

March 16, 2020

## Historic Mungo Martin pole is restored to its rightful position

VICTORIA, BC—Today, after months of conservation work, the Royal BC Museum repositioned an original Mungo Martin pole in front of **Wawaditł̓a** (Mungo Martin House), on the grounds of Thunderbird Park.

**Significantly, two of the central figures in the pole’s conservation this winter are closely related to the original carvers: Chief David Knox is Mungo Martin’s great-grandson, and Mervyn Child is Mildred Hunt’s son.**

**“It’s an honour to walk in my great-grandfather’s footsteps to preserve our heritage,” said Walas̓ Namugwis, Chief David Knox of Fort Rupert. “It’s important to teach the world our cultural traditions, especially young learners who are curious to know about carving and the history of the poles.”**

**“The Royal BC Museum is recognized as a world leader in the repatriation and the conservation of Indigenous belongings, sacred treasures and ancestral remains,” said Royal BC Museum CEO Prof. Jack Lohman. “We occupy this role because we believe this is a critical route to repairing relationships with Indigenous communities and living the values of the UN Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”**

**“The arts are key to the vitality of cultures,” said Lisa Beare, Minister of Tourism, Arts and Culture. “It is exciting to see this pole worked on now by generations of carvers. Our government is proud to support the Royal BC Museum in its work with Indigenous peoples to preserve these treasures.”**

**The pole, known as the Kwakwaka’wakw Heraldic Pole (pole 20122), was carved in 1952-53 by Mungo Martin, his son David Martin and his niece, Mildred Hunt.**

The conservation work in 2019-2020 included the removal of moss and other organic debris, drying out the pole, carving new elements, a fresh coat of paint, and a reinforced **“strong back”**—the steel support beam attached to the pole’s back side.



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Members of the Royal BC Museum's Conservation, Facilities and Indigenous Collections and Repatriation departments consulted with and worked alongside Chief Knox and Mr. Child to ensure the museum was handling the pole appropriately at all stages.

For more information about the history of this pole, the figures featured along its length and the history and status of other poles in Thunderbird Park, visit [royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/first-nations/events/conservation-thunderbird-park-poles](https://royalbcmuseum.bc.ca/first-nations/events/conservation-thunderbird-park-poles).

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About the Royal BC Museum: The Royal BC Museum explores the province's human history and natural history, advances new knowledge and understanding of BC, and provides a dynamic forum for discussion and a place for reflection. The museum and archives celebrate culture and history, telling the stories of BC in ways that enlighten, stimulate and inspire. Located in Victoria on the traditional territory of the Lekwungen (Songhees and Xwsepsum Nations), we are a hub of community connections in BC—onsite, offsite and online—taking pride in our collective histories.

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