

# Heard Museum Raises Conserved Friendship Totem

Learn about the reinstallation of the newly conserved Friendship Totem in the museum's Hearst Foundations Children's Courtyard.

The Heard Museum is proud to share the newly conserved Friendship Totem, a 49-year-old monumental carving created by Nisga'a artist Norman Tait. The 21-foot pole was raised in the museum's Hearst Foundations Children's Courtyard.

Originally carved in 1976 by Tait, the artwork was commissioned by the provincial government of British Columbia as a gift to the city of Phoenix, which was then gifted to the Heard shortly after its completion. It is a symbol not only of friendship between cities and nations, but also of the survival and resilience of Indigenous cultures.

“When a totem pole is raised, it is like the birth of an important person. The pole is given a name and treated with the same kind of respect you would give a chief. Like the elders, each pole is a teacher, a storyteller.”

—Norman Tait in *Carving a Totem Pole* by Vickie Jensen (1994)

Ron Harvey of Tuckerbrook Conservation (Lincolnton, Maine) travels annually to the Heard Museum to clean and care for sculptures on display in the outdoor sculpture gardens. Tuckerbrook led the conservation effort of the Friendship Totem and worked closely with Norman Tait's surviving brother, Alver Tait. Mr. Tait contributed his knowledge to the project and supervised the raising ceremony as the final act of the conservation.

*The conservation of the Friendship Totem was made possible by Bank of America's Art Conservation Project.*

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Norman Tait (Nisga'a) carving the Friendship Totem in the Heard Museum's Gallery of Indian Art, 1976.



Valerie Tait and Alver Tait at the raising of the restored Friendship Totem in the Heard Museum's Hearst Foundations Children's Courtyard, 2024.