

The Open Book by Ella Condie Lamb

If there is one mural painting for which Ella is known today, it's The Open Book which she executed for the library. The mural depicts the seated figure of a mother reading from an open book, surrounded by her children and is meant to convey the idea that books are the source of knowledge and that they should be available to all; rich, poor, young, old, male, female.

Ella used her four children as models for this mural and, in accordance with Emma Flower Taylor's wishes, she included a fifth child. The child placed on the lap of the mother was a memorial to Emma's first son, Roswell Taylor, who died in infancy from tonsillitis. Ella's first son also died in infancy from diphtheria.

Ella Condie Lamb was a painter, muralist, mosaic artist and designer of stained glass windows. She was born in New York City in 1862. She entered the National Academy of Design in New York when she was sixteen and a year later, took the academy's first prize in a woman's life drawing class. Later, Ella married Charles Rollison Lamb, an artist and architect. Much of Ella's work was done in collaboration with her husband. He designed the buildings and she designed the stained glass windows, mosaics or murals that went into them. A perfect example of this is our library. Charles Lamb was the architect and Ella filled our beautiful library with the amazing mosaics, murals and stained glass.