



Niagara Health System
Système De Santé De Niagara

MEDIA RELEASE

Tuesday, Sept. 8, 2015

Renowned artist's work on display at NHS's St. Catharines Site

Family of Conrad Furey generously donates artwork to hospital

The work of renowned Canadian artist Conrad Furey is now on display at Niagara Health System's St. Catharines Site, thanks to a generous donation by the late artist's family.

Five pieces of Mr. Furey's artwork adorn the wall in the lobby across from the main patient elevators on the first floor of the hospital. The artwork, which depicts Mr. Furey's memories of his upbringing in his native Newfoundland, was unveiled at an event today at the St. Catharines hospital.

"We are very grateful for this wonderful donation made by Mr. Furey's family," says NHS President Dr. Suzanne Johnston. "The addition of this significant Canadian art will create a lovely atmosphere for our patients, visitors and our NHS team, providing both comfort and a calming effect."

The placement of Mr. Furey's artwork near the entrance to the Mental Health unit was welcomed by Dr. Edgardo Perez, Chief of NHS's Mental Health and Addictions Program.

"The therapeutic benefits of art are tremendous," says Dr. Perez. "These paintings will be used to stimulate therapeutic conversations, in particular with mental health patients."

Mr. Furey was a self-taught artist, with his work bordering on a naif style. His portrayal of the everyday life of eastern Canada marks him as an important national artist. His works, although most definitely Canadian, have a universality that make them appreciated by people from all corners of the world.

Mr. Furey's art is included in prestigious public, corporate and private collections across Canada. His work can also be seen at McMaster Children's Hospital, Hamilton General Hospital and the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton, where he had undergone treatment for cancer. Mr. Furey, who lived in Hamilton, passed away in January 2008 of colon cancer at the age of 53.

Mr. Furey's wife, Theresa, said the family donated the work to the NHS to carry on her husband's tradition of giving back to the community.

“For over 30 years, Conrad had supported his community by giving back in ways of donating his work, be it either to raise funds or awareness of an organization,” she says. “He always felt it was a way for him to give back to a community that supported him as an artist. Conrad’s last commissioned piece was ‘Riding the Dragon,’ which hangs in the Juravinski Cancer Centre in Hamilton. It was a piece that was commissioned by the staff depicting Conrad’s journey through cancer treatment. Many patients commented to me on how they found great relief and courage from the piece. I donated his work to the NHS to continue his legacy and his wish to give back to his community for all to enjoy his work.”

ABOUT CONRAD FUREY:

Originally from Baie Verte, Newfoundland, Mr. Furey left home when he was 18 years old. After a brief stint studying commercial art in St. John's, he moved to Ontario where he attended the creative arts program at Sheridan College in Brampton in 1974. He then decided to settle in Hamilton. Mr. Furey was one of the founding members of the Tiger Group, which included Bill Powell, Rick Cook, Wayne Allen and Gundar Robez until 1980. Mr. Furey considered himself to be self-taught, pulled into expression by instinct rather than learned technique, and he rebelled against what little formal training he had. Instead, he followed his own creative agenda. In this pursuit, he employed many artistic media. He painted on canvas and plywood structures, experimented with bronze resin and stone sculpture, and even designed a set of 13 stained-glass windows. His art has a far-reaching effect and can be found hanging in schools and hospitals, local churches and government buildings.

THE ARTWORK DONATED TO NHS

Five pieces of Mr. Furey’s artwork were generously donated by his family to the Niagara Health System. Photos of the donated artwork – titled Dancers, The Trunk, Pitch Fork, Man in Boat and The Rope – are attached to this email.

Media contact: Steven Gallagher, Communications Specialist, 905-378-4647, ext. 43879;
steven.gallagher@niagarahealth.on.ca