



# Pasatiempo

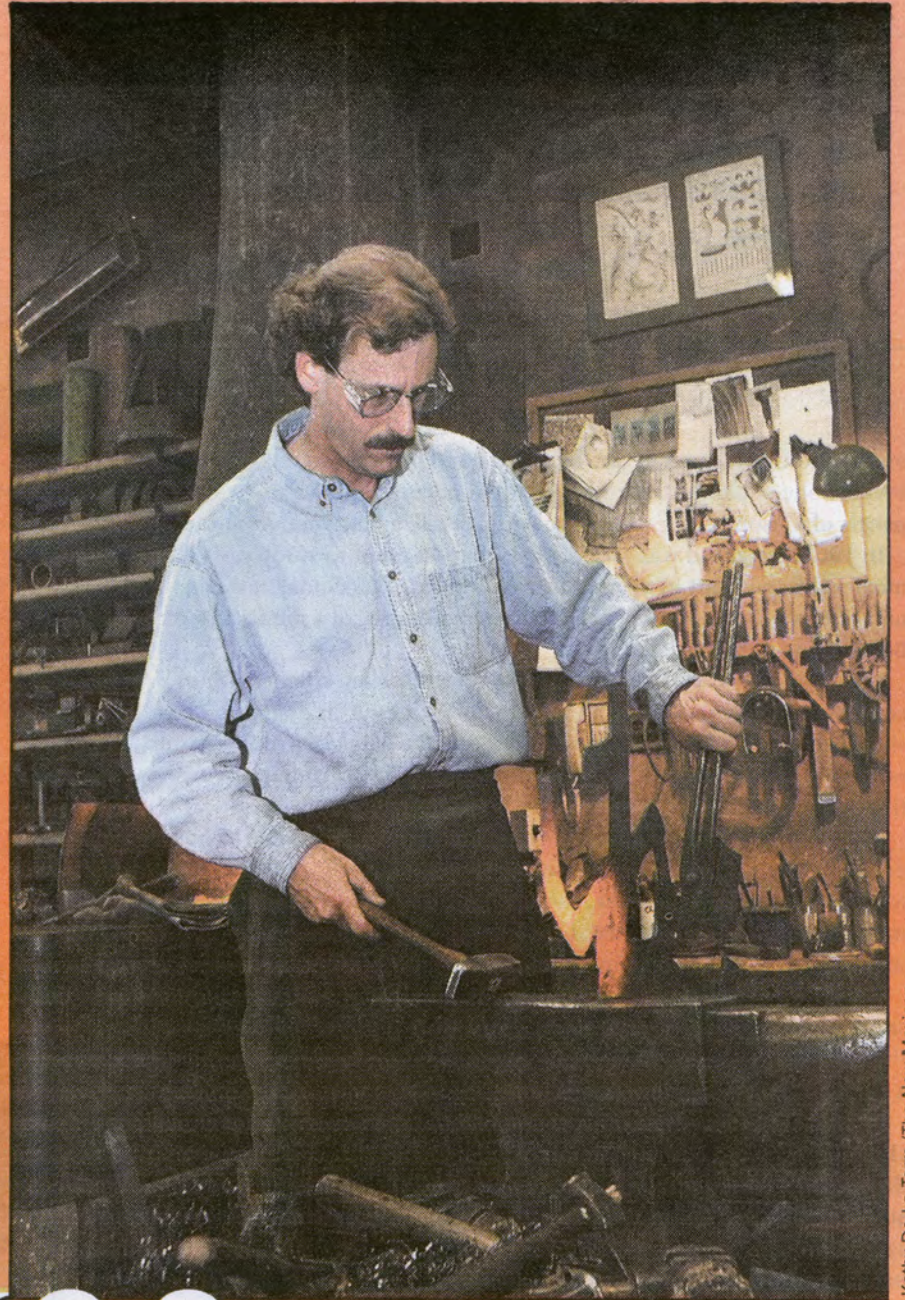
Tom Joyce  
forges  
ahead



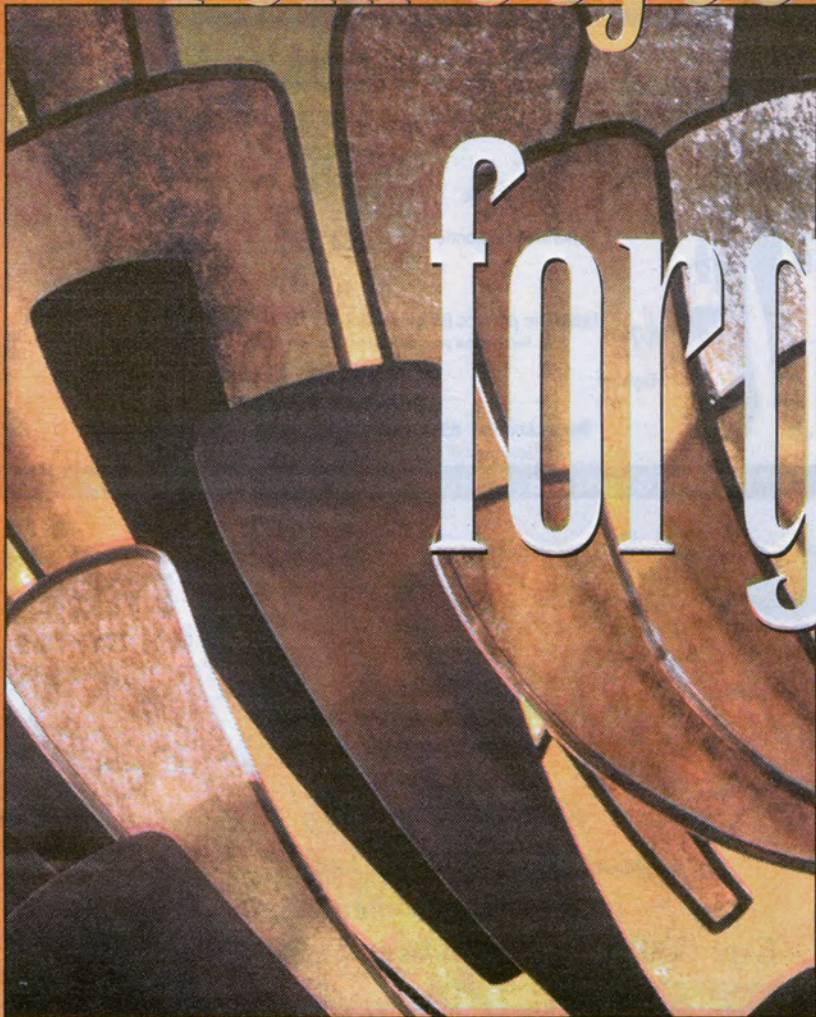




Tom Joyce



Kathy De La Torre/The New Mexican



forges ahead





When the **MacArthur Foundation** called, Tom Joyce couldn't quite believe his ears.

"I thought at first, 'How can this be?'" the Santa Fe blacksmith said. "I said, 'Are you sure you're speaking to the right person? You're speaking to a blacksmith!'"

But Daniel J. Socolow hadn't made a mistake. As director of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation's Fellows Program, he was calling to tell Joyce that he was one of this year's 24 recipients of a \$500,000, five-year, no-strings-attached fellowship.

Another Santa Fean, ceramist Daisy Youngblood, also was named a fellow. The awards were made public on Sunday, Oct. 5.

Colloquially known as "genius awards," the fellowships are one of the first programs the MacArthur set up after its 1978 founding. According to Socolow, MacArthur — who developed and owned Bankers Life and Casualty Co. as well as other businesses — told the foundation trustees, "I made it. You figure out what to do with it."

Since then, the MacArthur Foundation has granted more than \$3 billion for global security and sustainability, human and community development, and support for public interest media and Chicago-area arts and cultural institutions. But the fellowship program is doubtless best known to the general public.

"It caught me totally off guard," Joyce confessed of the notification. "After quite a bit of silence on my part and Dan trying to reassure me that he had the right number, the truth was bared.

"It's a wild thing. I can't tell you what it means to have this opportunity fall out of the sky. There's this feeling of tremendous awe and immense gratitude and, yeah, a huge kind of openness."

As for Youngblood, asked if she had to pick herself up off the floor when she heard the news, she laughed. "It takes me a while to appreciate good news. But I had been forewarned I was going to get something, though I didn't know exactly what."

That was because she and her husband, also a ceramist, were planning a trip to Costa Rica. A MacArthur staffer — who, like Joyce's initial contact, had been in touch with her previously on a pretext — urged them to postpone departure.

"The person I was talking to said, 'Would you please stay in the country a bit longer?'" Youngblood explained. "I said, 'Why?' All she said was, 'It would be worth your while.'"

In its announcement, the MacArthur Foundation identified Joyce as "a blacksmith exploring the expressive qualities of metal, transforming the ancient craft into a 21st century art form." Youngblood was hailed as "a sculptor whose figurative forms in clay and cast bronze convey intense emotional complexity."

Youngblood, who moved to Santa Fe in 1999 from Bisbee, Ariz., has been making her animal, human and hybrid figures since 1979. "I use both slab and pinch technique," she said. "I don't use a wheel. I've always done figurative work, and I build up in sections sometimes. I use the colors that come from the fire."

Joyce began to blacksmith at age 14. He left high school at 16, when he was offered a studio in El Rito. He got his first business license in 1977, when he was 20.

He has never regretted the decision that led him to a career making gates, fences, tables, fountains, room dividers and even baptismal fonts (at Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Community) as well as abstract, explorative metal sculpture. "It was a no-brainer," he said. "I didn't have to consider why. I knew it was kind of a driving force.

"Beyond that, the movement through my work has taken shifts and

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## Tom Joyce on his work

Joyce's artwork is currently on display at Evo Gallery, 725 Canyon Road, through October. He is one of 13 artists taking part in the show, titled *Pyro — burned melted smoked*. For information call 982-4610.

**Below right**, detail of baptismal font, 1994, forged bronze and iron. Joyce held an "iron drive" at Santa Maria de la Paz. Parishioners brought pieces of iron with special significance to them. After recording the stories of each piece, Joyce forged the contributions out, cut them into varying shapes, and pieced them together into

a quiltlike matrix. The font thus forms a link between the living past of the church members and infants newly baptized into the community. Courtesy Nick Merrick, © Hedrich-Blessing



**Bottom**, two-part wrapped wall piece, 1998, forged mild steel, 16 x 31 x 3/4 inches. This is "a calligraphic gesture in forged iron," made by heating a 20-foot-long piece of flat iron bar, then wrapping it around two iron plates. The entire piece was then forged out into its specific shapes. Courtesy Nick Merrick

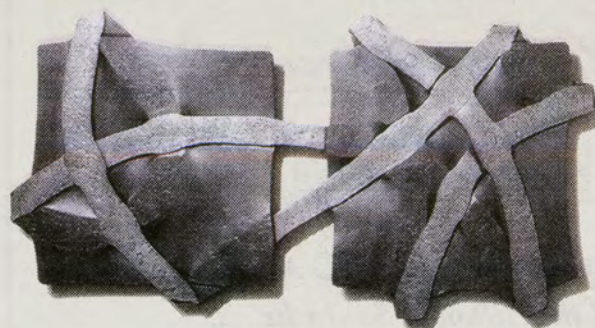
### Facing Page

**Top left**, detail of room divider made for a Tesuque residence, 1987, forged iron. The design is based on grama grass seed heads. In three sections, it divides the home's dining and living areas without unduly confining the space. Courtesy Nick Merrick, © Hedrich-Blessing

**Top right**, Joyce in his workshop

**Bottom left**, detail of lighting centerpiece, Phoenix Museum of History, 1995, mica, copper and iron. This was Joyce's first public art project, the design based on farm tools from the Phoenix area's agricultural traditions. "It's a fiery swirl of hoe shapes that come together in this cloudlike cornucopia," the artist said. The piece, weighing about a ton, hangs from the 17-foot ceiling of the main entry hall. Courtesy Phoenix Museum of History

**Bottom right**, bowl, 1985, iron, made from fragments from other pieces, 27 x 27 inches. This bowl inspired Jake Rodriguez, architect of Santa Maria de la Paz Catholic Community, to contact Joyce about making the church's font. Courtesy Nick Merrick, © Hedrich-Blessing

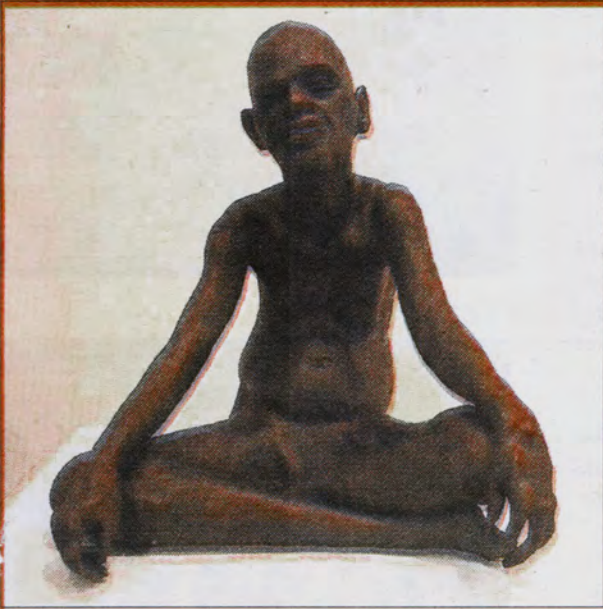




# Daisy



# Youngblood



**Top to bottom**

*Gloria, daughter-in-law, 1999, cast silver, 7 1/2 x 4 1/2 x 5 1/2 inches*

*Standing Gorilla '02, 2002, bronze, 32 x 24 x 24 inches*

*Ramana Maharshi, 2003, bronze, 14 1/4 x 12 3/4 x 12 inches*

Courtesy McKee Gallery, New York

**MacArthur awards, continued from Page 49**

changes as I've decided to work on public projects or sculpture" over the years. "I decided, about a year ago, it would be better for me to divide my time between commissioned pieces that would help fuel and fund the experimental work and that [experimental] work.

"Now that our children are grown, I can't think of a better time" for the MacArthur windfall. "This will be used judiciously, I hope, so that I can do work that has rested in the shadows."

Joyce's wife, Julie, runs a Challenge New Mexico writing program for developmentally and physically disabled adults. His daughter Kate, a photographer, is spending a year documenting nongovernmental organizations working with resettlement programs in Africa; his daughter Irene is a member of Aspen Santa Fe Ballet.

Also among MacArthur award recipients is composer Osvaldo Golijov, whose music has been frequently performed here by 20th Century Unlimited and the Santa Fe Chamber Music Festival. Other awardees are anthropologist Guillermo Algaze, Human Rights Watch researcher Corinne Dufka, children's novelist Angela Johnson, science exhibit artist Ned Kahn and botanist Loren Rieseberg.

Still others are a pen-and-ink illustrator, a conservation analyst, a professor of biomedical engineering, a physicist, a public health physician, an agronomist, a sculptor and a medieval historian. (For a complete listing, visit [www.macarthur.org](http://www.macarthur.org).)

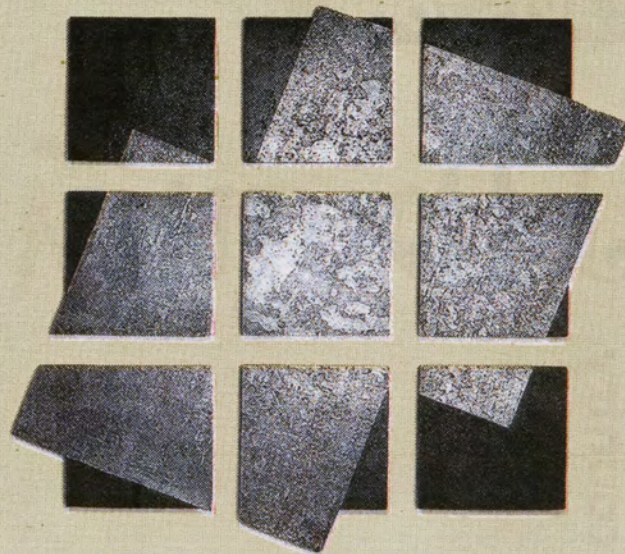
"Nothing is unusual in the MacArthur Fellows program, because we have no usual guidelines," Socolow said when asked if it's common for a city to have two fellows named at once. "We're looking at people, not where they are. Sometimes they're in the same town. Sometimes the same institution."

Notice of the honor came completely out of the blue for Joyce and Youngblood, and that's exactly how the Foundation wants it to be. Fellows are chosen anonymously. No one ever knows if they're under scrutiny. No one can apply for the honor. And only foundation staff members know who the program's advisers and nominators are and where they are.

Nor is there a fellowship age limit. The youngest grantee to date was 18, Socolow said; the oldest was 83. But fellowships are awarded only to U.S. citizens working here or abroad, or to foreign nationals who are residents of the United States.

Joyce and Youngblood have nothing to do now but decide how they want to use their award money. The MacArthur sets no restrictions on use. Nor does it require reports. And it never further publicizes the fellows or tries to involve them in special projects.

"We have a hands-off policy with the people who get this," Socolow said simply. "Doing the creative work is their job. Staying out of their



Wall piece, 1998, iron fragments, 48 x 52 inches, by Tom Joyce

business is our job. We provide the freedom and opportunity for an extraordinary journey to explore and create. We're investing in a lifetime."

Youngblood said that the award won't change her work or style. She has always done what she does, and this won't change. "There's the fear I'll be distracted by this," she said with a quiet laugh. "But on the other hand, it's interesting. I'm curious to see how I'm going to use this. I think one thing I will do is less bronze pieces. There's a lot lost [in artistic control] when you have to go through the foundry."

Joyce has no specific plans either, though he noted that "the uncanny thing about the timing is, every year for the last three or four years, I've taken some time off to work on new work. For 2004 I meant to take six months off. The last commission I have will end in March, and then it's free and clear.

"I haven't solicited grants, mainly because I felt I could make a living doing my architectural work," he said. "I would leave that for people who needed it more than I. The only thing I dream about is having more time! So I can't think of another time in my life that would have been so right for this to happen."

The MacArthur comes on top of another honor: Two months ago Joyce was given an award for excellence by the American Craft Council. That awards ceremony takes place Oct. 16 in Chicago, as part of the Council's annual Sculptural Objects and Functional Art exhibition.

"It's a pretty neat deal. They started them in the '70s, and only about 270-odd artists have been given them. Within my own blacksmithing community, it's quite a deal. ◀



For more information on Joyce's work, see [www.anvilmag.com/smith/007f4.htm](http://www.anvilmag.com/smith/007f4.htm).

For Youngblood, visit [www.galleryguide.org/ArtistPortfolios/mckee/youngblood/youngblood.asp](http://www.galleryguide.org/ArtistPortfolios/mckee/youngblood/youngblood.asp).