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"batik" painting which was brought to the Birmingham Art Gallery for framing by the late John W. McKinney shortly before his death. Police said whoever owns the picture may be able to help them solve the crime. (Tribune Photo)

Art Owner Sought in B'ham Murder

Birmingham Police are trying to find the person who left a piece of art at the Birmingham Art Gallery for the late Rev. John W. McKinney to frame.

Sgt. Malcom Mohr said the person who brought it to McKinney may have been the last to see the 50-year-old art dealer and nondenominational minister alive.

McKinney, who died from a single gunshot wound to the back of the head, had been beaten about the head by a blunt instrument. His body was found by a gallery employe at approximately 10 a.m., Sept. 20.

"We still are trying to backtrack his steps during the last moments before his body was discovered," Mohr said. "The person who left the art, a kind of painting called 'batik' may be able to help."

McKinney, who lived at 1520 North Selfridge, Clawson, had been ordained by the Christian Temple Association, Inc., a nondenominational religious and philanthropic

Sues Ford

—Continued From Page 1—
because they were Jewish, Herman contends.

12 Years in Camps—

He said he was arrested for "unknown reasons" in 1938 and served 12 years in Soviet labor camps. He married the daughter of another exile while in Siberia and the couple had two daughters — Svetlana, now age 27, and Janna, 20.

Herman became a boxing coach and toured the Soviet union with his team. While on

organization in Pontiac.

He had been a minister for 17 years and Chaplain at the Bloomfield Hills Nursing Center for the past 16. He had been director of the gallery at 1025 Haynes for 10 years.

Mohr said the painting was found on McKinney's desk and may have been next in line to be framed.

In addition to dealing in contemporary art, McKinney specialized in framings.

"None of the area art dealers recognized the artist or the art," Mohr said. "It may have been done by a foreign artist."

While Mohr permitted the painting to be photographed in black and white, he said that anyone claiming to recognize the painting must be able to clearly identify the colors used.

According to Mohr, nine investigators are trying to piece together the last moments before McKinney's death.

He was last seen alive ordering coffee at a Birmingham coffee shop at 11:30 a.m., Sept. 19, nearly 24 hours before his body was found.

"I don't want to suggest that the person who brought the art in is a suspect," Mohr said. "We just want to talk with him so we can find out what McKinney may have done before he died."

The art may be identified at the Birmingham Police Station, 151 Martin. Anyone with any information about McKinney is asked to call Birmingham Police at 644-3400.

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Birmingham Police Sgt. Malcom Mohr poses with "batik" painting which was brought to the Birmingham Art Gallery for framing by the late John W. McKinney shortly before his death. Police said whoever owns the picture may be able to help them solve the crime. (Tribune Photo)

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Birmingham Police Sgt. Malcom Mohr poses with the coat which was brought to the Birmingham Police for framing by the late John W. McKinney before his death. Police said whoever owns the coat may be able to help them solve the crime (photo)

Owner Sought 'ham Murder