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NDCA announces the *Yggdrasil: The Norwegian-American Carvings of Gaylord “Guy”* exhibit at the SHSND

The North Dakota Council on the Arts (NDCA) secured a permanent art gallery at the State Historical Society of North Dakota’s (SHSND) Heritage Center and State Museum in Bismarck, ND. The NDCA, in partnership with the SHSND, uses this gallery space to highlight the arts and artists of North Dakota.

The second exhibit through this partnership, opens on Saturday, January 30, 2016. This exhibit, titled *Yggdrasil: The Norwegian-American Carvings of Gaylord “Guy” Paulson*, will be on display for one year. The exhibit will feature traditional carvings such as *tine* boxes, tankards and a *kubbestol* (Norwegian stump chair).

Gaylord “Guy” Paulson lives and creates in Fargo, North Dakota. His grandparents and their seven children, including Guy’s father, left Norway in 1904 seeking land and opportunity. Guy was born in 1937 to Kristian and Evelyn Paulson and was raised on a farm and ranch in Philip, South Dakota, near the Cheyenne River Breaks. It was from there that Guy’s grandfather and uncles cut Rocky Mountain Juniper trees to make fence posts for their land in the western part of the state. Settled predominantly by Norwegian-Americans, the area was named Haakon County after the popular Norwegian King Haakon VII.

Guy began his education in a one-room schoolhouse, attended high school, went on to earn a Bachelor’s Degree, Master’s Degree, and eventually a Doctorate in Biochemistry. He worked for more than 30 years as a research scientist studying drug metabolism in animals at the USDA Metabolism and Radiation Research Laboratory in Fargo. Yet his informal education, that of Norwegian woodcarving, spans over 40 years. He learned from books, trial and error, and especially by associating with other carvers.

Guy was the driving force behind the building and carving of a full-scale replica of the Hopperstad Stave Church of Vik, Norway, in Moorhead, Minnesota. Stave churches, defined by the use of vertical posts, originally were built in the 1100 and 1200s near the end of the Viking Age in Scandinavia. The documentary about the building of that church, “Building a Dream: The Moorhead Stave Church,” will be available for viewing at the Heritage Center in association with the exhibit. In addition, a publication featuring Guy’s work, and the work’s place within a Norwegian-American cultural framework, is being developed to accompany the exhibit and copies will be available at the exhibit this spring.

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The North Dakota Council on the Arts is the state agency responsible for the support and development of the arts throughout North Dakota, and is funded by the state legislature and the National Endowment for the Arts.