

Palmer honored by first of eight Augusta statues

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AUGUSTA, Ga. — Arnold Palmer had another honor bestowed on him Tuesday morning in the Augusta.

In a ceremony conducted in the downtown area, several miles from the Augusta National course where he would later play a practice round, Palmer saw a bronze statue unveiled in front of more than 500 early risers on a cool and overcast morn.

The 7-foot high likeness of Palmer, sculpted by Philadelphia-based artist Zenos Frudakis, is the first of eight statues to be placed in the Augusta's Riverfront District over the next several years. The project, sponsored by the Georgia Hall of Fame, will continue next year with a Ben Hogan statue and later will include ones of Jack Nicklaus, Bobby Jones, Gene Sarazen, Sam Snead, Gary Player and Bobby Jones.

Each statue costs \$100,000 provided by a sponsor. Palmer became the first honoree because Monty Osteen, CEO of Bakers First, came up with the necessary funding.

"The statue is symbolic, standing on the 10th tee on Sunday afternoon," Osteen said before the unveiling. "Arnold won the tournament in 1958, 1960, 1962 and 1964 and we figured that from 1958 through 1967 he was in contention stepping to the 10th tee on Sunday.

"In fact, we used to say that the Masters didn't begin until Sunday when Arnold Palmer stepped to the 10th tee."

Palmer, who has been honored frequently during this Spring Classic week, expressed his profound appreciation for all the recogni-

Then he looked down at Osteen and said, "What concerns me is that I won't be on the 10th tee Sunday afternoon. I'm going to have to figure out something before then."

This is Palmer's 42nd Masters, but he has not made the cut since 1983, when he tied for 36th.

Frudakis attended the presentation ceremony, but planned to leave Augusta before the Masters opens on Thursday because he is busy working on a 9-foot statue of the late Frank Rizzo, Philadelphia's former mayor. Frudakis said he was honored to have been selected to sculpt Palmer and said he gained an even greater sense of honor after watching the way people react to Palmer.

"People want to stand beside him and have their picture taken with him," he said. "It's much like people in France want to have their picture taken by the Eiffel Tower or people in Rome wanting their picture taken next to the Parthenon or people in Egypt wanted to be photographed in front of the pyramids."