In memoriam

The “Portal” sculpture by Kathryn McBride and Gail Ritchie-Boedea, seen here at a ceramics conference in Davis in 2010.

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APTOS — To honor former Cabrillo College ceramics instructor Kathryn McBride, who passed away on Feb. 23, a large sculpture that she and fellow ceramics instructor Gail Ritchie-Boedea made with a group of students will be shown at the National Council on Education for the Ceramic Arts in Seattle on Wednesday.

The sculpture, called the “Portal,” is a ceramic rock arch that transitions into a waterfall. The idea of the waterfall made perfect sense, Ritchie-Boedea said, because it represents the Santa Cruz area of water and land.

The Portal was accepted for the conference in fall, and both Ritchie-Boedea and McBride were planning to caravano it to the conference.

“With her passing, it became even more important to get it there to honor her,” Ritchie-Boedea said.

The sculpture’s existence began in fall of 2010, when Ritchie-Boedea and McBride came up with a beginner ceramics class at Cabrillo. For the first assignment, the students made rock sculptures.

MCBRIDE

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received her bachelor’s and master’s degree in Ceramic Sculpture from San Francisco State University. She began teaching at Cabrillo in 1995 as a part-time instructor, and eventually worked her way up to head of the department.

“She was here long enough to really make her mark on the program,” Ritchie-Boedea said.

Well liked by students, McBride was known to keep her students engaged and thoughtful with the assignments they were given. She was also known for her “Halloween antics” in her classes, Ritchie-Boedea said. Last Halloween, McBride had students lie on a table and mold a slab of clay to their faces, while all the room was lit by candlelight with Bach’s “Bourrée and Fugue in D minor” playing in the background.

In memory of McBride, the Cabrillo College Foundation is establishing The Kathryn McBride-Cabrillo College Ceramics Program Fund, which supports the ceramics department. The foundation is also creating The Kathryn McBride Scholarship Fund, which funds art scholarships for Cabrillo students.

ABOVE: McBride holds up a tray of clay “noses” that beginning ceramics students made.

RIGHT: The “Portal” is currently on display at Cabrillo’s ceramics studio.

Kathryn McBride passes away

Longtime Cabrillo ceramics instructor Kathryn McBride passes away

and a space available for them at a ceramics conference in Davis, so they pitched the idea to students about an outdoor installation made from rock sculptures, Ritchie-Boedea said.

“Kathryn was always interested in student collaboration,” Ritchie-Boedea said. “We wanted ideas from them about how to make it more than just a stack of rocks.”

After many ideas, divisions and sketches, the final Portal concept was finalized, and was completed “just in the nick of time” for the conference, Ritchie-Boedea said.

The inner structure is made out of rebar, and all the pieces came apart, making it easy to transport, but “a giant puzzle to put back together,” Ritchie-Boedea said.

The NCCCA on Wednesday is the 45th year of the annual conference, which exhibits work from all over the country.

“It’s such an honor for Cabrillo to be represented at a national conference,” Ritchie-Boedea said.

McBride, who was a Sausal resident, See MCBRIDE, page A7