



## Legislation Text

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**File #:** 16159, **Version:** 1

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### Fiscal Note

No appropriation is required.

### Title

Honoring Harry Whitehorse for deepening our understanding of Madison's rich cultural heritage and for his contributions to the City's public art collection.

### Body

WHEREAS, the renowned Wisconsin artist, Harry Whitehorse, first carved "Let the Great Spirit Soar," commonly referred to as the "Effigy Tree," in 1991 after a Hackberry tree was felled by lightning in Hudson Park, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Whitehorse has maintained his commitment to public access to art and sculpture for nearly two decades, explaining his work to many school children and other community groups, repairing the "Effigy Tree" when necessary, and attending rededication ceremonies on two occasions, and

WHEREAS, in 2007 Mr. Whitehorse generously agreed to repair "Let the Great Spirit Soar" once more, knowing that it would not be able to withstand the natural elements, and would have to be removed from its original site and displayed in a climate controlled environment, and

WHEREAS, at that time Mr. Whitehorse humbly suggested that if the people in the community had the willingness to raise funds to bronze the repaired sculpture, the new piece would stand as a gift for many generations and would send a message about our current values, bidding those who come after us to care for the land and the lakes, just as the effigy mounds, which have lasted for thousands of years, beseech some of us, and

WHEREAS, at the most recent rededication celebration, held on September 26, 2009, at least 250 people attended to honor the artist and the project, including many dignitaries from the Ho-Chunk Nation, the City of Madison, Dane County, the neighborhood, the larger community, the Thundercloud Singers, Ho-Chunk dancers and many of Mr. Whitehorse's family members, and

WHEREAS, over 80 years, Mr. Whitehorse has generously shared himself and his culture with people, from opening his studio to school visits to other public appearances. Mr. Whitehorse described his personal memories of the Four Lakes region, inspiring many of us to feel a deeper understanding and responsibility for the environment we inhabit, and

WHEREAS, Mr. Whitehorse remembers family members describing camping on the land that has become Lakeland Avenue and Maple Avenue, and thus is eminently connected to what he describes as sacred ground near the effigy mounds in Hudson Park, therefore rendering him the most appropriate artist that neighborhood members could have selected to create the monument that now stands, bronzed, overlooking Lake Monona, and

WHEREAS, Harry Whitehorse's "Let the Great Spirit Soar" celebrates the constancy of Ho-Chunk people in Madison and in Mr. Whitehorse's own words proclaims that, "For a good part of the twentieth century, it was a commonly accepted idea by society at large that my relatives, my tribe, and Native Americans would eventually become extinct. Through our own determination, we are still here. The mounds of the ancient ones and the Effigy Tree bronze symbolize our continuity. With the help of our Creator, we will endure."

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, that the City of Madison expresses its appreciation for Harry Whitehorse's contribution to the culture, environment, and public art of the City of Madison in many ways over many years.