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Puncky '73 and Mary Soehren Heppner '76 Commission Sculpture for UMN Morris

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Puncky '73 and Mary Soehren Heppner '76 Commission Sculpture for UMN Morris

Created by Duane "Dewey" Goodwin, the piece will honor the past, present, and future of Native peoples on these lands.

Thanks to the [vision of generous donors](#), the University of Minnesota, Morris has the opportunity to honor the past, present, and future of Native peoples on these lands.

A new sculpture by [Duane Goodwin](#), Anishinaabe, and [commissioned by Puncky '73 and Mary Soehren Heppner '76](#) will become a defining element of the Morris campus, adding to its sense of place and celebrating the “strength, resilience, compassion, and heart of the indigenous peoples” here.

“The sculpture symbolizes the [journey] of the Native American, from a traditional people to an assimilated, but still proud, people,” writes Goodwin in an artist statement. “We have endured colonization, retaining our most valued traditions—our identity, language, ceremonies, and arts.”

A Sense of Place

It is the Heppners’ hope that the sculpture will promote awareness of the history surrounding Morris and the campus. They believe the sculpture can also foster a sense of belonging that will more fully ground students and contribute to their future success.

“We decided to commission a site-specific sculpture for the campus that would reflect the unique history and ‘sense of place,’” write the Heppners. “Goodwin’s sculpture depicts an important time in the early history of this educational institution; that of the boarding school days. That history, although painful, is important to remember as the institution moved forward and transformed itself over the years into a progressive model of a highly diverse community of scholars. In addition, Goodwin’s cultural background and choice of native stone from a Minnesota quarry all contribute to the sense of place we hoped the sculpture would achieve.”

Moving Forward

Work on campus began on Friday, June 29, with a blessing ceremony on the site. Goodwin was joined by elders Dr. Paul Day, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe; Bob Jourdain, Nickickousiminicaning First Nation; and John Romer, Leech Lake Band of Ojibwe.

Goodwin was inspired on this piece and others by the late Anna Gibbs, Red Lake Band of Chippewa Indians, who provided spiritual guidance throughout his artist’s journey.

The sculpture will be dedicated this fall. To learn more and follow along, visit z.umn.edu/goodwinsculpture