

Foundry Preparing Centralia College Statue for Dedication

Honor: Dedication for Statue Honoring Margaret Corbet and Katherine Kemp
Scheduled June 12



Christopher Brewer / cbrewer@chronline.com

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Artist Jim Stafford poses for a portrait along with a model of the statue he is helping create to honor Margaret Corbet and Katharine Kemp at Centralia College on Friday. The statue is expected to be installed soon, with a dedication ceremony to follow on June 12.

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Foundry Preparing Centralia College Statue for Dedication By [Kyle Spurr / kspurr@chronline.com](mailto:kspurr@chronline.com) | **0 comments**

Tacoma art foundry 2 Ravens Studio is putting the final touches on a statue honoring the two women who helped preserve Centralia College through the Great Depression and World War II.

A dedication ceremony for the statue will take place at 3 p.m. Thursday, June 12, on the Centralia College campus southwest of the Clocktower on the Aadland Esplanade.

Adna artist Jim Stafford, who designed the life-size statue of the women in 1930s dresses, said the foundry needs to finish welding and grinding pieces of the statue and put color on it prior to installation. The brick and concrete pedestal is already built on the campus.

Stafford said the foundry is a bit behind schedule, but should be ready by the dedication.

"The foundry got themselves in a bind, but I think they will come through," Stafford said.

The main concern for Stafford and the foundry is transporting the 700-pound statue from Tacoma and placing it on a pedestal. Stafford said he is trying to line up a Lewis County Public Utilities District bucket truck to get the statue over

the nearby hedges and onto the pedestal. The college is trying to keep the statue and truck off of the soft, red brick esplanade, Stafford said.

“Right now we are negotiating how to lift this thing,” Stafford said. “It’s kind of sight unseen.”

Once the statue is secured, Stafford said, it will offer a permanent remembrance of the first principal Margaret Corbet and former dean of students Katharine Kemp.

Corbet became the first principal of the junior college in 1925. Kemp joined the college seven years later, in 1932, as a language instructor and dean of students. Both women rallied the community multiple times over the years to raise funds and keep the college open.

The statue, titled “Keep the Doors Open,” depicts Corbet gesturing out toward campus while standing next to Kemp as she sits with a book in her hand. .

Gordon Aadland, a longtime columnist for The Chronicle and former Centralia College employee, spearheaded the idea for the statue up until his death at the age of 92 on Oct. 27.

“It’s all due to Gordon’s power of the pen, so to speak,” Stafford said. “It was his idea to do these ladies like this, and they were very instrumental to keeping the college going. He just thought the world of them.”

Aadland often wrote about the progress of the statue in his weekly column for The Chronicle before his death last year.

“Art is, if not eternal, at least outlasting many of the other things we consider important. Presently in a Tacoma foundry is one such statue, which will inspire Centralia College students far into the future as it stands on the edge of the Aadland Esplanade,” Aadland wrote on Aug. 30, 2013.

Aadland helped the Centralia College Foundation select one of the three versions Stafford designed. The foundation has raised about \$100,000 for the project.

“I gave them three versions, three different ideas,” Stafford said. “I’m happy going with what makes the college happy and Gordon Aadland was one of them.”