

Williams Center Green is Location for Centennial Sculpture

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After months of negotiations, the Rotary Club of Tulsa's \$700,000 Centennial Project has a home.

On January 6, the day new **Tulsa Mayor Dewey Bartlett** spoke to the club for the first time, it was announced that the five bronze sculptures will be located on the south end of Williams Center Green.



"We've reached a significant milestone in landing the perfect location for this significant gift of public art to the people of Tulsa," said Past President **Bob Lengacher**, chairman of the project committee. "It is most fitting that these beautiful bronzes will reside on the Williams Center Green."

Lengacher said that a number of downtown locations were considered, "but we kept coming back to the Green."

"The site provides high pedestrian traffic and drive-by appeal," said Lengacher. "In addition, the Rotary project will inspire future renovation and improvements to the Green itself."

Securing the location required approval of the Tulsa Parking Authority, which owns the Green, and the Tulsa Arts Commission. Former Mayor Kathy Taylor was also a strong proponent of the project.

Four individual bronzes representing the contributions of Rotary in Tulsa and around the world will surround a 12-ft. bronze globe, which signifies the worldwide presence of Rotary in 200 countries.

The sculptures were created by noted Tulsa artists **Jay O'Meilia** and **David Nunneley**. Installation of the plaza, located along Third St., is expected by late spring.

Past President **Tim Colwell**, project co-chair, said that the four slightly larger-than-life sculptures will feature major initiatives of Rotary that have dramatically improved the lives of others:

- *Freedom from Polio.* A sculpture of a young woman casting away crutches thanks to Rotary International's drive to eradicate polio worldwide.
- *Mentoring Youth.* A bronze of a Tulsa Rotarian working with a student from its partner Celia Clinton Elementary School.
- *Drinkable Water.* A sculpture of a woman carrying water from one of the 150 wells drilled in Nicaragua by the Tulsa club.

- *World Understanding Through Youth Exchanges and Scholarships.* A bronze of a high-school student with a backpack, signifying the student exchange programs and international scholarship opportunities provided through Rotary.

Currently, design of the plaza is taking place, while the castings of the five bronze sculptures are being made at a foundry in Colorado.

It is expected that once installed, the Rotary Plaza will become a tourist destination for visiting Rotarians, and increase the likelihood for district, national and international Rotary meetings to be held here.

Special attention was given to those responsible for the centennial project.

"This initiative would not be moving ahead without the generous financial commitment of our members and the hardworking Centennial Committee who has shepherded this project every step of the way," said Tim.

Founded in 1915, the Rotary Club of Tulsa has contributed to growth and improvement of the city. The club played significant roles in the creation of Tulsa Boys Home, Children's Medical Center and the forerunner of the Tulsa Area United Way. The club founded Rotary District 6110's Medical Supplies Network, where container loads of unneeded medical equipment are regularly shipped to third world countries. In 2007, the club raised funds to purchase and preserve the Beryl Ford Collection of historic Tulsa artifacts and photos.

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