



## MEDIA ADVISORY

### CRANE MEMORIAL DISPLAY REPRESENTS COVID DEATHS IN SIX COUNTIES

#### *Artist Creates New, Smaller Commemoration for Waukee Public Library*

#### **WHAT:**

Since Autumn 2020, thousands have viewed the [Folding Cranes, Enfolding Community](#) exhibit that commemorates the lives of Iowans who've died from COVID. Fine artist Pam Douglas' colorful origami crane memorial continues to travel across the state. Now, in collaboration with the [Waukee Public Library](#), Douglas will install a new, smaller display along with an approximately 12-foot educational COVID timeline on April 3, 2023 and where it will remain available for viewing through May 30, 2023.

Douglas has hand-folded 406 colorful origami cranes for the library's meeting room gallery, representing [COVID deaths](#) as of March 23, 2023, in Dallas County (160) and the surrounding counties of Boone (71), Greene (28), Guthrie (48), Madison (47), and Adair (52).

"The Iowa COVID Crane Memorial is a meaningful and beautiful artistic tribute to the value of each life lost in the pandemic," says Alex Coggeshell, Adult Services Librarian for the Waukee Public Library. "We are honored to host the crane memorial in our art gallery, as a place of reflection and hope for our community."

To date (as of March 23, 2023), there have been 10,769 Iowans who've died of COVID. The crane memorial continues to grow as it's "migrated" from [Sacred Heart Catholic Church](#) in West Des Moines and at [Reiman Gardens](#) in Ames, then to [Des Moines Area Community College](#) in Ankeny. It's been hosted by [Loras College](#) in Dubuque since last summer with a total 10,655 cranes. From a 12-foot curtain of cranes in its earliest version, the full display now consists of dozens of column-like structures and other configurations evolving to accommodate its new space.

#### **WHO/WHY:**

The exhibit incorporates a variety of colorful folded papers, with each handmade crane honoring the memory of an Iowan who tragically died from the disease. When possible, the cranes include the handwritten names of Iowans lost to the virus. Artist Pam Douglas began folding cranes when much of the state was in lockdown, starting in early 2020. She continues to fold cranes as loving works of art as part of the Iowa COVID memorial. She says, "This project continues to expand. Even though society may want to move past this challenging issue, there are still Iowans dying from this disease and their family and friends are mourning."

Douglas wanted to convey that these Iowa deaths were not just a statistic—they were people who loved and were loved. Douglas chose the crane for her artwork because the bird, with its broad wingspan, carries significant symbolism in many cultures.

Douglas explains, "Globally, the origami crane holds significant symbolism for healing and hope. In 1945, a Hiroshima nuclear bomb-victim engaged in the tradition of folding 1,000 pieces of 2-dimensional paper into beautiful 3-dimensional forms to hope or wish for healing. Similar to the classmates who chose to complete the 1,000 cranes for her after her death, I chose to show solidarity in offering this memorial to those who left us and those who remain to grieve. As COVID deaths continue to happen, I vow to continue to fold cranes to honor the individual dignity of each Iowan lost to COVID until this pandemic becomes classified as an endemic."

#### **WHEN:**

Exhibit is open at the Waukee Public Library on Monday, April 4 through Monday, May 30, 2023.

#### **WHERE:**

Waukee Public Library, Meeting Room Gallery, 950 Warrior Lane, Waukee, Iowa

The Art Gallery is open Monday through Friday 9am to 3pm, Saturday 9am to 12pm, and Sunday 12pm to 4pm. If the meeting room is in use, the gallery will be closed to the public.

Please call the Library at 515-978-7944 if you plan to visit at a specific date/time to ensure it is available for viewing and the room is not in use.

**CONTACT:**

Alex Coggeshell, Waukee Public Library: 515.978.7932 or [acoggeshell@waukee.org](mailto:acoggeshell@waukee.org)

Lore McManus Solo, Crane Memorial PR: 515.229.3169 or [lore@thesoloconsultancy.com](mailto:lore@thesoloconsultancy.com)

**Waukee Public Library Art Gallery Hours**

Monday-Friday | 9 AM - 3 PM

Saturday | 9 AM - 12 PM Sunday | 12 - 4 PM (September-May)

\*If the meeting room is in use, the gallery will be closed to the public.

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