

Kessler wind machines demand to be seen at Allyn Gallup Art

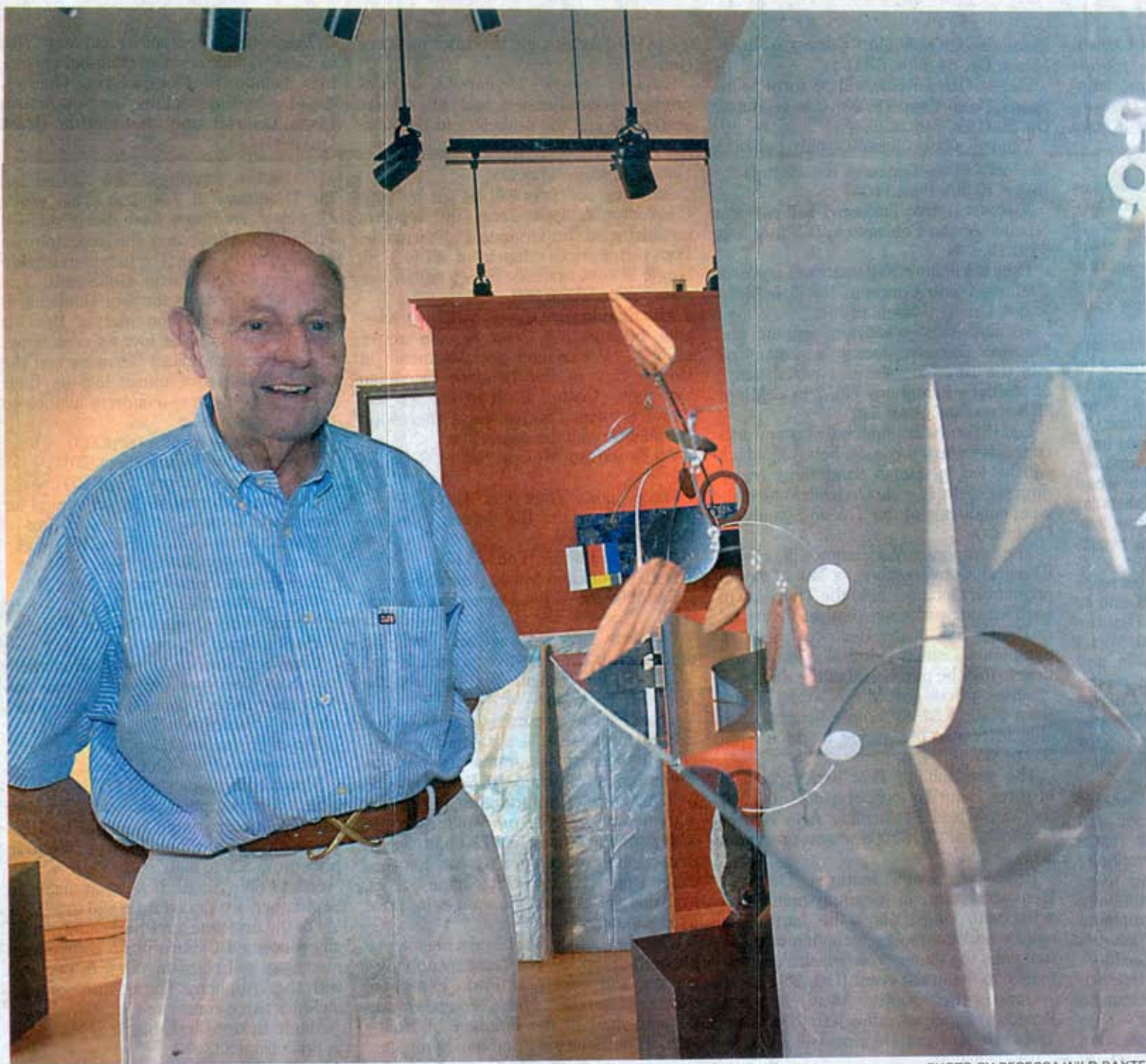


PHOTO BY REBECCA WILD BAXTER

Richard Kessler talks about one of the pieces he has on display at the Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art gallery.

BY THYRZA JACOBS

These small, precisely made mobile sculptures tantalize with their measured balance between intellect and instinct. Sharply conscious of lucidity, they move completely spontaneously, though constructed with the utmost

exactitude, a study in specificity that partners with playful *comme-çi comme-ça*, devil-may-care grace. And that is what makes them fun.

In creating these "Variations on a Theme by Calder" pieces, Sarasota artist/craftsman Dick Kessler pays homage to the great

original American sculptor who invented the mobile (Calder died in 1975), borrowing some concepts and similarities from the master. Geometric in spirit, some are eccentrically asymmetrical, some touched with bits of tendril-like twists of wire, tiny hooks, swans-neck graceful

bends of metal, small dollops of wood or copper, graceful "German silver" bases, or dots of paint, making each a physical space to visually explore as they lightly swing into changes made by wind and air.

Sculptor Dick Kessler's adult life began as an ambulance driver in WWII before going to medical school.

Early in his doctoring career in Manhattan Kessler had a patient who was an artist pay his bill with a painting, and Kessler's life became happily endowed by art and artists from that point on. "It was a different world," he acknowledges, smiling.

The Kesslers began some serious collecting (since given to their children and museums) with a growing appreciation of Calder's wonderfully playful work, along with "a reverence for the creative portion of life — our highest expression of human behavior."

Gallery owner Allyn Gallup, a longtime friend of Dick Kessler, mentions that he knew him as a craftsman who made musical instruments, but when he saw the sculptures, "I wanted them for the gallery!"

Looking at them moving, gravity seems to dissolve and everything connects, and one can see the connections and sense the pleasure of that infinite balance and persistent order.

WHEN YOU GO

▼ Allyn Gallup Contemporary Art: Recent work by Macyn Bolt and Tom Grabosky; Variations on a Theme by Calder by Richard Kessler

▼ Through May 26

▼ Gallery located at 556 S. Pineapple Ave.