



PRESS RELEASE

Heard Museum Raises Restored “Friendship Totem” by Nisga’a Artist Norman Tait

48-Year-Old Totem Pole Underwent Conservation Funded by Bank of America

PHOENIX– [The Heard Museum](#) announced the reinstallation of the newly renovated Friendship Totem, a 48-year-old monumental carving created by Nisga’a artist Norman Tait. The project, funded through [Bank of America’s Art Conservation Project](#), was recently unveiled to the public in the museum’s Hearst Foundation’s Children’s Courtyard.

“When a totem pole is raised, it is like the birth of an important person,” said Tait in *Carving a Totem Pole* by Vickie Jensen. “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.”

The 21-foot totem pole, carved in 1976 by Tait, who is credited with reviving the art of Nisga’a totem pole carving, was commissioned by the provincial government of British Columbia as a gift to the city of Phoenix, which, shortly after its completion, gifted it to the Heard Museum.

Nearly 50 years later, Bank of America generously funded the restoration and reinstallation of the totem pole. Since 2010, the Bank of America Art Conservation Project has provided funding for more than 260 projects in 40 countries to conserve historically or culturally significant works of art, including works that have been designated as national treasures. In 2015, Bank of America’s support helped conserve eight iconic sculptures at the Heard Museum by notable American Indian artists, including “Earth Song,” carved by Allan Houser (Chiricahua Apache) which welcomes every guest to the Museum. Bank of America credit or debit cardholders also get free general admission to the Heard the first full weekend of every month through the bank’s Museums on Us® program.

“Bank of America’s support for the conservation of Friendship Totem reflects our ongoing commitment to cultural sustainability and history, while uplifting communities as we collaborate to make the arts more accessible,” said Scott Vanderpool, president, Bank of America Phoenix. “Our longstanding partnership with the Heard is one way we help drive Responsible Growth here in the Valley.”

Ron Harvey, of Tuckerbrook Conservation in Lincolnville, Maine, who travels annually to the Heard Museum to clean and care for sculptures on display in the outdoor sculpture gardens, led the conservation effort. He worked closely with Norman Tait's surviving brother, Alver Tait, and Norman's daughter, Valerie Tait. Alver contributed his knowledge to the project and traveled to Phoenix to consult with Harvey and supervised the raising ceremony as the final act of the restoration.

The Norman Tait Friendship Totem has been part of the Heard Museum collection for 47 years. It is a symbol not only of friendship between cities and nations, but also of the survival and resilience of Indigenous cultures. After a quarter of a century in storage, the Friendship Totem once again adorns the Children's Courtyard, welcoming school tours and visitors.

For more information about the Heard Museum, please visit Heard.org.

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

Notes to Editors:

The Heard Museum is open daily, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. It is closed on Easter, Independence Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas.

Ticket prices for the museum are as follows: adults are \$26; seniors (65+) are \$21 at the door; students with a valid ID are \$10; children (6-17) are \$10; all children 5 years and under, American Indians (with Tribal ID or CIB) and Heard Museum members are free.

Photography of any kind may not be used for publication without written permission from the museum and/or artists.

Credentialed members of the media may contact a member of the marketing staff for more information concerning photography of public events or museum galleries.

About The Heard Museum:

Since its founding in 1929, the Heard Museum, a private nonprofit organization, has grown in size and stature to become recognized internationally for the quality of its collections, world class exhibitions, educational programming and unmatched festivals. Dedicated to the advancement of American Indian art, the Heard successfully presents the stories of American Indian people from a first-person perspective as well as exhibitions that showcase the beauty and vitality of traditional and contemporary art. The Heard Museum is supported, in part, by the generosity of Heard Museum members and donors, the Arizona Commission on the Arts, and the City of Phoenix Office of Arts and Culture.

For more information, please visit heard.org.



To follow updates on the museum via Facebook, Instagram and Twitter, use [@heardmuseum](https://www.instagram.com/heardmuseum).

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