



Churchill statue 'long overdue,' group says

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Byline: Alanna Smith
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A local group of Sir Winston Churchill enthusiasts are raising funds to erect a statue in the wartime British prime minister's honour.

It is estimated the monument would cost \$300,000 for creation, placement and upkeep. The Sir Winston Churchill Society of Calgary has raised \$67,000 so far from private donors, and hopes to complete fundraising efforts and install the statue in time for the 75th anniversary of the Second World War in 2020.

"We're confident in raising \$300,000 simply because Winston Churchill's accomplishments, legacy and connection to southern Alberta, we think, are worthy of celebrating," said Mark Milke, president of the society.

Churchill visited Alberta once in 1929 where he viewed the oilfields southwest of Calgary at Turner Valley, spent time in the Rocky Mountains and gave a few speeches. He was a journalist, painter and, most notably, British prime minister during the Second World War who led Britain to victory.

The revered political figure changed the course of history and Milke believes "it's long overdue" for Calgary to celebrate his legacy and connection to the city.

The project will be entirely funded by private donors, and no city dollars will be sought for its creation. Fundraising efforts will take place over the next six months.

If the funds are secured, the statue will be commissioned to a local artist shortly after and installed when complete.



Churchill enthusiasts raising funds for commemorative statue

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"We're confident in raising \$300,000 simply because Winston Churchill's accomplishments, legacy and connection to southern Alberta, we think, are worthy of celebrating," said Mark Milke, president of the society. "If Winston Churchill, who fought against tyranny in the 20th century, can't be celebrated, then I don't think there is anyone that we can celebrate with a statue."

Churchill visited Alberta once in 1929 where he viewed the oilfields southwest of Calgary at Turner Valley, spent time in the Rocky Mountains and gave speeches. He was a journalist, painter and, most notably, British prime minister during the Second World War who led Britain to victory.

The revered political figure changed the course of history and Milke believes "it's long overdue" for Calgary to celebrate his legacy.

There are a collection of places in the province that commentate Churchill, including Sir Winston Churchill High School in Calgary's northwest, Winston Churchill High School in Lethbridge, Sir Winston Churchill Square in Edmonton and Sir Winston Churchill Provincial Park.

A painting by Churchill of Emerald Lake in B.C. was sold at auction to a Calgary gallery owner for \$87,257 in March 2018. The buyer, Ryan Green, told Postmedia bringing the painting back to Western Canada was "incredibly important."

"It's something we feel Churchill would have appreciated," Green said at the time.

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