



Artist Barney Zeitz and friend, James, work on the installation of his sculpture that will be situated on the southwestern side of Government Center Monday. PHOTOS BY COLIN FURZE/THE HERALD NEWS

‘A LITTLE BIT OF EVERYTHING’

Fall River native’s sculpture installed at Government Center

Jo C. Goode The Herald News
USA TODAY NETWORK

FALL RIVER — A piece of sculpture that honors the diverse cultures in the city was installed on Monday on the cornerstone of One Government Center. Two years in the making, it was the creation of Fall River native and artist Barney Zeitz.

“We wanted to make this for everyone,” said Zeitz. “It’s indigenous people, immigrants, refugees and the enslaved. It’s about diversity and looking to the future.”

With the help of city workers and a few of his friends, Zeitz oversaw the installation of the 9-foot-tall sculpture that was carefully lifted by a backhoe onto the cornerstone overlooking South Main Street.

Zeitz, a 1969 BMC Durfee High School graduate, hand-welded the piece of art in his Martha’s Vineyard studio on his own.

It took about 30 people to move it from his property to where it was displayed on the island for three weeks for public viewing before making its journey to its final home in Fall River.

At the base of the sculpture a quote by Zeitz reads: “To the enduring memory of our

See **SCULPTURE**, Page 2A



A close-up of the sculpture by Barney Zeitz.



Rob Pajor helps with the installation of the Barney Zeitz sculpture.

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Barney Zeitz
Fall River artist

Sculpture

Continued from Page 1A

ancestors who have enriched this land; Indigenous peoples, immigrants, the enslaved, and refugees. Their descendants and newcomers will continue to build a strong and peaceful community.”

“It has a little bit of everything, so that as a viewer, you can look to your past and maybe see someone you know up there,” said Zeitz. “There is clearly someone that looks indigenous, someone that looks of African descent. There is a young Asian boy crouching on the side.”

While his goal was to make the sculpture a positive piece of art, Zeitz said it was important to represent the enslaved who were forced to come to this country.

“It’s remembering that we had slavery, because we love to forget that this country was made by slaves,” said Zeitz.

Barney Zeitz is a self-taught welder

A self-taught welder, Zeitz, 70, began his art career in stained glass. His body of public art work includes an immigrant memorial in Brewster Gardens across from Plymouth Rock, a Vietnam memorial on Martha’s Vineyard, a Holocaust memorial at the Rhode Island Holocaust Memorial Museum in Providence, as well as stained glass, metal pieces and functional art, commissioned for private spaces.

The piece called the “Cornerstone Sculpture Project About Diversity” is directly welded “which is insane,” said Zeitz.

“Most people think this is a caste in a form, but it’s not, it’s all done by hand. That’s the look you get by directly welding and get different color tones,” said Zeitz.



Installation is complete on Barney Zeitz's new sculpture, which was attached to the southwestern side of Government Center. COLIN FURZE/THE HERALD NEWS

The repurposed metals used to create the sculpture are all from the Westport company, Mid-City Steel, said Zeitz.

Former City Councilor Stephen Camara was the first to reach out to Zeitz several years ago with the idea of bringing art to the city’s public spaces.

“It’s incredible what Barney, an artist, can do in terms of taking something like scrap steel and turning it into this magnificently beautiful and poignant depiction of the people that came here or were here, initially.”

Camara said that once the concept of the piece and the location was decided, fundraising began with BayCoast Bank,

BankFive, and local financial advisor Bernard Taradash making the initial donations.

The City Council in 2019 approved the acceptance of the sculpture as a gift to the city.

Camara said about \$150,000 has been raised so far and there is still an opportunity for someone to donate to the project.

Donor’s names will be engraved on the diversity sculpture

Every donor’s name, no matter how large or small the donation, will be engraved on the sculpture.

Donations can be made at Bristol County Chamber Foundation, 200 Poccasset St., Fall River, MA, 02721. Note in the memo line “Zeitz sculpture for Government Center.” An online page is being created for donations. Learn more about Zeitz at facebook.com/barneyzeitzfneart.

Plans are underway to design and install plantings around the sculpture.

A dedication of the newly installed piece of art is scheduled for Sept. 12 at 12 p.m. at One Government Center.

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