

Monument to missing and murdered indigenous women unveiled at emotional ceremony

A monument honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls was unveiled to the public in front of the Saskatoon police station on Friday.

MATTHEW OLSON Updated: May 5, 2017



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Her first sight of the statue now standing in front of the Saskatoon Police Service headquarters to honour missing and murdered indigenous women was "breathtaking," says Gwenda Yuzicappi of Standing Buffalo Dakota First Nation.

The sculpture of a woman dancing on a cloud, her shawl transforming into an eagle's wings, depicts her daughter, Amber Redman, who went missing in 2005.

"As a mother, I would never, ever have foreseen this to happen," Yuzicappi said Friday after the statue was unveiled. "From a mother's perspective, to watch her daughter dance is very honouring."

Yuzicappi often watched her daughter dance at powwows. Renowned artist Lionel Peyachew heard the story and wanted to depict Redman in art. His sculpture is named Wicashpi Duta Win, or "Red Star Woman" — Redman's Dakota name.

"It was breathtaking, it was beautiful ... to see her dancing again," Yuzicappi said through tears.

"I felt so much just from seeing the statue."

About 300 people gathered under a blazing sun on Friday to see the statue finally revealed to the public. Police Chief Olive Weighill, Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations Chief Bobby Cameron, and Saskatoon Tribal Council Chief Felix Thomas spoke to the solemn audience to pass along the message that missing and murdered indigenous women and their families are not forgotten.

"It's our hope that this monument to missing and murdered indigenous women and girls will serve as a beacon to all residents of Saskatoon, that we must never forget those who have been a victim of violent crime," Weighill said.

When the white curtain was finally pulled back to reveal the gleaming statue, the crowd responded with gasps and cheers.

Marilyn Napope, whose daughter Shelley was murdered at the age of 16, was among them.

The man who killed her daughter ended up in prison, but too often that's not the case, Napope said.

"I would like to respect the other families that don't have closure. Me, I had closure. I got to bury my daughter and I got to see the guy put away. But I would love to see justice for all the families."

Emotional ceremony in Saskatoon honours missing and murdered indigenous women



By Meaghan Craig

Reporter Global News



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Hundreds of people gathered outside of police headquarters on Friday where a commemorative statue was unveiled honouring missing and murdered indigenous women and girls.

It's a visual recognition of Canada's painful truth and the lives that have been lost.

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A life-sized bronze sculpture is said to be 10 years in the making but realistically it's taken decades for missing and murdered indigenous women and girls to be honoured and recognized in a way they deserve.

"It's our hope that this monument to missing and murdered aboriginal girls will serve as a beacon to all residents of Saskatoon that we must never forget those who have been the victims of violent crime," [Saskatoon police Chief Clive Weighill](#) said.

"To all the families here
– take solace that your
loved ones are not
forgotten."



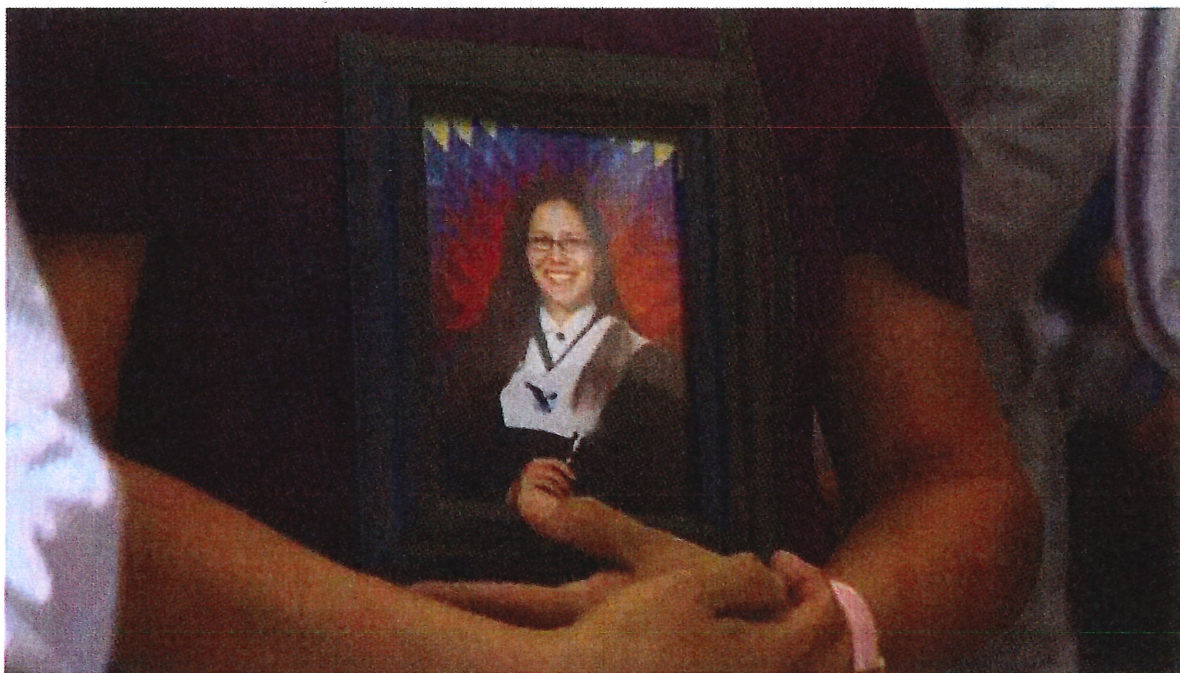
The meaningful memorial to [pays tribute to mothers, daughters, sisters and nieces who are no longer with us or who have never been found.](#)

"So many of them have no grave marker but Red Star Woman will be their monument forever more," Lt.-Gov. Vaughn Solomon Schofield said.

READ MORE: They represent the unfinished lives': memorial honours missing and murdered indigenous women

Chief Felix Thomas with the Saskatoon Tribal Council played an inaugural role in making the monument a reality and became emotional as he addressed the victims' families.

"Your women made the ultimate sacrifice."



For those who have lost a loved one, Friday's ceremony and this symbol of love was bittersweet.

"My daughter died a gruesome death and when I think about it – it's very, very hard to cope when you hear the other stories but when I think of my daughter she's in my heart all the time," Marilyn Napope said.

Her daughter, Shelley, was murdered in 1992 at the age of 16.

"The families who are left behind now have a starting point for their walks and vigils they hold but also they have place of reflection," Wolfe's mother Carol said.

In 2010, Karina vanished without a trace – Jerry Constant, 33 was sentenced to life in prison for her death.



Also present on Friday was Amber Redman's mother, who says the statue holds a special place in her heart – her daughter was the inspiration.

"When she danced, she soared, she danced like an eagle and each step was so soft – it was like she was dancing on top of the clouds," Gwenda Yuzicappi said.

The first hearing in a long-awaited inquiry into the root causes of this national tragedy will begin later this month and is expected to take two years.

"We can as a country, we must as a country do better," federal Minister of Justice Jody Wilson-Raybould said.

"While we cannot change history, we can honour those that we have lost and those that have suffered and we can move forward together – laying the pathway for a better future."

Monument to MMIW unveiled at Saskatoon Police headquarters

EFN Staff | May 08, 2017

A monument to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls was unveiled in an emotional ceremony held outside the Saskatoon Police Service Headquarters building.



For more photos, check out our Photo Gallery.

Created by artist Lionel Peyachew, the life-sized bronze sculpture depicts a woman named Wicanhpi Duta Win or Red Star Woman, a fancy dancer with her shawl as her wings. The sculpture was chosen in 2015 following a vote on several different submissions. The project is funded by the STC, the Province of Saskatchewan and the SPS.

The monument was unveiled in a public ceremony that drew around 300 people on a hot and sunny day. Prayers were put down by the Elders and then an honour song, the Métis anthem by Krystle Pederson, and O Canada in Cree and English by the students from Confederation Park Community School opened the event the dignitaries from many levels of government spoke on the importance of embracing our women and stopping the problems that have led to so many women and girls losing their lives.

"The Saskatoon Tribal Council has been working with the Saskatoon Police Service, the City of Saskatoon and the Province since 2015 to acknowledge the tremendous importance of focusing on our murdered and missing Indigenous women and girls," said Tribal Chief Felix Thomas. "This monument exemplifies the serious impact even one Indigenous murdered or missing woman or girl has on our community, not just our First Nations, but everyone the city, the province the country this is a problem that affects us all."

In collaboration with the Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC), the City of Saskatoon, the Province of Saskatchewan and the Saskatoon Police Service (SPS), the statue honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls was created. The statue will have a permanent home in the plaza area in front of the building, near the main entrance. Benches will soon be installed around the monument.

"The Saskatoon Police Service is honoured to be the home for the monument to missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls," said Police Chief Clive Weighill. "It is our hope that the monument represents not only a place of reflection and peace, but also represents the strong partnerships our Service has with the Saskatoon Tribal Council, the families of victims of violence, the province of Saskatchewan and the City of Saskatoon."



Carol Wolfe also addressed the event with the help of her translator. "The families now have a starting point for walks and vigils and also a place to reflect," said Wolfe. She knows the pain as she lost her daughter Karina several years ago. "We can come here and find peace and hope or just a place of calm from the grief we all carry. This monument carries their spirit and they will never be forgotten. They are loved."

The vision for the statue came to Peyachew as he was researching the issue in news papers. He came across a story in the Saskatoon Star Phoenix that stuck with him. "I was looking at old newspapers and I found an article that was very inspiring. They were interviewing a family and the mother was describing her daughter and the way she used to dance as a fancy dancer," said Peyachew. "She described her as very light on her feet like she was flying like an angel on top of a cloud. I got to work and I started drawing and this is what I came up with. I would like to share some words with the families and mothers. Never give up. It is a long way to get to what we want but I know things will get better. But don't ever give up."

Statue will be 'place of calm,' mother of murdered indigenous woman says



Laura Woodward and Kevin Menz, CTV Saskatoon
Published Friday, May 5, 2017 5:43PM CST
Last Updated Wednesday, May 10, 2017 6:15PM CST

A monument honouring missing and murdered indigenous women and girls, unveiled in Saskatoon Friday, will serve as a place of peace for Carol Wolfe.

The mother, whose daughter Karina's remains were found in 2015, five years after she was reported missing, says the statue will keep her daughter's memory alive and provide her a place to reflect on Karina's life.

"This will be a place of calm, even for a moment, from the grief and heartache we all carry," Wolfe told a crowd of hundreds, through a sign-language interpreter, outside the Saskatoon Police Service headquarters, where the statue was unveiled.

PHOTOS



A statue honouring missing and murdered indigenous women and girls unveiled Friday, May 5, 2017, sits in front of the Saskatoon Police Service. (Kevin Menz/CTV Saskatoon)

She was one of several speakers at the event.

"As a mother who lost her only daughter at the hands of another, the breaking of my heart never goes away," Wolfe signed. "This is why we must join together to stop this from happening. The violence has to stop. Working together as a nation we can stop this from happening if we simply remember that our women and girls are loved and valued."

The monument depicts an indigenous woman, named Wicahpi Duta Win or Red Star Woman, dancing on a cloud. The cloud lights up in the dark.



A statue depicting an indigenous woman, named Wicanhpi Duta Win or Red Star Woman, dancing on a cloud was unveiled outside the Saskatoon Police Service on Friday, May 5, 2017. (Kevin Menz/CTV Saskatoon)



A statue depicting an indigenous woman, named Wicanhpi Duta Win or Red Star Woman, dancing on a cloud was unveiled outside the Saskatoon Police Service on Friday, May 5, 2017. (Chad Hills/CTV Saskatoon)

Lionel Peyachew, the artist behind the statue's design, said the piece was inspired by Amber Redman and the way Redman's mother described her missing daughter.

"She described her as being very light on her feet. It was like she was flying like an eagle on top of a cloud, and that just sort of hit me and I said, 'Wow, wouldn't that be something if we could do that,' " the Saskatchewan-based artist said.

First Nations chiefs and police officers were on hand alongside federal, provincial and municipal government officials for the unveiling. Every speaker at the event Friday encouraged those who visit the monument to have a conversation about missing and murdered indigenous women.

"While we cannot change history, we can honour those that we have lost and those who have suffered, and we can move forward together, laying the pathway for a better future," Jody Wilson-Raybould, Canada's minister of justice, said. "This is the true work of reconciliation."

Saskatoon police, the City of Saskatoon and the Saskatoon Tribal Council all worked together to fund and bring the statue to the city.

Statue honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women unveiled in Saskatoon

'It gives me a lot of hope,' says mother of murdered Indigenous woman

CBC News · Posted: May 05, 2017 5:00 AM CT | Last Updated: May 5, 2017



Cree artist Lionel Peyachew's statue honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women was unveiled Friday outside Saskatoon police headquarters. (Dan Zakreski/CBC)

A work of art honouring missing and murdered Indigenous women was unveiled Friday morning outside Saskatoon's police headquarters.

Cree artist Lionel Peyachew's concept was chosen as the design in 2015 after a public vote.

The slightly larger-than-life bronze sculpture depicts a fancy dancer with her shawl becoming the wings of an eagle. She dances on a cloud that will light up at night.

Peyachew was inspired by the story of Amber Redman, who was murdered in 2005. Her mother, Gwenda Yuzicappi, once described her daughter's traditional fancy dancing as reminding her of an eagle in flight.



Gwenda Yuzicappi, mother of Amber Redman, who inspired the statue, once described her daughter's traditional fancy dancing as reminding her of an eagle in flight. (Dan Zakreski/CBC)

Yuzicappi attended the ceremony and said she was honoured that her daughter continues to capture hearts.

"I'm here to advocate for the families; I'm here to advocate for my daughter; and I will continue to advocate for the missing and murdered," she said.

"For this statue, this monument, to be set up here in the police station, it gives me a lot of hope that in the future to come there is hope that our [missing and murdered] women, the numbers will decrease."

- **Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations urges Sask. to wear red for missing and murdered**

Peyachew described the work as "an angel, in flight, on a cloud; white wings to represent purity." Icons on the shawl include a tree of life "to represent the longing for life," he said; butterflies to represent freedom; and flowers to represent beauty and femininity.

Peyachew said he is thinking of calling the work *Stolen Sisters*.

The statue is permanently on display in the plaza area beside the police headquarters' main entrance on 25th Street. Speakers at the ceremony described it as a starting point for vigils, walks and a place of hope.

The project was funded by the Saskatoon Tribal Council, the provincial government and the Saskatoon Police Service.

Exhibit: National Inquiry into Missing and
Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls

Location/Phase: Part 2 Regina

Witness: Clive Weighill

Submitted by: Ashley Smith

Add'l info: P02 P02 P0301

Date: JUN 27 2018

Initials

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Entered

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