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UNH Announces Wildcat Sculpture Finalists

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DURHAM, N.H. — The University of New Hampshire and its Alumni Association have announced the names of the four artist-finalists under consideration for the commission of a larger-than-life sculpture of the wildcat, the university's mascot. The finalists are: Forest Hart, Monroe, Maine; Matthew Gray Palmer, Friday Harbor, Wash.; Sandy Scott, Loveland, Colo.; and Robert Shure, Woburn, Mass. The finalists have been invited to present their proposals, discuss their work and answer questions with the community on April 15 and 22, 2005.

The commission is made possible through funding from the Edward and Selma Bacon Simon Fund, gifts from Alumni Association classes and chapters, and a grant from the UNH Parents Association. The sculpture will be installed in front of the Whittemore Center, adjacent to Main Street on the Durham campus. The committee expects to finalize its decision and award the commission in May 2005. Installation and dedication are tentatively scheduled for June 2006.

"It is an additional benefit to be able to host these nationally known artists, and hear firsthand about how they create their sculptures," says Elizabeth Slomba, university archivist and Wildcat Sculpture Art Program Committee chair. "Our students, faculty and staff as well as our wider community will have the opportunity to learn from their insights and come away with an increased understanding of the value of public art."

All presentations will be held in the university's Memorial Union Building in Durham. On Friday, April 15, UNH will host Forest Hart from 9:30-11 a.m. and Robert Shure from 1-2:30 p.m., in the Wildcat Den. On Friday, April 22, Sandy Scott is scheduled to present from 9:30-11 a.m. and Matthew Gray Palmer will be available from 1-2:30 p.m. in Room 203.

Forest Hart has dedicated his life and career to the appreciation and study of wildlife and art. He incorporates movement, texture and lasting materials into his work and shares his enthusiasm for wildlife sculpture by teaching seminars throughout the United States, Canada, England, and South Africa.

Matthew Gray Palmer gained his experience designing and executing commissioned sculptures and architectural elements while working at Old World Stone Carving in Ohio. His work has been featured on the Home and Garden Network's program, Modern Marvels. His current commissions range from the miniature to the monumental.

Sandy Scott is among the nation's best known wildlife sculptors, with commissions placed around the world. During the past two years she has completed 11 larger-than-life sculptures for

public placement, most recently in front of the Clinton Presidential Library in Little Rock, Ark.

Robert Shure earned a master of fine arts in sculpture from the School of the Museum of Fine Arts and Tufts University. During his 25 years of experience he has completed many commissions from schools and universities, museums, libraries and numerous institutions and parks.

The wildcat sculpture is the first project to be administered under guidelines established by the university's Committee for Campus Aesthetics. The guidelines are based on successful public art programs at other universities and those administered by state and federal agencies. The guidelines are designed to promote the thoughtful development of the university campus.