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Wildcat Sculpture Unveiled At UNH

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UNH Alumni Association

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Editors: A high-res photo of the new wildcat sculpture is available for download at:
<http://unh.edu/news/img/wildcatStatue.jpg>

DURHAM, N.H. -- There's a wildcat poised at the corner of Memorial Field in Durham, and on Saturday, October 14, the bronze sculpture will be officially unveiled at a dedication ceremony. The wildcat sculpture is the first project to be administered under guidelines established by the university's Committee for Campus Aesthetics. The ceremony will take place from 11–11:30 a.m. in front of the sculpture. The event is free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served.

Festivities for the dedication event include the UNH marching band, the UNH cheerleaders and Wild E. Cat. Remarks will be made by interim UNH President J. Bonnie Newman and Gregg Sanborn, executive director of the UNH Alumni Association. A group of New Hampshire Notables—both current students and alums—will conclude the ceremony with the UNH alma mater.

The university's wildcat sculpture is the first piece of commissioned artwork on the UNH campus, according to Sanborn. The \$160,000 project was funded entirely with private gifts, including support from the Edward '42H and Selma '42 Bacon Simon Fund, many alumni donors, the Alumni Association, and the UNH Parents Association. "We are delighted to have commissioned this stunning piece of work," says Sanborn, "which offers tangible proof of the pride we all feel in the university."

The sculpture was created by Matthew Gray Palmer, of Friday Harbor, Washington. Chosen by a committee of UNH staff and faculty members, alumni and parents, as well as professional artists, Palmer was among 40 artists who submitted proposals for the project. "We were looking for something compelling and charismatic, something that reflects the values of the university community," says University Archivist Elizabeth Slomba, chair of the committee. "The quality of his work really impressed us."

Palmer, who specializes in large public works of art, hopes his latest 850-pound creation will not only touch people—but be touched by them, literally. "The public work I do gets an artistic expression out where people can touch it, feel the patterns, put their arms around it."