



Janesville Design & Development Center

downtownpossibilities

March 15, 2010

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contacts:

Christine Moore, Managing Director, Janesville Design & Development Center, (608) 756-3721

Janet Harris, Spokesperson, Friends of Judi Kneece, (608) 754-7165

Next Mural to Highlight Role of Women

Two are up, one is coming, and now a fourth mural is underway for Downtown Janesville. The new Janesville Women's History Mural will celebrate the role of women in making Janesville a better community from 1860 to 1890. The project is co-sponsored by the Janesville Design & Development Center and the Friends of Judi Kneece.

The new mural will follow the template of the earlier mural project sponsored by the Design Center. The Heart of the City Outdoor Art Campaign featured three murals celebrating the founding of the community. Each mural highlighted a decade of history from 1830 to 1860 and all of them featured male central figures. Two of the murals have been hung, the first on the north side of the Prospect 101 building at 101 E. Milwaukee St. and the second on the east face of the Janesville Gazette building at 1 S. Parker Drive. The third mural is scheduled to be hung on the backside of the city building at 18 N. Jackson St. by the end of March.

The fourth mural will feature a female central figure. All of its subject matter will reference women's contributions to the community in the late 19th century. A location is yet to be chosen.

"The activities and accomplishments of Janesville women in the late 19th century are part of the story of Janesville," says Christine Moore, managing director of the Design Center. "Janesville women were making some remarkable accomplishments during this time period. You could argue that Janesville women in the late 19th century were in many ways far ahead of their time."

Moore cites the presence of two of the first three female lawyers in the State of Wisconsin practicing here in Janesville. She also cites the presence of a suffrage movement here 50 years before the 19th Amendment gave women the right to vote. Further examples include women organizing for health care and a free library and the predominance of female workers in the textile mills.

"There is just more women's history during this time period than we can possibly include in one piece of art," says Moore.

The sponsors hope to enhance the project and convey the full history of women's contributions to the community with follow-up educational activities targeting both children and adults.

In January the Friends of Judi Kneece approached the Design Center about co-sponsoring a women's history mural in memory of their friend Judi. After Kneece's death in May 2009, approximately 20 women created the Friends organization to discuss ways to keep her legacy alive. Kneece was an active volunteer and leader in many women's and community organizations including the League of Women Voters, American Association for University Women, and the Women's Fund of the Community Foundation of Southern Wisconsin. At the time of her death, she was the station manager for JATV, Janesville's local access television station. The Janesville Women's History Mural will be dedicated in her memory.

"Every woman who has made a commitment to bettering their community will be honored in this mural," says Janet Harris, spokesperson for the Friends of Judi Kneece. "Judi's volunteer service and leadership mirrors the significant contributions of women like her throughout our local history. The mural will reflect the legacies of those women."

The target date for the dedication of the mural is August 26, Women's Equality Day.

A call for artists is being issued. All artists are welcome to apply for the \$2,500 commission. The deadline for the artist applications is Friday, April 23. The final art is due July 9.

The sponsors are seeking to raise \$32,000 for the project. The budget includes art, production, insurance, lighting, promotion, and educational activities. To date they have raised \$8,700.

"We hope this public art piece will inspire everyone to adopt Judi's personal commitment of service to keep Janesville a great place to live," says Harris.

Donations to the project are tax deductible. Checks may be made to "JDDC" and sent to the Janesville Design & Development Center, 18 S. Jackson St., Janesville, WI 53548.

For further information, contact the Design Center at (608) 756-3721 or visit the Design Center's website at janesvilledesign.com.