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Artist Seth Wade moved to Mesa, Ariz., in 2006 to spend a year in an artist's colony, where he learned the traditional oil painting techniques of the Dutch Masters under the tutelage of painter Joel Coplin.

That greatly influenced the Kettering, Ohio, resident as he created Brother Raymond L. Fitz's official presidential portrait, which has been installed on the second floor of St. Mary Hall on the University of Dayton campus. The hall of presidential portraits features 16 of Fitz's predecessors — most priests. He was only the second Marianist brother to lead the University of Dayton.

"You can only be so pleased as the artist, but I was pretty darned pleased with this one," said Wade, who works as an art instructor at Otterbein Retirement Living Community. "Some words I have heard used to describe Brother Ray are kind, generous, strong, sincere, modest. I simply did my best to convey his spirit through these details."

Fitz, who's known for his humility, quipped, "I don't know if I've ever looked that good."

Turning serious, he said, "I am very honored to have a place among all of the people who provided the foundation for a tradition of excellence for UD to build upon. I am particularly grateful to Father Raymond Roesch and his generation who brought the University through great crises. I am also extremely proud to have passed the torch to President Dan (Curran) and his team. They are moving forward with a strong Catholic and Marianist vision and a wonderful entrepreneurial spirit."

Fitz is the longest-serving president in school history and a beloved figure on campus and in the community. He stepped down after 23 years in June 2002 and now works in the Fitz Center for Leadership in Community as the Ferree Professor of Social Justice.

Wade, who grew up in Springboro and studied art at the Art Academy of Cincinnati and Sinclair Community College, worked from a series of photographs to create the portrait over six weeks. "It doesn't look like any one photograph," he said. "I'd see a smile in one, a really good look in the eyes on another, and other good, pure moments caught on film.

"I can't take any credit for the spirit in the painting. It's just the man's spirit."