

## Wellstone's Legacy Nears Fruition

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by Mary Ann Akers And Paul Kane



### Of Paintings . . .

He hasn't won the election, but Barack Obama already is the subject of a portrait titled "President Obama."

"The painting is on hold and ready for when he walks into the Oval Office," says Chaz Guest, the artist who painted it. Guest said the painting will be on loan to Obama from the DuSable Museum of African American History in Chicago "until it is official."

Guest decided to paint the portrait because the senator from Illinois was so appreciative of Guest's portrait of the late Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall. That portrait, which Guest lent to Obama, has hung in Obama's Senate office for three years.

Obama sent Guest a thank-you note for that painting on Oct. 11, 2005, saying: "One of the people whose shoulders I stand on is Thurgood Marshall. . . . Looking at the painting each day provides me great inspiration and comfort."

The painter, who lives in Los Angeles, says the two first met at a fundraiser during Obama's first run for Senate four years ago. He seems confident his portrait will hang in the Oval Office next year.

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Guest said silkscreen prints of the painting may eventually be available.

### . . . and Sculptures

Keep your eyes and ears open walking through the Capitol late in the evenings these days. If you're not careful, you might be run over by a 1,000-pound statue roaming the hallways.

In preparation for the planned December opening of the Capitol Visitors Center, officials are moving two dozen of the mostly marble statues that line the Capitol's hallways into the new underground greeting center for tourists. The acting Architect of the Capitol, Stephen T. Ayers, is overseeing the moves, which are incredibly

labor-intensive.

Monday night, for example, more than half a dozen workers gathered in the second-floor hallway just off the Senate floor to lay down wood planks across the Capitol. Using a large hydraulic lift system, they picked up a likeness of John Middleton Clayton-- a 19th-century senator from Delaware -- and slid it across the Capitol, out the doors and into the visitors center.

Eva Malecki, the architect's spokesman, said the decision on which statues go into the visitors center depends on how recently they were added to the Capitol's collection and which ones reflect "the diversity of the collection and the diversity of the country."

For example, Po'pay-- a 17th-century Pueblo freedom fighter in what became New Mexico -- is the most recent addition, in 2005. It was recently hauled from the Capitol's site of highest honor, the Rotunda, where Jefferson, Washington, Eisenhower and Martin Luther King Jr. are on display, to the visitors center.

In the end, there will be more room inside the Capitol, with 76 statues there and 24 in the visitors center. The next addition, a statue of Helen Keller, soon to be sent up from her native Alabama, will go to the visitors center, Malecki said.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2008/09/24/AR2008092403821.html>