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MAQUOKETA

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Portraits exhibited at Smithsonian

By DOUGLAS MELVOLD

“Portrait of Maquoketa,” Rose Frantzen’s exhibit of 180 portraits of Maquoketans, went on display in the National Portrait Gallery of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C.

An estimated 70 Maquoketans made a whirlwind visit to Washington to attend festivities that accompanied the opening.

“This is just so amazing,” exclaimed Jack Willey, who was one of Frantzen’s portrait subjects and who attended the festivities.

“Are we having fun?!” Frantzen said as she moved among people crowding into the exhibit rooms, being greeted by fellow Maquoketans, posing for pictures and answering questions about the exhibit.

“Portrait of Maquoketa” will remain on display through July 5, 2010 as part of an exhibition called “Portraiture Now.”

The festivities included a gala private reception attended by those whose portraits were painted to recognize Frantzen and two other artists whose collections of portraits opened at the same time.

During the two-hour reception Maquoketans talked excitedly about the project in the large courtyard of the National Portrait Gallery building and visited the two rooms on the first floor



The National Portrait Gallery is part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C. It holds approximately 20,370 artworks and last year hosted approximately 1 million visitors. The Portrait Gallery is the only museum of its kind in the United States to present American history, biography and art. The museum will be home to the “Portrait of Maquoketa” exhibit by artist Rose Frantzen through next July.



Many of the Maquoketans who traveled to Washington, D.C. last week for the opening of the “Portrait of Maquoketa” exhibit pose for a group photo on a staircase of the recently-opened visitors center at the U.S. Capitol. Artist Rose Frantzen, her husband, Charles Morris, and her mother, Ellen Frantzen, are in the lower right. The Maquoketa visitors took advantage of their visit to tour the Capitol and many of the memorials, monuments and other attractions in the Washington area.



MSP photos by Douglas Melvold

Maquoketa artist Rose Frantzen, fourth from left, poses with members of her family in one of the exhibit room at the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. at the opening of her “Portrait of Maquoketa” exhibit on Nov. 5. From left are Frantzen’s older brother, John Frantzen of Los Angeles, Calif.; her youngest brother, Army Sgt. Tim Frantzen of Fort Bragg, N.C.; Charles Morris, Rose Frantzen’s husband; Rose Frantzen; her mother, Ellen; her father, Wayne; her younger sister, Joanne Goodwin of South Portland, Maine, and Joanne’s husband, Todd Goodwin. Two of Rose’s brothers were unable to attend the opening because of prior commitments. They were Steven Frantzen of Prague, Czech Republic, and Jerry Frantzen of Chicago.

where the unframed oil paintings are displayed in clusters on all four walls.

A few of the portraits are mounted near the entrances to the display rooms to indicate what’s inside.

The long-awaited opening was a special event to many residents. Thirty-five residents rode to Washington by bus on a six-day, five-night chartered tour arranged by the Maquoketa Art Experience.

In addition to the Nov. 5 reception and the Nov. 7 opening program, the group toured the U.S. Capitol, White House visitor’s center and many Washington monuments and memorials.

Jack Willey, a Jackson County supervisor, and his wife, Marilyn, who both own and operate a beauty salon, used the occasion to take their first vacation away from home in 33 years.

A special reason for the trip to recognize Frantzen is that she baby-sat their children when they were young.

Tom and Mary Fadale, also on the bus trip, have been next-door neighbors of the Frantzens for years.

“Our kids grew up together, got into trouble together,” laughed Mary. “We wouldn’t have missed this for the world.”

U.S. Rep. Bruce Braley, D-Iowa, attended the reception and presented Frantzen with a framed and mounted copy of the tribute to her and “Portrait of Maquoketa” that was published in the Congressional Record.

“Every day, I learn a little more about your town,” said Brandon Brame Fortune, a curator and acting director of the National Portrait Gallery.

Fortune visited Maquoketa as part of the process of approving “Portrait of Maquoketa” for showing at the Smithsonian gallery. She was one of three curators who studied the exhibit before approving it for display.

“She is such an energy force in the community,” Fortune said of Frantzen. Her idea was fabulous. It’s just a wonderful work.”

Based on the attendance of 996,000 visitors the National Portrait Gallery hosted last year, Fortune estimated that 700,000 people could be expected to view “Portrait of Maquoketa” during its eight-month showing.

■ GALLERY, Please turn to page 16



Jack Willey of Maquoketa focuses in on one of the portraits of Maquoketans that will be displayed through July 5 at the National Portrait Gallery. The gallery lifted its restriction on photography for the opening of “Portrait of Maquoketa” and portrait collections of two other artists that also went on display this month at the Washington, D.C. gallery. Willey was among 35 Maquoketans who traveled by chartered bus to the exhibit.