“A library, in a sense is a universe, a sum of knowledge handed down from generation to generation. It is a place where discovery is made, where knowledge is gained, and where we find direction and location in life. The information contained in a library borders on the infinite, containing examinations of life and matter from the most minute concerns to the greatest”.

– excerpt from Clyde Lynds’ proposal for Plumb & Rose.
Commissioned by the New Jersey Arts Inclusion Program, *Plumb & Rose* defines the importance of the Stockton Library, while allowing intellectual and emotional access to its history and the architecture that stands there. *Plumb & Rose* consists of a cast concrete 72” square containing fiber optic embedments which represent the vast resources of a modern library. The work has been sandblasted and carved and contains the symbolic forms of two open books juxtapositioned atop a large table. A 24’ cubic stainless steel base supports the concrete element which is positioned beneath the opening to the second floor. A stainless steel sphere etched with the map of the world hangs at the second floor level, and a polished steel plumb bob hangs below, visually linking the globe with the concrete table.

Fiber optics in constantly moving and changing programs illuminate the surface of the table and the books. One book illustrates the minute particles and beginnings of life from the micro world, while the other book portrays a macrocosm represented by a night sky. The night sky is a depiction of the sky as it appeared over the College on the night of the first Stockton Board of Trustees meeting on February 9, 1969. Together, the two books symbolize the vast, encompassing amount of knowledge available in the library.

While the forms in the books are in motion, the background of the table reveals gentle pulses of random points of light. As the books slowly complete their display, a second sequence forms on the table directly below the plumb bob. The rose articulates the cardinal directions and orients the viewer to one’s position on earth. Moving lines emanate from the compass rose and ignite various symbols over the surface of the table. The lines come and go, appearing and disappearing at random. The symbols which appear on the books are taken from many cultures and disciplines, and no one person will know the meaning of every one. Lynds used symbols from ancient cultures, astronomy, mathematics, religion, music, commerce, and other areas. They, like the books, symbolize the breadth of knowledge available at the college and throughout the library. They appear and disappear from the surface as other displays weave in and out. The helix of DNA, bands of starry light, lines, arcs, and spirals all come and go in a slowly moving panorama of form and color which takes days to repeat.

*Plumb & Rose* was conceived to have many facets of meaning. At the second floor level, one notices that the stainless steel sphere depicts the Earth with its axis askew symbolizing respect for the Holocaust Resource Center located there. Upon approaching the second floor opening to the first floor, the viewer perceives the plumb line and bob which point to the treasures of the world found in the realm of the library. Like life, the sculpture reaveals itself and its contents over time. Like life, it is not simple, easy, or quick. Lynds has created a work which suggests a broad scope and infinite possibilities.

*Plumb & Rose* combines recorded knowledge with the artist’s unique sculptural elements forming a powerful link between life, architecture, and those who experience it.

Clyde Lynds believes that the vitality and intellectual progress of every great culture is mirrored in public art – that public art should not just decorate but amplify the primary elements of its location as exemplified by *Plumb & Rose*.

*Administered by the New Jersey State Council on the Arts/Department of State. The Public Buildings Arts Inclusion Act of 1978 allocates up to 1.5% of the total cost of new state buildings for the commissioning of works of fine Art. Since the program’s inception, over 150 artworks have been installed in state facilities throughout New Jersey. The goal of the Arts Inclusion program is to enhance the quality and aesthetic effect of state buildings by incorporating works of fine art into the total architectural design.*
Clyde Lynds began his career as a painter and subsequently became interested in manipulating light. In the early 1960’s, he developed ways to use fiber optics as a means of expression which led to his uniting them with concrete in 1972. Inspired by his extensive travel, especially through the ruins and temples of Greece, Egypt, Mexico, and Japan, he began combining monumental form with light. Since 1982, the combination of stone and light formed the core of his work.

Lynds’ sculptures can be found in prominent public collections across the United States including the National Museum of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC; the Butler Institute of American Art, Youngstown, Ohio; The Wadsworth Athenium, Hartford, Connecticut; New York University, New York, New York; and others.

In 1995, Lynds completed a major commission for the United States Federal Office Building in New York City.

Titled, America Song, it is one of his largest works. Other commissions include New Jersey Arts Inclusion projects at the New Jersey Veterans Memorial Home at Vineland; the Institute of Marine and Coastal sciences at Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey, New Brunswick; and the School of Osteopathic Medicine and Dentistry of New Jersey, Stratford; the United States Border Station, Nogales, Arizona; Connecticut Superior Court, Hartford, Connecticut; and Townsend Harris High School, Queens College, Queens, New York.

In an essay on Lynds’ work, art historian Eleanor Heartney has written, “Lynds’ public works tend to be more broad ranging in many of their references. They speak about the possibilities of shared experience and common understandings, bringing art back into the social world from which it has so often seemed to retreat in recent years.”