College seeks donors for art exhibit

WNC project travels to new places

SUBMITTED BY WNC

The “Always Lost” art exhibit debuted at the Western Nevada College galleries in 2009, offering a solemn, eloquent account of the effects of the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Now, the exhibit has captured the attention of other colleges and universities, and plans are being made to display it throughout the United States.

“Always Lost” is a powerful multimedia experience created by WNC creative writing and sociology students that tells a story about war. Photographs of combat along with prose and poetry capture the human element of war that is often lost.

Pictures of the more than 5,000 American service members who have perished in the wars are displayed in stark, compelling murals.

WNC English Professor Marilee Swirczek and instructor Kevin Burns are leading the effort to transform the show into a traveling exhibit, and they rely on volunteers to keep the images current and prepare the show for transport.

Burns, a former Marine, explains, “We have spent thousands of hours finding the faces of those killed in the wars for the ‘Wall of the Dead.' We are diligent; it has become our mission to ensure we include photos of all the service men and women who have given their lives.”

Of the national interest, Swirczek says, “We could not have imagined this project would touch so many people and spark interest throughout the U.S. What started as a collaborative class project became a collective experience with which people in the community and beyond not only identified, but even found closure.” In addition, the Dallas Morning News has given WNC permission to utilize images of several Pulitzer Prize winning war photographs in the exhibit.

Donors are needed to help fund the remounting and packing of the images and literary works for shipping and display. The Nevada Arts Council, a division of the Department of Cultural Affairs; and the National Endowment for the Arts have awarded WNC a grant to support the project. The funding requires that 100 percent of the $3,051 grant award be matched through fund-raising.

To support the effort to make “Always Lost” available for other communities, donate online at www.wnc.edu/foundation or contact the WNC Foundation, (775) 445-3240. Reference the “Always Lost” campaign.