

Foundation seeks money for sculpture honoring Peratrovichs

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ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP) - The Anchorage Park Foundation will seek money to install a sculpture honoring the late anti-discrimination leaders Elizabeth and Roy Peratrovich at the park named for them, and the sculptor has a familiar name.

The Peratrovich's oldest son, Roy Peratrovich Jr., designed "Flight of the Raven" to honor his parents.

The engineer and artist has had work displayed at the Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., and the Alaska Capitol.

"I wanted to honor the work my parents have done against discrimination," Peratrovich said from his home in Bainbridge Island, Wash.

In doing so, he recalled the Tlingit legend of Raven, who stole the sun from an ancient chief and gave it to the people.

"Raven is respected for what he's done and is common to many Alaskan tribes," he said. "I wanted something that would be acceptable to our Native people in the north as well as the Southeast."

In the legend, Raven escapes with the sun in his beak through a smoke hole, causing him to turn black.

The sculpture will feature a 10-foot stainless-steel column of twisted and curved gray smoke. Atop the smoke trail will sit a bronze raven, finished with a highly polished black patina and a 4-foot wingspan. Its beak will hold a 2-inch polished quartz with thin gold seams to represent the sun.

"The sun on the sculpture is small on purpose," Peratrovich said. "When you look at the sky, the sun is small there too."

The sculpture will symbolize shedding the dark days of discrimination and the rising hopes and dreams of people once oppressed, he said.

"It's fitting to use a raven because my mother was of the Raven clan and she brought light to the world through what she did," he said.

The Peratrovichs were leaders of the anti-discrimination movement in Alaska during the 1940s and leaders in the Alaska Native Brotherhood and Sisterhood organizations. They were instrumental in the passage of America's first anti-discrimination laws, enacted Feb. 16, 1945. Elizabeth Peratrovich Day is celebrated throughout Alaska by legislative decree on Feb. 16.

Steve Beardsley, former municipal Parks and Recreation Department commissioner, estimated the cost of building and installing the sculpture at \$80,000.

"We've applied for a matching grant of \$40,000 from the Anchorage Park Foundation," he said. The

project will rely on donations from businesses and the community.

A plaque will tell the story of the Peratrovichs' achievements.

"When the park was dedicated, I remember walking by onlookers and heard people wonder who the Russians were that they named the park after," Peratrovich said. "I want this to be something that raises awareness of the struggles of Alaska's Native people and something that everybody in Alaska can be proud of. We were the first in the nation to pass anti-discrimination laws and that's something everybody should know."

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