

## Sculpture Commemorating CNM's 50th Anniversary Being Erected on Main Campus

**May 22, 2017 – A 20-foot tall, five-piece sculpture installation made of Cor-ten steel and stainless steel is starting to take its place on the southwest corner of the CNM Student Resource Center on Main Campus. Part of the monumental artwork, titled "Growing Strength," was erected last week with installation completion expected by the end of June. A dedication and public lecture will be scheduled in mid-September.**

Albuquerque artist Karen Yank was commissioned to create the work to commemorate the college's 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2015. Damon Chefchis, owner of CMY, Inc., a custom metal fabrication shop, worked directly with Yank in the fabrication of the large art project.

"The sculpture is abstract, combining elements of a mountain topped by a wildflower growing out of a fractured rock. The flower has a petal that drops to the ground flowing into a bench seat," Yank said. "The mountain is a metaphor for CNM's strength and stability and how the college has grown, and the flower represents CNM's fruits of labor and what the school gives back to the community."

The delicate flower also symbolizes the qualities of growth through the learning process. The shape of the entire piece contains curves and angles that are in some places graceful and in others awkward. The complete picture is one of wholeness, intention and fulfillment.

"The sculpture is designed specifically to embody CNM's educational mission and values and was created for this particular location, but it also expresses the strength and vitality of Karen's maturing artistic expression," said Mary Bates-Ulibarri, project director and CNM Libraries branch manager. "The piece is connected to the SRC, and it is intended to be a centerpiece for the Main Campus as the SRC is the hub of student learning."

When it is completed, the sculpture site will include two companion benches fabricated by advanced CNM welding students. People will be able to walk up to the sculpture, touch it, sit on it and see it from different angles. The sculpture will be officially dedicated in mid-September.

Yank is best known for her large-scale, steel-ornamented public sculptures and her artistic contributions to award-winning freeway interchange designs in Albuquerque. She's had exhibitions in Santa Fe; New York City; Scottsdale, Ariz.; Aspen, Colo.; Rutgers University; and the University of Wisconsin.

"The design of my art expresses a context that can be understood in a moment but with layers that can be seen for those who pause to look deeper," Yank said. "My overall goal is to develop a visual language that is compelling within the given environment and community."

The artist was selected for the "Growing Strength" project through a very competitive, formal juried selection process, organized by Arts in Public Places, under the New Mexico Division of Cultural Affairs. She was among six finalists, selected from approximately 200 applicants from all over the country. The selection committee was comprised of faculty, staff and student representatives of CNM, who brought different expertise and diverse cultural and professional perspectives.

"The jury committee chose Karen based on the strength of her past works, the quality of the proposed work and how well it matched the criteria of the committee's prospectus and her willingness and ability to engage the CNM community," Bates-Ulibarri said.

The artwork is funded by the "One Percent for Art Program," which is written into law and managed by Arts in Public Places (AIPP). The State of New Mexico controls the funds, holds the funds on behalf of institution and pays the artists from the fund through the AIPP. The funding comes through the Department of Cultural Affairs Arts Division, which is controlled by the New Mexico Department of Finance and Administration.

The cost of the "Growing Strength" project is \$112,750. Out of this, the artist pays for all materials, subcontracted labor, New Mexico sales taxes, licenses, permits and inspections, site preparation and site restoration. This project's budget was attached to the construction of the SRC. To learn more about how the "One Percent for Art Program" works, go to <http://www.nmarts.org/art-in-public-places/>.

For more information about the artist, visit <http://karenyank.com/>.

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Artist Karen Yank

