

The Perfect Setting



Professor Joe Taylor was an ideal choice to design the DeGolyer screen, his interest in science being second only to his love of art. Ironically, a high school teacher had discouraged him from becoming a physicist because "there's just no future in it."

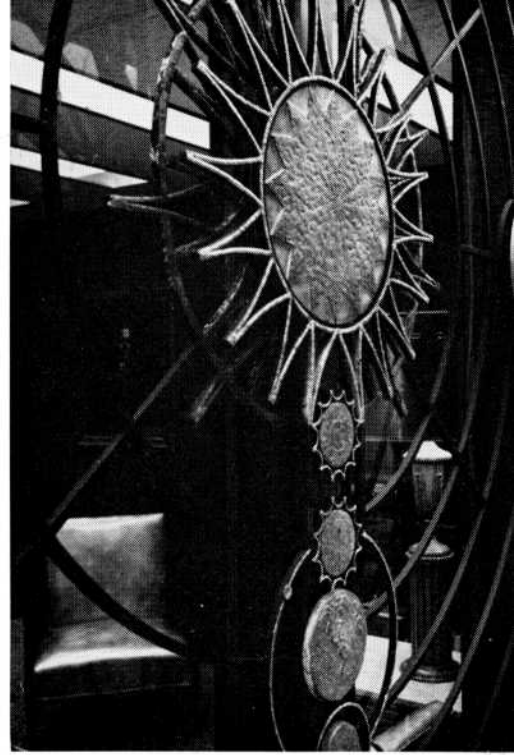
N EARLY 2,000 years of scientific thought are practically impossible to express in volumes of words. Yet art professor Joseph Taylor was given the task of expressing the development of science and technology in wrought iron—an ornamental grillwork to encase the University's coveted DeGolyer Collection in the Bizzell Memorial Library Addition.

At a glance the metal screen, actually a protection for the glass front of the collection area, is an attractive series of symmetrically designed panels. But a more detailed study reveals the role which each iron rod plays in symbolizing the advance of science.

DeGolyer curator Dr. Duane H. D. Roller is amazed at the historical accuracy with which Taylor accomplished his task. The artist was asked primarily to produce designs that would be decorative and appealing to the eye. Secondly he was to convey as much scientific history as possible with accuracy as the minimal requirement.

Three years of sketching by Taylor, collaboration with Dr. Roller, and ironwork and bronze casting by Oklahoma City's H & K Iron Works and Ramos Manufacturing Co. went into the screen. A portion of the library addition building fund was earmarked for the project.

The 16,213 volumes in the DeGolyer Collection describe the influence of pure and applied science upon the course of western history and civilization. Established in 1949 by the late Texas oilman E. L. DeGolyer, '11 geol, the volumes represent the donor's personal collection of scientific books dating back to the 15th century and those highlighting the history of his own field, geology, as well as additional books purchased through funds provided in the DeGolyer grant.



The shift to the Copernican theory, which places the planets in orbit around the sun, is a scientific landmark. This central sun is shown here as a radiant bronze medallion.



DeGolyer bookplate, reproduced in bronze to the left of the entrance, features crossed geologist's picks over open book—artistic comment on oilman's dominating interests.



Ptolemaic system, represented in the screen's panels, envisioned a universe centered around the Earth. Below this "earth" medallion, planets are arranged in Ptolemaic order.