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1-1-2003

# Talking Points for "Wake Dance" Dedication

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Owens, John, "Talking Points for "Wake Dance" Dedication" (2003). *John Owens: Speeches & Appearances.* Paper 92.
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Talking points for "Wake Dance" dedication
Wednesday, Oct. 22, 2003
"Wake Dance" statue site, East Campus, Lincoln
John C. Owens, NU Vice President and Harlan Vice Chancellor, IANR

*When the Morrill Act was passed in 1862, creating the land-grant university system which includes our own University of Nebraska, part of the language of the bill read: "... *the leading object shall be, without excluding other scientific and classical studies, and including military tactics, to teach such branches of learning as are related to agriculture and the mechanic arts, in such manner as the legislatures of the States may respectively prescribe, in order to promote the liberal and practical education of the industrial classes in the several pursuits and professions in life.*"

– You will see the words "the leading object" on the doors of this campus as a reminder of our roots in the Morrill Act as the land-grant university OF NEBRASKA.

– Listening to that language from that original bill, you see the far-sighted founders of the land-grant system linked [redacted] scientific, and classical studies from the very beginning, realizing that

and that there is an art – and science – to both. Our campus is known for science and the high-tech work we do, but when you look around – at "Wake Dance" and "Ascot," another sculpture to the west of here – at our Maxwell Arboretum, the art you find tucked away in various buildings, at the treasures housed in our International Quilt Studies Center and the Robert Hillstad Textiles Gallery, and at the general sense of the artistic seen in the layout and design of our campus – you see WHY [redacted] we recognize and SO HIGHLY value art. We know that people's values, our tastes, even our judgments, are shaped by the arts and humanities as well as by the science, technology, and business that defines so much of this campus. Indeed, people tell me that Earl G. Maxwell, for whom the Maxwell Arboretum is named and who began the Arboretum by planting trees on this campus over 60 years ago, was a scientist and expert in arboriculture and forestry who had the heart of a poet, and loved to recite from memory the poems of James Whitcomb Riley.

all are part of the whole that makes an educated individual capable of lifelong learning.

*We are so pleased to have "Wake Dance" on our campus, which we think is itself a work of art. This is a wonderful place in all seasons. In my mind's eye I already picture "Wake Dance" in winter as it stands black against the white of snow, drawing the eye up to the stark lines of leafless trees set against gray [redacted] skies. We see the sculpture now in the fall, warmed by late October sun, as the trees themselves add both color and grace to our days. In the spring this campus is splashed with horticultural art as lilacs bloom, and in summer flowers and green add to the setting, making this a wonderful spot to pause, to reflect, to think and indeed to discover.

*Isn't that what art prompts each of us to do – to pause, to reflect, to think, to discover? Our Agricultural Research Division has used the phrase "the art of applying science to people's lives" to show how much we recognize the intertwining in our lives of both art and science,

*I'd like to tell you a little bit about our campus today. Originally it was the Moses M. Culver farm. The Regents purchased it in 1874, noting in a report then that *"The farm contains 320 acres, for which $55 an acre was paid. The farm is well adapted to the purpose of the College, and is in a high state of cultivation..."*

*Often called the farm campus in its early years, it was divided into 40-acre test plots, pioneering work to develop a hog-cholera serum, with numerous crop and livestock experiments to explore Nebraska's rich agricultural promise. That is a promise we continue to enhance today.

CHARLES BESSEY - Botanist
George BEADLE - Nobel Laureate

*Just south of our Agricultural Communications Building, the red brick building to the west which is the oldest building now on campus, built in 1899, is a replica of the porch of a white-frame-house originally built in 1875 as a dormitory for students enrolled in the then College of Agriculture. Availability of affordable-housing brought the first-handful of agricultural-students to the university, and those

students had the benefit of hands-on experience as they studied – something we are proud to still provide our students today. The College Catalog of 1875 said the students in that old house long since demolished and now celebrated by our replica white porch were *"far enough away from the city to be out of the way of its temptations to idleness and worse, and yet near enough to enjoy all its literary and public advantages."*

*Early on beauty was seen as an important part of our campus; by 1910 the core of our campus – the Mall – was taking shape as W.H. Dunman, a former worker on the estate of King George VII and campus landscape gardener until 1946, directed the development of horticultural art here.

*We are so pleased to have Sculptor John Henry's "Wake Dance" on our campus as part of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln's Sheldon Memorial Art Gallery and Sculpture Garden, and to have John Henry here with us today. Perhaps I'm prejudiced, but I think East Campus is the prefect setting for this work.

– And we at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln are so pleased to have more than 30 sculptures by national and international artists installed throughout the UNL campus; most of those works are located near the Sheldon Art Gallery, and add a great deal to our campus. In fact, our campus sculpture collection helps distinguish UNL.

*It is my privilege to have this opportunity to welcome you to East Campus and to celebrate with you the placement of "Wake Dance" here. Thank you for joining us today as we celebrate.