictures of the unveiling ceremonies**

### **4.1.3. O'Hara dedication speech**

Hello, my name is Evan Damiano and I would like to thank you for coming to this first of two unveilings of the plaques commemorating American writers Frank O'Hara and Esther Forbes. Raising funds and seeing through the creation of these plaques was completed as my Junior Project for WPI and I hope it will help Grafton and Worcester to remember Frank O'Hara and Esther Forbes, talented and successful writers.

This project is actually a continuation of one that took place over eight years ago commemorating Charles Olson, Stanley Kunitz, and Elizabeth Bishop. I thank Tim Adams, the student who placed these plaques, for paving the way for me and my project partner, Matthew Neale, to be successful in our own endeavors. Many thanks also to the Worcester County Poetry Association, the American Antiquarian Society, and WPI for funding our plaques, and to Maureen O'Hara and John Heyl for funding this unveiling ceremony and the reception that will follow. And, most of all, thank you to our advisor, Professor Laura Menides, for being very helpful every step of the way.

This is the childhood home of Frank O'Hara. He moved here at a very young age after being born in Baltimore, Maryland. He attended Worcester grammar and high school and studied at the New England Conservatory in Boston, concentrating in piano. He then joined the armed forces in 1944, and after an honorable discharge earned his B.A. from Harvard in 1950. It was then he moved to New York, where he became curator at the Museum of Modern Art and wrote poetry, and enjoyed his life until it was tragically cut short by an accident on Fire Island Beach, Long Island, in 1966.

Frank O'Hara's writings clearly reflect the manner in which they were written. O'Hara enjoyed writing poetry so that it became a habit, and a routine in his day,

meaning that his poems echo a wide range of emotions and thoughts flowing through his mind on any given day, in any given poem. His works range from the heartfelt loneliness of “To the Harbormaster” to the outright silliness of “Lines for the Fortune Cookies.” We see by these variations in theme that O’Hara is not only a talented but also versatile writer. His attention to detail is matched only by his very close observation of the city he loved. I will now show a reminder for the world to see that Frank O’Hara lived in this house.

I would now like to introduce Maureen O’Hara, Frank O’Hara’s sister, who will read her favorite poems.

Thank you for coming, and I hope all of you will come back to WPI with us for the Esther Forbes unveiling and reception. If you need directions please see me. Thank you.

#### **4.1.4. Forbes dedication speech**

Hello and welcome to the site of Esther Forbes’ former home. My name is Matthew Neale and this is the second of the two unveilings scheduled for today for Frank O’Hara and Esther Forbes. My partner, Evan Damiano and I, as our junior-year project at WPI, raised funds, designed the plaques, and arranged for their placement. As Evan mentioned at the unveiling in Grafton, these plaques are to bring about awareness of Frank O’Hara and Esther Forbes and their unique and talented writing styles.

As Evan also mentioned, this project is a continuation of a previous project done by Tim Adams as his senior-year project at WPI commemorating Charles Olson, Stanley Kunitz, and Elizabeth Bishop. We are thankful for his paving the way for us. I would also like to express much thanks to the Worcester Historical Museum for providing

information on the Forbes-Erskine-Merrifield estate, as well as the Worcester County Poetry Association and the American Antiquarian Society for their support, WPI – in particular John Miller and John Heyl for their continued support – and lastly Professor Laura Menides for helping us through the thick and thin areas of this project.

Esther Louise Forbes was born on June 28, 1891, the fifth of six children in the Forbes family. Forbes was tall and slightly built, and, although she was near-sighted, she was very lively. She contracted a severe case of rheumatic fever that caused her many problems through her entire life. She attended the Bancroft School and the Worcester Art Museum and Bradford Academy and graduated in 1912. She lived on this site for many years as a child (1899-1909) and moved out during the time she was at the Bradford Academy and while she was married (1909-1933). She would live here from the time of her divorce until her death in 1967.

In a letter to her sister, Katherine, Esther Forbes wrote the following: “Books are only the shadow and life the real thing. I believe this as strongly as any belief I hold. I also believe that writing becomes worthwhile and vitalized only through a full and exciting life.” (Repeat).

Many of her novels express this idea of originality through vivid imagery. She mostly wrote as if a page of history were torn open and presented before one’s eyes.

Forbes wrote many novels throughout her life, beginning with *O Genteel Lady!* in 1926, an immediate bestseller. She followed up this success with *A Mirror for Witches* in 1928, about a witch's experiences during the infamous witch-hunts in the late 17<sup>th</sup> century America.

Here is a powerful passage from *A Mirror for Witches* through the eyes of Doll Bilby, the main character accused of being a witch.

“[Doll] fell to the ground in an ague, and lay sobbing dryly, exhorting the powers of Hell. Twigs snapped in blackness about her. Feet padded in silence.

“The cold of the night, the terror of her soul, the dearth of food, the sorrow of her heart struck her into a stupor from which she could not move. Through this stupor, in steady procession, and with much pomp and circumstance, a long parade of figures, fiends, witches, warlocks, imps, beasts, familiars, satyrs, and even the beautiful chaste Diana herself, moved in fleshly form: a wicked, most fantastic procession. Goblins were there with faces of cats and owls, salamanders but lately crawled from fire. Basilisks were there, serpents, vampires with bats’ wings and horrid mouths swollen with blood. The pretty pink bodies of innocent babes were there, who had died unbaptized, and therefore must stand as servants in the halls of Hell, and with them were pucks and pugs.” (Witches, 81-82)

She wrote many other works, including *Paradise* (1937) and *The General’s Lady* (1938), but it was her two works on the American Revolution that won her much acclaim: *Paul Revere and the World He Lived In* (1942) and *Johnny Tremain* (1943). These stories won her the Pulitzer Prize and the Newberry Award, respectively. Here is a passage from *Johnny Tremain* where George Hewes speaks vehemently and passionately about the English tyranny.

“Friends! Brethren! Countrymen! That worst of Plagues, the detested tea shipped for this Port by the East India Company, is now arrived in the Harbour: the hour of destruction, of manly opposition to the machinations of Tyranny, stares you in the Face; Every Friend to his Country, to Himself, and to Posterity, is now called upon to meet at Faneuil Hall, at nice o’clock this day, at which time the bells will ring to make united and successful resistance to this last, worst and most destructive measure of Administration.” (Tremain, 107)

I will now ask Ellen Dunlap of the American Antiquarian Society to come up and say a few words.

I would like to thank you all for coming and for Ms. Dunlap for speaking today.  
We will be having a reception now across the street at International House with some  
food and refreshments and all are invited.

## **5. Analysis and Evaluation of Results**

Our project sparked a significant amount of positive feedback from literary circles and the general public. Included is an article on the project featured in the Worcester Telegram & Gazette, and appreciation letters from some of the people who were involved.

## 5.1 Newspaper Articles



### **5.1.1. Featured article from the Telegram and Gazette**

## 5.2. Appreciation letters

### 5.2.1. Maureen O'Hara

<b>From:</b>	"Maureen O'Hara" <mgsohara@earthlink.net>
<b>To:</b>	"Evan Damiano" <ed12321@yahoo.com>
<b>CC:</b>	"Laura Jehn Menides" <lmenides@WPI.EDU>
<b>Subject:</b>	Thanks - Frank O'Hara plaque
<b>Date:</b>	Thu, 28 Apr 2005 11:00:46 -0400

Dear Evan,

Many, many thanks for your fine presentation of the Frank O'Hara plaque at 12 North Street. You were wonderful. I enjoyed hearing you read your perceptive and interesting statement. It was a pleasure to meet you. I am most appreciative.

Don Petrie and the Davis family were very pleased too. It was lovely to see Professor Laura Menides, your family, and all the special friends from Worcester, the Poetry Society, and the special friends and family from Grafton. Such a beautiful day! Frank would have loved it.

I am disappointed that I could not continue on for the placement of the Esther Forbes plaque and your reception at WPI. Again, many thanks.

Let's stay in touch. I hope that all goes along well.

All best wishes,  
Maureen

Maureen O'Hara  
[mgsohara@earthlink.net](mailto:mgsohara@earthlink.net)

## 5.2.2. Michael Sokolowski

<b>Date:</b>	Tue, 19 Apr 2005 09:22:24 +0800
<b>Subject:</b>	maureen o'hara
<b>From:</b>	"Michael" <msokol@simons-rock.edu>
<b>To:</b>	ed12321@yahoo.com

The effort to mark with plaques homes of O'Hara & Forbes is much appreciated. Very sad to walk by the house on Trowbridge St as it was being razed. Anyway, thanks to the plaque, it won't be completely forgotten.

take care,

michael

## 6. Conclusion and Recommendations

This IQP, although not of the typical engineering style of WPI, provides the city of Worcester with links to its rich and diverse cultural heritage. This tour of the Worcester/Grafton area allows these communities to absorb parts of the history of their neighborhood they might never have known about. These communities get a chance to encounter a little known piece of history in Worcester. With the help of the American Antiquarian Society, the Worcester Historical Museum, Worcester County Poetry Association, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, and many others, word of this event spread quickly to the community.

The plaques dedicated to Frank O'Hara and Esther Forbes will serve as markers for passers-by as well as for permanent residents to remind them of the rich literary tradition that is part of the Worcester area. These dedications also bring attention to the specific authors whose works may have been under appreciated by the public. These authors were recognized in the Worcester Telegram and Gazette the day after the unveiling ceremony (Tuesday April 19, 2005), helping to bring more awareness to the authors.

While this project was successful as it brought attention to local persons of importance, it did have some major flaws that could be corrected easily with a little work. Problems with the plaques such as mistakes with dates and grammar could easily be avoided if research was carefully done and multiple people used to check over the plaque design. Funding was a difficult issue as the applications for the grants were both denied.

As far as preventing any problems in this area, setting up many meetings with the donators and keeping precise accounts of money spent is essential.

This report outlines the process of producing the project's results and can be once again used to follow up on this project. Although the project had many small flaws that could be avoided with a little work, it was successful in its purpose of acknowledging Worcester literary of its history. Worcester has an incredible literary background, which is relatively untapped and taken for granted. This project recognizes two 20<sup>th</sup> century authors who received the attention they deserved.

## 7. Future Work

As far as future work, this project, already based upon Tim Adams' MQP from 1997, provides a few more areas to be extended. As the previous project suggests, continuing the dedication of plaques to local Worcester authors would provide a great experience for the project and the community. While the previous project outlines the grant proposal process, our project illustrates methods of obtaining funds outside of the Local Cultural Commissions – WPI and local foundations for example.

An updated version of Tim Adams' brochure may be created, one that includes the new additions of Frank O'Hara and Esther Forbes. The brochure could focus on more authors in a similar way, or possibly broaden the study to include a sketch of many more authors, providing a larger look at the literary importance in Worcester.

With more research, these results can be reproduced and expanded, and the precedents set by this project and Tim Adams can open avenues for future project teams. These projects serve as a foundation upon which a great deal of future work can be built. Hopefully, in time, other groups will follow the path we have set to commemorate the many remaining great Worcester area writers, such as the playwright SH Behrman, the poet Donald Baker, or the dramatist Robert Benchley.

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## Appendix A

Relevant discussions with:

1. Steve Hebert
2. Maureen O'Hara
3. Phil O'Hara
4. Carle Johnson
5. Patrick Quinn
6. Debra Medeiros
7. Kristen O'Connell
8. William Wallace
9. Ellen Dunlap
10. Lance Schachterle
11. John Miller

### A.1 Steve Hebert

Dear Mr. Hebert,

My name is Matthew Neale and for my IQP I am planning on constructing a memorial for Esther Forbes on the former site of her home here in Worcester. As you are probably aware, her house stood on WPI property and I will need your permission to place anything there. I know Prof Menides already talked to you so I am just reminding you and I will be sending you a packet with information, a sample reference letter, and a picture of what the memorial could look like.

Thank you for your support,  
Matthew Neale

Matthew:

Thanks for your note. I expected to hear from you. John Miller, our Associate VP for Business Affairs and Director of the Physical Plant, and I have talked about your project and agree that something can be done. He is away this week, but when he returns please contact him so the two of you can coordinate what is being planned/proposed. It is neat that we can recognize Esther Forbes in this manner and I know John is looking forward to working with you.

Steve

### A.2 Maureen O'Hara



Hello Maureen,

I am writing to inform you the orders are in and paid for and plaques are currently being fabricated, and we are planning the unveiling ceremony. We are choosing between the following dates:

Monday, April 18th  
Tuesday, April 19th  
Thursday, April 14th

These dates are ordered by our preference, April 18th being our favorite choice. However, we want to choose a date that will be of the most convenience possible for everyone. The time we were hoping to have it was 2-3pm, so Professor Menides' humanities class would be able to attend. However, we are aware a lot of people will be at work during that time, so an alternative if people could not get out of work early was to have it right after dinner time, around 6pm. Please reply with your input.

Thanks again,  
~Evan Damiano

Hi Evan,

Thank you for writing to me about the Frank O'Hara plaque and the proposed dates for an unveiling ceremony. It has been my understanding that you and/or Professor Menides would let me know the specifics regarding the plaque, the unveiling ceremony, and that you would send me any written information that you would like to present regarding Frank, the plaque, and ceremony. Therefore, please send me a copy of the wording that you would like to appear on the Frank O'Hara plaque, the design and measurements of the plaque. Also, please send me any written information that you would like to have appear regarding Frank and the plaque, etc.

Regarding the unveiling ceremony, April 18th would be best date for me. April 19th would be the next okay date for me. I look forward to hearing from you very soon because this is all being planned right now within a little more than two weeks. Please send the above mentioned information to me now by e-mail attachment or by fax or express mail. If you send a fax, please call first so that I can turn on the fax machine. My phone/fax number is: 203 866 6516. I would appreciate talking with you. Could you please send me your phone number? Again, thanks for your attention.

All best wishes,

Maureen

### **A.3. Phil O'Hara**

From: O'Hara, J. Philip [mailto:[J\\_O'Hara@brown.edu](mailto:J_O'Hara@brown.edu)]  
Sent: Friday, April 15, 2005 8:41 PM  
To: Menides, Laura Jehn  
Subject: Monday

Hi, Laura...

It is highly doubtful that Pat and I will be there on Monday. We've been in Hawaii for ten days and this is our busiest time of year. We had the opportunity to be with one of my sons and his family in Kona and just couldn't turn it down. We had a grand time.

Thank you so much and please thank the students for all that you have done to make this moment possible. My mother and father would be so proud.

Best,

Phil

### **A.4. Carle Johnson**

Dear Carle,

I intercepted your email first and wanted to make sure you received a speedy reply. I'm not sure what Matt is up to these next few days but I can guarantee I'll be able to meet you whenever you are available, on or off campus, as long as it is not between 9 and 10am tomorrow (my physics final) or between 11:30 and 12:30 on Thursday (my BE4023 final). So, please choose a time and place, and I will be there

Many, many thanks again for all your help

~Evan Damiano or Matt - Could you make it to the service station [I forget the flavor] a block east of West Street on Highland @ 3:30 Wednesday afternoon? I'll be in the D'Angelo / Honey Dew corner with a check in one hand and a mocha in the other.

Incidentally, I would prefer making the check out to a company - perhaps Olympic Trophy - rather than an individual. Is that acceptable? What company?  
Carle

### **A.5. Patrick Quinn**

Prof Quinn,

As you probably know, we are working on a project to honor the memories of the local authors Esther Forbes and Frank O'Hara under the guidance of Prof Menides. We came across some difficulties during the grant applications whereby we were denied a grant from the Worcester Cultural Commission based on the fact that it does not have a strong enough impact on the community. We were wondering if you had any ideas on how we could possibly fund this project or if WPI would be willing to fund our endeavor. Any information you have would be greatly appreciated.

Thank you,  
Matthew Neale  
Evan Damiano

Dear Matthew and Evan,

Having just been through a rather difficult 5% spending cut exercise with Pres. Berkey, the department has a few problems financially; however, I can suggest that you speak with the vice-Provost Prof. Lance Schachterle about it ([les@wpi.edu](mailto:les@wpi.edu)) and then come around to office next week and see if we can help. Let Karen Hassett my p/a know when you might come by. She is [khassett@wpi.edu](mailto:khassett@wpi.edu).

Good luck with the worthy project.

Patrick J. M. Quinn  
Head, Humanities and Arts  
Professor of English Literature  
Worcester Polytechnic Institute

Prof Quinn,

We have just received word from the vice-Provost Prof Schachterle that WPI will fund the \$1300 we requested from them with the claim the project will bring WPI closer to the community. We also received word from Ellen Dunlap of the American Antiquarian Society saying they will put in at least 1/4 the share of the cost of the plaque, and maybe more. We were just wondering if you had any ideas on which money we should accept. Obviously we will need WPI's money to finance the bulk of the project, but would it be better to have WPI and the AAS share in commemorating these authors? Let us know what you think.

Matt and Evan

Wowwie!

Nice going guys! You both deserve all the kudos for following up on your ideas and project.

For what it is worth, I would take the quarter that the AAS is offering and

the rest from WPI and make the project a joint effort. It seems to me that literature commemoration does not only belong to WPI, but a broad based community. Everyone should share in the memory of the two authors. It also would be nice to have representatives from both organisations present at the ceremony, so the Press and Worcester can make a connection between us and the AAS.

Needless to say, it is up to you guys, but that is my thought!

And congrats again on your hard work!

Cheers,

Patrick

## **A.6. Debra Medeiros**

Dear Debra Medeiros,

I am a student attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute and, as part of a required Junior year project, have been given the task of creating a memorial honoring the Worcester author Esther Forbes. I am planning on constructing a plaque on the site of her former childhood home here in Worcester. I was wondering if you had any information as to the validity of this project, if I could possibly get funding for it, and how to get funding. I would greatly appreciate any information you could provide.

Thank You,  
Matthew Neale

Hi Matthew –

Thank you for sharing information on your senior project. It sounds like a wonderful effort, however, it is not the type of project that we support. For additional information on our grantmaking activities, please visit our website at [www.greaterworcester.org](http://www.greaterworcester.org) or feel free to call me. Best of luck to you!

Deb

## **A.7. Kristin O'Connell**

Dear Matthew--

Unfortunately, the Massachusetts Foundation for the Humanities does not award grants for historical marker projects or historic preservation activities. You might contact the Worcester Historical Museum at 30 Elm Street; perhaps someone there could advise you. Best wishes for success with your project.

Kristin O'Connell

## A.8. William Wallace

Matt,

Ellen Dunlap's email address: [edunlap@mwa.org](mailto:edunlap@mwa.org)

I mentioned in an email to her that you'd be in touch with a low-cost, high-return opportunity for community partnership. Sounds like you've had great success. Congratulations.

I had lunch with Ellen yesterday and she was quite enthusiastic about your project. Good luck!

Bill

## A.9. Ellen Dunlap

Great idea!!

It seems that there could/should be as many as four funders in creating the plaque: WPI (which now owns the property), the Erskine family (which sold it), the AAS (which has been the beneficiary of the Esther Forbes literary legacy), and the city/community of Worcester itself (the Greater Worcester Community Foundation, the City of Worcester, the Worcester Cultural Commission, etc., etc.). There may well be other possible funders as well, but I'd start with those.

For its part, AAS is prepared to put in at least a 1/4 share of the cost of the plaque, and we may be willing to contribute more, depending on what you hear from others. Let us know as your plans for the plaque develop (costs, designs, etc.) and keep us in the loop about the results of your approaches to other funders. If you'd like to get folks together to discuss the memorial plaque (and how they can contribute), we'll be happy to host a group meeting here. Just let me know.

All the best,  
Ellen

Ellen,

Sorry for the delayed response to your email, but I've been trying to get the monetary aspect of my project down and it's taken quite a while. As far as funders for this project there seem to be two on board right now that will cover all the expenses: 1) the AAS, as you say you can provide some money, and 2) WPI, who has graciously donated a large portion of what is needed. So, in all, the AAS will probably only be donating approximately \$200-\$250 for the plaque and WPI will cover the rest (it's about \$800-\$900 total).

As for the city of Worcester, I have not had much success there as the Worcester Cultural Commission denied my application and the Greater Worcester Community Foundation never got back to me.

Thank you for all your help with this project,  
Matthew Neale

Ms. Dunlap,

I know it's late notice and all, but I was wonder if you or someone from the AAS would like to read an excerpt or a little something on Forbes for the unveiling. It would be a great help if there was someone more learned than myself could speak on her writings.

Also, this email is just to remind you that the unveiling is happening this Monday, April 18. We will be starting at 12 North St in Grafton at the site of Frank O'Hara's boyhood home promptly at 2:00 and then making our way to 23 Trowbridge St in Worcester for the Esther Forbes unveiling, which should start around 2:30-2:40 depending on how long the O'Hara portion lasts. I will be at 23 Trowbridge from 2:20 until the end, in case people show up early.

-Matthew Neale

## **A.10. Lance Schachterle**

Dr. Schachterle,

On behalf of myself and my partner, Matthew Neale, I am writing in request of funds to support our IQP which will commemorate great local writers including Esther Forbes and Frank O'Hara. We require an additional \$1300 to pay for the fabrication of the two plaques and an unveiling ceremony which the WPI community will be invited to attend. Related information on the proposed project is already in your possession; please let us know if we can provide any more clarification.

Evan Damiano

Dear Evan and Matt,

I am pleased that John Heyl, VP for University relations, has agreed to provide the remaining \$1300 to cover the two plaques. He will want to ensure maximum PR for WPI for your work, so be sure to check with me and with Kevin Wynn about publicity for the project.

Thanks and congratulations for doing a great IQP for WPI and the community.

## **A.11. John Miller**

Dear John Miller,

My name is Matthew Neale and for my IQP my partner and I are planning on constructing a memorial for Frank O'Hara and Esther Forbes on the former sites of their homes around Worcester. I know it has been a while since first contact, but we have had many issues with funding and whatnot that needed to be taken care of immediately. More specifically, I am asking

you about the placement of Esther Forbes' plaque at 23 Trowbridge Road. I was wondering if I could meet with you at some point before the term ends to discuss possible issues with the placement of the plaque (where, when, etc.).

Thank you,  
Matthew Neale

Appendices not included  
in original submission

# IQP/MQP SCANNING PROJECT



George C. Gordon Library  
WORCESTER POLYTECHNIC INSTITUTE



## **Appendix B**

### 1. Tim Adams' Project Abstract

## **B.1. Tim Adams' Project Abstract**

## **Appendix C**

1. Worcester Cultural Commission funding application
2. Grafton Cultural Council funding application
3. Worcester denial letter

## **C.1. Worcester Cultural Commission funding application**

## **C.2. Grafton Cultural Council funding application**

### **C.3. Worcester denial letter**