

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**25' SAILOR AND NURSE CAUGHT KISSING
IN MEMORIAL PARK**

**Royal Oak, Michigan to Host Giant Icon
Kissing Couple Will Bring Attention to WWII Memorial**

Royal Oak, Mich. (June 14, 2016) — On Monday, June 20, 2016, the dramatic *Embracing Peace* sculpture by renowned American artist Seward Johnson, will be installed at Memorial Park at the northeast corner of Woodward Avenue and 13 Mile Road in Royal Oak, Michigan adjacent to the future home of **The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial**. The sculpture itself, as well as the installation process, will be visually stunning and will present an opportunity for spectacular television and still photos with the best times being around 9:00 a.m. when the statue arrives and 11:00 a.m. when it is hoisted via crane into position.

Beginning Monday morning, the towering figures will arrive from the artist's studio in New Jersey and a huge crane will lift the sailor and nurse into the air. A collaboration between The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial, the City of Royal Oak and The Seward Johnson Atelier, a not for profit entity that encourages the placement and sharing of public art, has brought the enduring kissing couple to the city.

The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial is the state's officially recognized tribute to its contributions during the second world war. It honors Michigan's role both on the war front and the home front as the Arsenal of Democracy and the home of Rosie the Riveter.

Debi Hollis, President of The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial remarked, *"We are so excited to have this iconic statue come to the site of The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial. We are grateful that the Seward Johnson Atelier chose this location as one of only four venues in the world to display this work. It's a perfect spot and will build further awareness for the memorial throughout Royal Oak, Oakland County and the entire state. We believe the enthusiasm about the statue will help drive the fundraising we need to complete this project. We are also planning some exciting events around the statue. Keep an eye on our website, www.michiganww2memorial.org, and Like Us on Facebook for details."*

Royal Oak Mayor Jim Ellison echoed these sentiments, *"For many generations the image of a kissing couple has been a symbol of VJ Day and the euphoria that erupted in Times Square and across the nation with the news that WWII had finally ended. We are happy to except*

stewardship of this 25-foot statue and the opportunities it brings for the next several months to grab the public's attention to The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial."

The Foundation's Curator, Paula Stoeke, notes, *"One key purpose of public art is to initiate dialogue within communities. This monumental sculpture is provocative in its very presence, and should turn heads as well as start conversations. Royal Oak is creating a special opportunity for visitors to interact with the sculpture and be affected by its symbolism. We hope that part of the result will be the telling of individual stories from the greatest generation, to those that follow."*

In the words of sculptor Seward Johnson: *"I am excited to have this sculpture in Royal Oak to bring attention to the project to build **The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial**, to highlight this important historic moment, and to honor our veterans of every era."*

A passion for detail, an uncanny realism of pose and a striking palette are qualities often connected with the works of American sculptor Seward Johnson. Well-known for recreating life in our times in vividly realistic bronze, Johnson steps back into history with his work entitled ***Embracing Peace***, to pay homage to the veterans of World War II. At a time when we are losing these heroes in great numbers – statistics suggest that 1200 people of this generation pass daily – it is an ideal time to honor their service and sacrifice. With this sculpture, Seward Johnson breaks the barrier of the two-dimensional, delivering a captivatingly lifelike, monumental three-dimensional interpretation of the iconic image that encapsulated the joy of the conclusion of the war, and the homecoming. This artwork honors the memory of the past, reminding us of the sacrifice of a nation, and awakens a younger generation to a turning point in our nation's history.

"With this work, I wanted to evoke a time of unity. The moment captured in the embrace of these two strangers encapsulates the spirit of having fought a successful campaign defending our values, and celebrates the expression of sheer joy at the homecoming." Seward Johnson

Local funding has been generously provided by Jack and Annette Aronson.

"We've been proud supporters of The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial for the last three years," Jack Aronson said. "Sponsoring the installation of this iconic statue near the site of the memorial was another great opportunity to help raise awareness and funds for the project."

About The Seward Johnson Atelier and Artist Seward Johnson:

The Seward Johnson Atelier, Inc., was created to promote the appreciation of, and education about, sculpture and public art in general, utilizing the creation, maintenance, sales and public placement of Seward Johnson's artwork as its instrument.

For additional information about the artist or the sculpture, contact:

THE SEWARD JOHNSON ATELIER, INC.

Paula Stoeke

310.264.2400

info@sewardjohnsonatelier.org

www.sewardjohnsonatelier.org

About The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial

The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial will provide a year-round multi-purpose destination that will tell Michigan's unique story while encouraging visitors to both commemorate and celebrate their freedom. It will also serve as an inspiration for future generations, enlightening us all about these hallmarks of remarkable patriotism, selfless sacrifices and extraordinary devotion to liberty that helped save the world.

For additional information about the memorial or to donate, contact:

The Michigan WWII Legacy Memorial

Debi Hollis, President

248.568.7764

debi.hollis@michiganww2memorial.org

www.michiganww2memorial.org

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