



# City of Slidell

Dept. of Cultural & Public Affairs • Press Release for Immediate Release

Kim Bergeron • kbergeron@cityofslidell.org • www.slidell.la.us  
P.O. Box 828, Slidell, LA 70459 • 985.646.4375 • Fax 985.646.4231

## PRESS RELEASE

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Contact: Kim Bergeron, 985-646-4375

### **Slidell Katrina Memorial to be dedicated August 27** ***Sculpture donated by Colorado artist John Doherty***

When the City of Slidell's "Where Are They Now?" exhibit opens on Friday, August 27, one of the show's featured sculptures will be conspicuously absent from the Slidell Cultural Center gallery. That's because unlike the other works, which are on loan from St. Tammany alumni now enjoying successful arts careers throughout the United States, this sculpture will become a permanent part of Slidell's history. It's "Fleur de Triomphe," a Hurricane Katrina memorial sculpture that now stands beside the city's 9-11 Memorial in Heritage Park, in an area that will now be known as the park's Memorial Plaza. The dedication ceremony will take place on Friday at 9:30 a.m., with Mayor Freddy Drennan taking a few moments to reflect upon the city's progress since the storm, followed by a prayer by Councilman Bill Borchert and a moment of silence. The event is open to the public.

Artist John Doherty, a 1984 Slidell High School graduate who now resides in Denver Colorado, created and donated the piece to help the city commemorate the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina, in recognition of the city's comeback following the seemingly insurmountable damage caused by the storm. The sculpture is crafted from a 24" steel pipe, stands 13' 4" tall and weighs in at 1,200 pounds. It is crowned with a curved fleur de lis, and at the 7 foot mark, there's a hurricane symbol and a line which depicts the actual water level reached in the area of the park in which the statue stands.



"While I recognize that all of our citizens would rather forget that Katrina ever happened, it's now an undeniable part of our history," said Mayor Drennan. This memorial gives us a way to recognize the event in a way that celebrates all that we achieved to overcome the adversity. That 7 foot water mark is also a way to share with visitors the almost unfathomable depth to which this storm impacted our city. Though I know we still have much to achieve, this anniversary marks our many triumphs thus far. The name of the sculpture, which means 'Flower of Triumph,' implies."

Doherty says he thought it was fitting to create the work with raw, rusted steel. "This is not unlike all of the tons of rusted steel along the bayou you could see for many years at the old shipyard where I worked summers as a college student. I think the rusty brown color will blend in with the tree trunks along the bayou."

Shortly after the storm, Doherty began creating the works, twisting the fleur de lis to suggest the extreme rotational energy of the hurricane. For the next few years, the artist donated the proceeds of

PRESS RELEASE – ADD ONE

several sculptures, along with some of his artwork, to help with the region's rebuilding efforts. His work can be seen on his website, [www.twistedfleurdelis.com](http://www.twistedfleurdelis.com).



In addition to the artist's donation of his services, the materials and services were donated from four other operations throughout the U.S. The 24" steel pipe was donated by Pipe & Piling Supplies (USA) Limited, based in Omaha, NE. Integrity Burning Services of Commerce City, CO, made the mounting flange (the base plate). Highland Pipe and Steel of Denver, CO, donated additional steel, welding supplies and the use of forklifts and other fabricating supplies. Acme Truck Line, Inc., of Lafayette, donated shipping of the sculpture from Denver to Slidell. The base for the sculpture was built by the City of Slidell's Public Operations Department and the Trusty Labor Program.

"I think the generosity of all of these companies is absolutely remarkable," said Mayor Drennan. "That they remember us, even five years after the storm, is humbling. Their contributions toward helping us recognize this inescapable moment in our city's history is inspiring, and greatly appreciated."

Photos:

Top: detail of the Fleur de Triomphe sculpture, showing the 7' water line mark;

Bottom: Work crews complete the finishing touches of the sculpture installation at Heritage Park Memorial Plaza. Left to right: Mike Teague, Donnie Marshall, Eddie Oggs, Assistant Director of Public Operations Gene Swann.

