



"Once you have the material in your hand that you can mold and shape, then you can carry it over from your mind to your fingertips; and your mind tells your fingers, 'Make that bigger or smaller . . .' until this whole process slowly starts happening.

"Nowadays, when I make animals, I sit there and think about the days when I'd take a moment sitting on a cliff side and look down and see a deer down there or watch some turkeys walk through the forest. Or the time I followed a mountain stream and a deer stopped in this pool of water and looked at me with his huge, brown eyes. It lasted just a few moments, but it's one of those moments that I draw on for inspiration."

Michael inspires others by leading sculpture workshops for children and adults, veterans and seniors, both sighted and visually impaired.

In 1999, Michael was named the Outstanding Disabled Veteran of the Year and received the LIFE Presidential Unsung Hero Award.

His sculptures can be seen in museums and public buildings across the United States, in the Vatican, and in the White House.



### **A Special Fan**

Many people like to collect Michael's work, but Michael fondly remembers one special young "collector."

"It was maybe 20 years ago at the Indian Market in Santa Fe. One day there was this little boy who came, and he was looking at my work, and I was telling him about it. Next year, he came back and said, 'I was here last year. Do you remember me?' And I said yes. He said, 'I want to buy that little buffalo.' And I said, 'OK.' I told him how much it was.

"As he paid for it, he said, 'I worked all last summer and this summer, and saved my money.' I had no words to describe the emotion I felt. I still can't describe what a moment like that feels like."

Does Michael have one piece of sculpture that is his very favorite? Could it be the buffalo from the Santa Fe Indian Market? Or the bear with a fish in its mouth?

"You know, it's the same as with children," Michael said. "If you have more than one, you love them all equally. That's how I feel about my sculptures."