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LIVINGSTON DAILY

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2018 ■ LIVINGSTONDAILY.COM

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After 2 years of planning, statue for Howell icon Duane Zemper to be unveiled Nov. 4

The bust portion of the Duane Zemper statue was combed by Colin Poole, of Santa Fe, New Mexico. He and his wife Kristine were commissioned to create the statue. "We use fine stainless steel tools to remove seam lines left on the wax from the mold, repair any defects (like bubbles) and refine details," Poole said. COURTESY OF COLIN POOLE

Meaningful work of art

Sean Bradley
Livingston Daily
USA TODAY NETWORK — MICHIGAN

Each piece in a statue created to honor Duane Zemper has meaning.

The bronze, 7-foot-tall statue will honor the late Howell resident on what would have been his 99th birthday.

"It becomes an example of how someone who came from very little means can have an impact on a community," Mike Hall said on Tuesday. "It's a celebration of his life and the contributions that this man made to our community, in many ways in a quiet way. A lot of what he accomplished was in the background and behind the scenes."

The statue will be unveiled during a ceremony Nov. 4 on the lawn of the Howell Carnegie District Library.



Zemper recorded and chronicled the profiles of Livingston Countians for well over 50 years. The portrait on the wall just to the right is a self-portrait he took in his studio. FILE PHOTO

If you go

The unveiling of a statue honored Duane Zemper is scheduled for 1 p.m. Nov. 4 on the lawn of the Howell Carnegie District Library, 314 W. Grand River Ave. A reception open to the public is scheduled from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. at the Howell Opera House.

Hall is the chairperson of the Zemp Legacy Committee, created after the 2016 death of Zemper, a renowned photographer whose nickname was "Zemp." The idea for a statue was pursued almost immediately after his death.

The statue — created by Colin and

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EPIC-MRA/FREE PRESS POLL RESULTS

Poll shows big lead for all 3 ballot proposals

Kathleen Gray Detroit Free Press
USA TODAY NETWORK

The three ballot proposals that Michigan voters will face on Nov. 6 — legalizing marijuana, changing the way state and federal legislative district lines are drawn, and providing easier access to voting — are all on a path to victory, according to a new poll commissioned by the Detroit Free Press and its media partners.

The biggest shift in support came on Proposal 2 — the anti-gerrymandering proposal, which went from tenuous support with a 48-32 percent margin in September to a 59-29 percent lead in the latest poll, done by the Lansing-based polling firm EPIC-MRA.

"That's what happens when you do the advertising that they started doing," said Bernie Porn, president of EPIC-MRA. "They have managed to simplify their messaging on a very complicated issue."

The proposal would shift the task of redrawing Michigan's state and federal legislative lines from the political party in power in the state Legislature to a 13-member citizen commission that would be made up of four Republicans, four Democrats and five independents. The final map would have to get approval from a majority of the commission, including at least two Republicans and two Democrats.

"People in Michigan want change. They want politicians who are accountable and that don't gerrymander their voting districts. When people know what Proposal 2 does, they overwhelmingly support it," said Katie Fahy, executive director of Voters Not Politicians, which is heading the campaign to end gerrymandering. "We will do everything we can in the remaining days to tell every person in this state why voting YES on Proposal 2 is the right thing to do — regardless of which party or candidate they support."

The group has been airing commercials on television for a couple of weeks and even has the commercial playing on video screens embedded on gas station pumps.

Those numbers could tighten in the final days of the campaign since the opposition's political action committee — Protect My Vote — began airing ads this week that portray the proposal as an expensive alternative to the status quo in which elected state politicians in power draw the lines.

"The poll isn't surprising given that the supporters had a head start on sharing their message, but we've had an active campaign over the last week to 10 days," said Tony Daunton, executive director of the Michigan Freedom Fund, which is helping bankroll the ad campaign. "Given the blank check nature of the proposal, as that message reaches more individuals, it will res-

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Lauren Caffrey created the lettering on the books in the statue, according to sculptors Colin and Kristine Poole. COURTESY OF COLIN POOLE

Statue

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Kristine Poole of Santa Fe, New Mexico, and owners of Poole Arts — weighs 647 pounds and features Zemper leaning on a stack of books. That image represents his involvement in things such as creating yearbooks and doing sports photography, Hall said.

“Everything in that stack of books is some symbol of him,” Hall said.

The statue also features a camera next to Zemper that is an exact replica of a camera he used in World War II, Hall said.

Creating the sculpture

Kristine Poole said the creation process for the statue took more than two years from idea to finished product.

“It was really us working within the committee to listen to what was important to everybody and incorporate these ideas into the final design,” she said.

The actual creation process started with sketches, then creating a model one-third the size of the actual sculpture, known as a maquette.

In addition, two of Zemp’s sons, Rick and Steve, helped with the final sculpture by using their faces to find subtleties in areas such as Zemp’s face and hands.

After this, images of the maquette were sent to the Zemp Legacy Committee for approval.

Creating the full-scale sculpture started in the spring.

“We sculpt the entire thing over again,” Colin Poole said.

A silicone mold of the sculpture and book stack were created, which were then brought to Arts Castings of Colorado, in Loveland, Colorado, to pour wax for it.

“We came up to review the wax and make sure all the details were there to our satisfaction,” Colin Poole said.

After this, the shell is waxed over, the wax is burned out, the cavity is filled with bronze, the shell is removed, and the bronze version of the sculpture comes out to many pieces then put back together again.

In all, there are nearly 50 Easter eggs in the sculpture that refer to Zemp as a person, the community and the stories he told, Colin Poole said.

“We feel very grateful we get to be part of this project just because it’s part of my life history,” said Kristine Poole, who grew up in Novi and her parents and brother live in Howell.

Renaissance man

Zemper was born in Bay City but

raised in Flint. He attended Eastern Michigan University before the war. A champion cross country runner, he was named an EMU Distinguished Alumni in 2009.

He came to Howell when he married his wife, Tillie, who was a fellow student and daughter of former Howell Mayor Eric Reiner.

Zemper was somewhat of a renaissance man.

A professional photographer in the Howell area for nearly 50 years, Zemper was also an active volunteer with the Howell Area Archives — his work forms the basis of the archives’ photo collection. He saved many historical photos of the Howell area.

He was a decorated World War II veteran, serving as an aerial combat photographer during the war. A flyover of WWII vintage aircraft will occur honoring him and a missing pilot, Hall said.

Locally, he was named Howell Area Citizen of the Year in 1976, named a life member of the Howell Chamber of Commerce, and had perfect attendance at nearly 60 years of Howell Rotary Club meetings.

His family will be on hand to unveil the statue, along with the statue creators and community officials.

The unveiling is scheduled for 1 p.m. Nov. 4 at the library at 314 W. Grand River Ave. A reception open to the public is scheduled from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Howell Opera House, where the documentary, “Through the Lens of Duane Zemper,” will be shown and refreshments served.

Colin and Kristine Poole will also debut their short film, “The Making of The Zemper Legacy Monument,” documenting the process of creating the statue from its conception to completion. They will be available for a “meet the artist” session at the Howell Opera House.

“It’s going to be a truly moving event for Livingston County,” Hall said.

The piece will not just exist on its own.

“It’s really the beginning of a piece of art in a public space,” Hall said.

It will have an educational component in the form of a large book permanently mounted next to the statue that will list all of the donors who made donations toward the project on one side and have Zemper’s story on another.

The story of Zemper’s life for this portion of the project is being written by Joyce Fisher of the Howell Area Archives in the Howell Carnegie District Library.

That portion of the project is planned to be completed within the next six months, Hall said.

Contact Livingston Daily reporter Sean Bradley at 517-552-2860 or at sbradley@livingstondaily.com. Follow him on Twitter @SBradleyLD.