

Michael Halady
Artist Bio

Duwamish Nation Master Carver, Michael Halady, is a fifth-generation descendent of Chief Seattle. Based in Port Orchard, he is an enrolled member of the Duwamish Tribe and has spent his career working to restore Duwamish art, inspired in part by his mother, Mary Lou Slaughter, who is a celebrated Master Weaver.

Halady loves to carve and takes pride in his culture and heritage. Halady began carving in 1994, "Something moved me at that time to carve an Indian killer whale, which I did with an X-Acto knife." After discovering his talent for carving, Halady created several pieces and entered some in competition. He took the second place prize at a Portland art show and created a welcome figure for the Kirkwood family home in South Kitsap. Halady worked in construction jobs in Seattle and around the country before meeting [David Boxley](#), a totem pole sculptor from Alaska. From Boxley, he learned the art of northern tribes, but information about designs favored by Puget Sound-area tribes was hard to find.

In 2006, Halady carved the Story Pole for the Admiral Way Viewpoint in West Seattle, a 65 foot welcome pole that tells the story of the Duwamish tribe, Seattle's indigenous peoples, and the first pioneers who landed at Alki Point in 1855. Halady said that for the story pole, he drew on the few symbols of Puget Sound-area indigenous art he found on the posts of longhouses and on spindle wheels, which were used by the Duwamish to spin wool. It's the first story pole in memory that was carved by a member of the Duwamish. The Coast Salish people are known for their Welcome Figures — shorter carvings, with outstretched arms — and a more minimalist style of art.

Halady's new work—*[Spirit of the Duwamish](#)*—was recently installed at the entrance to the KCIA Terminal Building. A story pole carved from 600-year-old cedar, the form of the sculpture references the house posts that held up two Duwamish longhouses on the site until at least 1855.

Coast Salish peoples traditionally use story poles and welcome figures to educate and welcome people to their lands, and Halady's artwork features two potent symbols: The top symbol represents an ancient supernatural being, "Changer," a major figure in the cosmology of Puget Sound First Nations who is known for transforming our world before changing himself into the Moon. The second symbol on Halady's story pole represents the collective spirit of the Duwamish in human form with arms raised in the traditional sign of welcoming and lips pursed to indicate a greeting song.

MICHAEL HALADY















*Michael Halady
Pillars of Promise
Proposal, Dictated to Alison Post*

“On the one side, I’d like to paint it red, solid, and then put a black Native design up and down, like a Salish design. And then on one side I’d like to put the Welcome Figure that I do, and maybe some other designs. And then on one side I’d like to do a Keeper of the Songs, and thensong bats and spirit figures raising up. And then on the other side I’d probably do the same design, or I might do salmon design with salmon net.”

[Michael Halady Audio Proposal:](#)

