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Sculpture To Keep Time By

TIME is the essence of a new sculpture at Johnson State College in Johnson, Vt.: a steel, granite and concrete sundial that measures 18-feet in diameter and is set in the middle of the campus green.

"We wanted a piece of environmentally oriented art, and by that I mean we did not want a man on a horse," said Kenneth D. Leslie, an assistant professor of fine arts at the small liberal arts school, about 40 miles northeast of Burlington. "We wanted something that could engage the community."

To this end the college asked for samples of work from 20 Vermont artists, finally selecting Kate Pond, a Burlington, Vt., sculptor, who proposed a sundial. Ms. Pond in turn put friends, family members and 13 art students from the college to work on her piece.

At the center of the sundial is a nine-foot pole, the gnomon, which casts the sun's shadow over the face. The face of the sundial is on the ground, divided by four markers of Vermont granite designating North, South, East and West. Twelve smaller granite markers, set in a semicircle, mark the hours.

Much of the work, like welding the gnomon, was done by Vermont businesses, and a local surveyor volunteered to take a reading off the North Star, plotting the line at which the gnomon would point to celestial north.

Mr. Leslie said he envisioned the sundial as a gathering place for students who might use the directional markers as backrests as they sit on the ground.

"I have this idea of a student sitting against the North marker, reading a newspaper before a noon class, and knowing it's time to leave when the shadow crosses his paper," he said.



The New York Times/Jym Wilson

Kate Pond by her sundial sculpture at Johnson State College in Johnson, Vt., as a student raked section of the face that was to be seeded.