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"Unfolding Blessings" by Estella Loretto

Former Albuquerque Indian Health Service Physician Bestows Memorial Bronze Creation Gift to the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center

(Albuquerque, NM - April 16, 2009) An impressive bronze sculpture by renowned artist Estella Loretto (Jemez Pueblo) will grace the east entrance of the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in memory of the Albuquerque Indian Hospital and its former Chief Medical Officer, Dr. Henry K. Bobroff.

The sculpture is being given by Dr. Bernard Eggertsen, who served with Bobroff from 1951-1953 at the Albuquerque Indian Hospital when they were the only two physicians at the hospital during those years.

Eggertsen said he first laid his eyes on Loretto's spiral shaped sculpture at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center last October, while viewing an exhibition celebrating Jemez Pueblo sculptors.

"I was captivated by the piece," he said. "It seems as though the sculpture captured the continual unfolding of life through the centuries, the millennia, apropos to the Indian experience." Eggertsen purchased the sculpture and decided to donate it to the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center in memory of his experience at the hospital and with Bobroff.

Eggertsen said that Bobroff had tremendous ability to get people around him to do what needed to be done. "He was a great expeditor," he said.

The two physicians served Albuquerque Indian School students as well as the surrounding rural and urban tribal communities.

"We accomplished great things during those years," Eggertsen said, "He could have treated me as an underling, but rather treated me as a partner. He had the ability to not only serve the Indians well, but to establish clinics in the field. Above all, he had the ability to inspire people to do well."

According to Bobroff's son Jack, his father had a long and distinguished career in the Indian Health Service starting in 1933 at the Walker River Paiute Reservation in Nevada.

Jack Bobroff said that his father was usually the only physician at reservation clinics on call 24-7. He said his father's career included service in mostly tribal clinics and hospitals including: Rosebud Sioux reservation, Mandan reservation, Chippewa reservation during WWII, Shoshone/Arapaho reservation and in 1949-1953, the Albuquerque Indian Hospital.

He said his father left the Albuquerque Indian Hospital because he was drafted into the military in the spring of 1953.

Bobroff said his father was a strong advocate for Indians . "He opposed the closure of the Indian Hospital in order to combine their services with the Bernalillo County Hospital which is ultimately now UNM Hospital. He thought the Indians would get shortchanged in that move," he said.

The dedication program will include stories by family, friends and professional colleagues and will take place at the Indian Pueblo Cultural Center on Saturday, April 18 from 1:30 p.m. to 3 p.m. in the Silver and Turquoise Rooms.

The public and press are welcome to attend the event.

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