

To: Mayor and City Council Members

Date: July 6, 2009

Re: Scotty Backens Memorial Statue



Reason for a Memorial Statue:

To serve as an inspiration and provide a visual reflection, not only for persons with disabilities, but also to the general community as a whole. Serves as an awareness that "everyone" can be a contributing member to their community no matter what circumstances and challenges individuals face on a daily basis.

Scotty was an individual with a deteriorating disability; however that did not stop his desire to live each day to the fullest. He had a positive attitude, saw the best in people, and was an active and integral part of the Rapid City area for his entire life. Citizens who knew Scotty would often see him navigating his wheelchair on the city streets throughout the day and evening hours. Scotty faced daily challenges many of us can only imagine, however his daily routine always involved "reaching out" to the community. He remained focused on his "Abilities" and his enthusiasm and optimistic attitude would serve as an inspiration to others.

Scotty Backens was active in the following areas:

- Board Member-Rapid City Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities with numerous mayors to improve accessibility and inclusion,
- enjoyed working out and visiting community members at the YMCA,
- visiting the Club for Boys exchanging stories and creating an awareness for youth not to be afraid of a person with a disability,
- participating in Hills Alive Festival, (one of the key factors in determining the Memorial location),
- Board Member for Western Resources for dis-ABLED Independence (currently there is an annual golf tournament in his memory),
- Participant-Meeting the Need -camping for people with special needs,
- Participant-Ski for Light-providing winter and summer recreational opportunities for persons with visual, mental, and physical disabilities.

We all need a portion of Scotty's inspiration and optimism to continue our zest for life. Take each new day as a unique challenge and create more opportunities.



CITY OF RAPID CITY

RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57701-2724

Rapid City Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities
300 6th Street – Office of the Mayor
Rapid City, South Dakota 57701

June 18th, 2009

Dear City Council Members:

My name is Tom Collings; I am currently Chair of the Rapid City Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities. Recently, a request for a letter of support to establish a Scotty Backens Memorial was presented at our Committee meeting. Scotty Backens, was a resident of Rapid City resident and long standing member our Committee. Scotty passed away three years ago. Scotty was known by many and admired by all that were blessed with his acquaintance.

Scotty was an active member of our Committee and supported and assisted with all of our functions to the fullest extent possible. Scotty always found the time to visit, whether it be on a street corner or on a basketball court. He was blessed with the gift of genuine kindness and respect. Scotty will forever be remembered for the flag atop his wheelchair, the bandanna that he wore, the smile that he always had, and the handshake that he always offered. The Rapid City Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities will be forever thankful to Scotty for all of his efforts put forth to assist those with disabilities in the Rapid City area.

For these reasons, the Rapid City Mayor's Committee for people with Disabilities is offering its full support to establish a Scotty Backens Memorial in Rapid City.

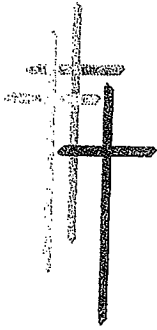
Sincerely,

Tom Collings, Chairman

Rapid City Mayor's Committee for People with Disabilities



EQUAL OPPORTUNITY EMPLOYER



TRINITY LUTHERAN CHURCH

402 Kansas City Street, Rapid City, SD 57701

(605)342-9302

trinityluth@rushmore.com

Web Site: tlcrapidcity.ctsmemberconnect.net

June 22, 2009

Office of Mayor and the City Council
City of Rapid City

Dear City Leaders,

We at Trinity Lutheran Church had a long time relationship with Scotty Backens and continue that relationship with his family, Bruce and Sandra. Scotty was an active member of our church for over fifteen years. At his funeral in April of 2006 there was standing room only in our large church. We see that rarely. We can think of only one other time in the past thirty years.

Bruce has kept us informed regarding the hope and work to place a statue of Scotty somewhere visible to all. At Scotty's funeral, many of our people spoke of the loss to future generations who would not get to know Scotty. We asked the family to help us get a copy of the drawing of Scotty used at his funeral and from which the sculpture will be made. Yearly, we use the framed picture we now have to tell our youth of what a hero and role model Scotty was.

If Scotty were only a handicapped person who did the best he could with the hand he was dealt, he would not have stood out from many others. Scotty did not think of himself as handicapped, but rather as blessed. With great courage and faith, he gave life all he had, never showing any sense of feeling sorry for himself, but always looking for ways to encourage others. Ours was not the only church he asked yearly to share with youth a message of hope and encouragement.

It was easy for those who met Scotty to feel loved by him and to love him in return. Even so, we feel that he touched not only friends and family, but the entire community in the way he lived among us.

It is unusual when one person is able to touch an entire community. It is amazing when this person had a debilitating disease and lived half his life in a wheel chair.

Scotty lived many years in our downtown area, across from Memorial Park. We believe the location in question is the perfect place for 'Scotty' to continue to touch our community, making a difference for all of us, for years to come.

Sincerely,

Wilbur Holz, Pastor

Penny Steinken, Parish Assistant



Tim Pederson, ^{ATP}
Chief Executive Officer
318 Mount Rushmore Rd. Suite E
Rapid City, SD 57701
605.342.7004 FAX: 605.342.7032
tpederson@westmedrehab.com

Office of the Mayor and the Common Council
City of Rapid City

June 9, 2009

Dear City Leaders:

It is my understanding that a group is interested in placing a statue of Scotty Backens in Memorial Park. I am writing in support of this effort.

Scotty was more than a friend, a community leader, and a client. Scotty was an inspiration to all of us to persevere in spite of unthinkable hardships. Scotty lived his life with grit, determination, and sheer joy. Scotty was an example to all of us that life's challenges can be overcome.

I first met Scotty when I was a young boy. My father did some writing for the sports section of the Rapid City Journal. My brother and I would frequently accompany our dad to various sports events. Dad met Scotty through his work at the Journal because Scotty would frequently be the Public Address announcer at Black Hills State. Dad would frequently offer Scotty a ride to various events because he could not walk very well, and Dad enjoyed his company.

In my childhood years I saw the Scotty that many people never knew. He had trouble walking, but I assumed he had a nagging injury. We never discussed it. At that time, Scotty knew that his Friedrich's Ataxia would eventually not only claim his mobility; it would ultimately claim his life. This never stopped him from enjoying life and looking after the well-being of others.

This sculpture of Scotty is not a tribute to a single man. In my own occupation I work with many people who have profound disabilities. These people either knew Scotty personally or knew him through others. Scotty was and continues to be an inspiration to all of them. This statue is a monument to all of those with similar struggles in everyday life. It is a monument to the notion that when all hope is lost, we can still dare to hope and dream about a better future.

I'm not saying that we should erect a monument to every person who has ever had to use a wheelchair. What I am saying is that the placement of this monument will inspire others with similar struggles to see past their disability and dare to live a normal life. This is what Scotty Backens has done. We must remember his undying spirit and optimism. This is the legacy that he has left us. We should be proud as a community that we were honored to have Scotty among us, and this sculpture is the least we can do to repay the legacy he left behind.

Scotty would be humbled and probably a bit embarrassed to know that these plans are being made to memorialize his life. In his view, he wasn't disabled. Rather, Scotty's attitude was that his struggles were just a mere inconvenience. He was just like the rest of us except he couldn't walk. In a sense, this monument honors all who have ever had to live their life in a wheelchair.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Tim G. Pederson".

Tim G. Pederson, ^{ATP}
CEO



Meeting The Need

Working to provide a unique lodging experience for people with disabilities.
Helping to fill the need for special equipment for people with disabilities

June 17, 2009

Good Morning Mayor Allan Hanks & Common Council,

On behalf of Meeting The Need and our board of Directors, I would like to voice our whole-hearted endorsement of the proposed Memorial Statue for Scotty Backens. This project will greatly contribute to continuing Rapid City's tradition of helping the disabled community.

My confidence in the worthy merits of this memorial derive from many years spent developing organizations dedicated to improving the lives of the disabled. Over 30 years ago, I began my involvement with an appointment to the Mayor's Committee for the Employment of the Handicapped under Mayor LaCroix. I became even more actively involved in helping the disabled through spearheading the inception and development of the Ski for Light Program which is now in its 31st year of running. Most recently, I have developed Meeting The Need which provides a destination place for people with disabilities in a historic mining mountain environment that is totally handicapped accessible.

These years of experience have given me a unique perspective on the needs of the handicapped community. This need is not merely to be given equal opportunity or access, but also to be recognized as contributing, pivotal members of the larger Rapid City Community.

The proposed memorial statue will do just that. It will not only recognize the importance of Scotty Backens, a man who gave his heart, smile and time to those around him, but will represent Rapid City's recognition of the importance of its' disabled community members.

Thank You,

Dallas Dietrich
President, Meeting The Need

JULIUS & SIMPSON, L.L.P.
ATTORNEYS AT LAW

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RAPID CITY, SOUTH DAKOTA 57709
(605) 716-1000 TELEPHONE
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MARGO TSCHETTER JULIUS
MICHAEL J. SIMPSON

EMAIL: margo@juliussimpson.com
mike@juliussimpson.com

June 17, 2009

Office of the Mayor and Common Council
City of Rapid City
Rapid City, SD 57701

Dear City Leaders:

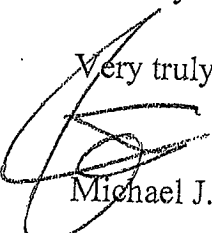
I am writing in support of placing a statue of Scotty Backens in Memorial Park.

Several years ago, I served on the Board of Directors of Western Resources for disAbled Independence, a local group that helps disabled individuals. I helped with organizing the first annual Scotty Backens Memorial Golf Tournament in June of 2006. This was shortly after Scotty passed away on April 21, 2006.

Although I never knew Scotty, in organizing the Tournament and contacting sponsors, I came to understand how well known and respected Scotty was in our community. Almost every person I contacted about the Tournament knew Scotty and had a personal story to share. Scotty obviously was not the only disabled individual in our community who has dealt with adversity in a positive way. However, I think he was surely the most visible and, as such, I think it is very appropriate for us to remember him with the statue in order that he can inspire other in the future.

Thank you for your consideration.

Very truly yours,



Michael J. Simpson

MJS/rjk



P.O. Box 90
701 St. Joseph Street
Rapid City, SD 57709

June 17, 2009

Marcia Elkins
City of Rapid City
300 Sixth Street
Rapid City, SD 57701

RE: Scotty Backens Memorial

Marcia:

Bruce Backens has visited with me regarding a memorial for his brother, Scotty Backens, in Memorial Park. As part of that process, Bruce has requested a letter of support for that project.

I met Scotty in 1976 when we were residents in a dormitory at Black Hills State College. At that time, Scotty was not handicapped, although by the following Spring he was rapidly beginning to lose mobility.

Scotty "cruised" his wheelchair throughout Rapid City for many years. Many of us recall his bright colored clothes and flags on his wheelchair to warn motorized vehicles of his presence on the streets! Scotty was very active in promoting handicap access through out our City, was a local "DJ" and known to many.

For many years, I helped Scotty track his personal finances. Almost every Friday afternoon, Scotty would stop by my office to get his check book register current, and talk baseball and football. I have never known anyone who had so many things go "bad" in their life, and be able to maintain such a positive attitude. Scotty was always smiling and glad to visit. Scotty always left my office with me realizing how lucky I was, and, how lucky I was to have Scotty as a friend.


A life-size bronze statue is proposed of Scotty in his wheelchair, to be placed in Memorial Park as recognition of handicapped people and their ability to positively contribute to Society. I can not think of a more deserving handicapped individual to be recognized as a source of inspiration for all of us. Scotty truly made an impression on many of us in the Community and we should not forget his spirit.

I fully support the project and propose the Memorial be dedicated as part of the 2010 Heritage Festival – for those of us who knew Scotty; he would have really liked it that way.

Please feel free to contact me at (605)394-2036 if I can be of assistance with this project.

Sincerely;

U.S. BANK NATIONAL ASSOCIATION



Doug Jackson
Vice President



YMCA

We build strong kids,
strong families and strong communities.

June 22, 2009

Dear City Leaders:

I am writing to show my support in placing a statue of Scotty Backens in Memorial Park.

For several years, Scotty would come into the YMCA and work out. Some days, the work out consisted of just a few minutes of strength exercises while on others it was a couple of hours chatting with friends in between sets. Everyone in the Wellness Center knew Scotty and thought highly of him.

Scotty was able to provide inspiration and motivation to all who knew him. His consistency in working out taught others that no matter what happens in life, you must take care of yourself in order to enjoy the life you have. He always had cheerful words for anyone that would listen.

I believe Scotty will still provide inspiration and motivation, not only for those with disabilities, but to all who see the monument.

Sincerely,

Nicole Craig
YMCA Wellness Director

YMCA of Rapid City • 815 Kansas City Street • Rapid City, South Dakota 57701
605-718-YMCA • fax: 605-348-6578 • Website: www.rcymca.org



YMCA mission: To put Christian principles into practice through programs that build healthy spirit, mind, and body for all.

John Lopez Sculptures

Life-size bronze monument of **Scotty Backens** in a wheelchair.

Estimated cost of life-size bronze \$55,000.00 to \$65,000.00 depending on extra bronze added for a base. Because of the steadily rising cost of bronze, this estimate will be recalculated if the job is delayed beyond 2009.

Time schedule..... If commissioned to sculpt this piece I will sculpt it in the winter months so the piece could be ready to unveil in late summer of early fall of 2010 depending on approval by city council. I need at least six months lead time to create this piece.

Payment schedule..... I will require half down to start sculpting the life-size clay monument. Then another forth of the total will be due just before the clay goes to the mold maker. The last forth will be paid upon installation. The sculpture will not be cast in bronze until all the fund raising for the bronze is completed.

If you have any questions please feel free to call or e-mail me.
jhnlpz@aol.com

John Lopez, Sculptor

John Lopez 6-9-09

Bruce Backens

Bruce Backens

Notary

Barbara J Wamsley 6/23/09

John Lopez Sculptures
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Eagle Butte, SD 57625
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Home (605) 964-7333
www.lopez-ranch.com
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Proposed location of
Scotty Backens
Memorial

36

OMAHA ST

7 ST

6 ST

Copyright (C) City of Rapid City
Parcel lines are not adjusted to match aerial photography

0 48ft