

Saturday, July 12, 2008

# Greendale Eagle icon rededicated

## Memorial being refurbished

By Thomas Caywood TELEGRAM & GAZETTE STAFF



**Preservation Worcester put the memorial on its 2008 Most Endangered Structures List because of the crumbling masonry in the base.**

**WORCESTER** — The black granite Greendale Eagle looked as polished and vigilant as ever, perched on its globe just off West Boylston Street yesterday morning on the 60th anniversary of its installation.

But the distinctive war memorial's masonry pedestal is showing its age after six decades.

The mortar is cracked and missing in places, some stones have crumbled and the walls are bowed out by decades of water seeping into cracks and freezing during the winter. Rather

than soaring above the surrounding landscape, the eagle now perches in the shadow of shrubs and plantings that have grown taller than the statue over the years.

The Worcester Cultural Commission and a group of veterans from the nearby American Legion Post 319, who held a rededication ceremony at the memorial yesterday, are working to design and build a new base for the statue by acclaimed Swedish designer A.L. Carl Milles.

"We want to work on preserving it and protecting it," said Gloria Hall of the Worcester Cultural Commission. "It's a beautiful piece, but you can't see it. With the greenery, it gets lost."

The restoration effort began with a \$7,500 state grant. The group hopes to have plans for a new base of some sort and a cost estimate for the work by the end of the year, she said.

"The monument itself is in perfect condition. It's just the base," American Legion Post 319 Commander Russell T. Henderson said.

Mr. Henderson said the original drawings for the memorial indicated the polished granite extends to the ground from beneath the globe on which the eagle sits. So, the masonry structure is built around the sculpture, as opposed to supporting it, he said.

"We're hoping the city will be coming into the picture to help us with the structure," said Mr. Henderson, who served as a U.S. Navy corpsman, a medic with the Marine Corps during the Korean War and Vietnam War eras.

Craig S. Millner, a local writer and photographer who conducted a photographic survey of all the city's outdoor artworks, said the stylized black eagle stands out to him.

"This is one of the most artistic of our outdoor sculptures. Despite that, it's a war memorial, it's a fantastic piece of art in its own right," Mr. Millner said.

Although the statue has come to be known by some in the city as the "Norton Eagle" because the former Norton Co. was a sponsor — and the president of the company was a friend of the artist — the sculpture was dedicated in 1948 as the Greendale War Memorial, Mr. Millner said.

One of the elderly veterans at yesterday's ceremony brought a program from the original dedication ceremony 60 years ago.

Preservation Worcester put the memorial on its 2008 Most Endangered Structures List because of the crumbling masonry in the base.

In his prayer during the ceremony, the Rev. C. Richard Risas, who grew up in Greendale, noted that the memorial's location, steps off busy West Boylston Street, ensures that thousands of people pass it every day.

"May they remember," he prayed.