

= Kwakiutl (statue) =

Kwakiutl (or variously KwaKiutl) is a totem sculpture by Aboriginal Canadian artist Simon Charlie , which has caused controversy for its nudity over multiple decades of display in Chinguacousy Township , and later Brampton , both near Toronto in Ontario , Canada . Charlie , also known as Hwunumetse ' , later received the Order of Canada . The 9 @-@ foot @-@ tall cedar wood sculpture is best known for its exposed male genitals .

= = Creation = =

Named after a native Canadian , Chinguacousy Township was rapidly growing due to the Bramalea development , initiated in the late 1950s and early 1960s . A statue was commissioned for a new township hall , with Simon Charlie as artist . Charlie was a sculptor of the Cowichan Tribes of the Coast Salish peoples . The Indians of Canada pavilion at Expo 67 included a totem pole and " welcome figure " carved by Charlie and two Kwakwaka 'wakw (Kwakiutl) artists . For the 1971 centennial of British Columbia , Charlie and thirteen other carvers were commissioned to carve totems presented to each of the other nine provinces , two territories , and the federal government . Internationally collected and displayed , he had already been awarded the Canadian Centennial Medal .

The figure depicted by the statue is that of a nearly @-@ naked Aboriginal man , and the name of the sculpture refers to a Pacific Northwest coast tribe . He wears a wide @-@ brimmed Kwakwaka 'wakw hat , and a cape . The sculpture features outstretched arms and exposed male genitals . The statue is made of cedar wood , and 9 @-@ foot tall .

= = Exhibition and reception = =

The Township of Chinguacousy unveiled the sculpture on July 19 , 1972 , in front of roughly 100 spectators . It was originally intended to be placed at the doors of the Chinguacousy Township municipal offices .

Reverend Edward Robinson of All People 's Church , in attendance , described the sculpture as " disgusting " . The Reverend insisted that the sculpture violated Christian principles , morality , and decency . According to The Globe and Mail :

He left the event relatively promptly . The Globe and Mail ran an editorial commenting they were " striving (against the wicked odds that only Toronto can provide) to view the situation with proper seriousness . But Mr. Robinson has not been making it easy for us . " The paper suggested that Robinson 's insights " doubtless would have stopped Michelangelo in his tracks and branded him as nothing more than a dirty chisler . "

Reeve Robert Williams suggested ferns and flowers indigenous to British Columbia would be brought in , and planted around the statue . Williams insisted the flora would not obscure anatomy . Township Council voted to place the statue in a " suitable place " in the yet @-@ to @-@ be @-@ opened municipal offices . The sculptor suggested that he was not even sure what a fig leaf looked like , an often suggested addition , and no coverage was requested during the commission .

By late August , the statue had developed a crack in its back . According to a Canadian Press report , " One civic official said it was probably the weight of the moral controversy , rather than the weather , which broke Kwakiutl 's back . "

On January 1 , 1974 , the Town of Brampton , some of the Township of Chinguacousy , a portion of Toronto Township , and most of Toronto Gore Township merged into the City of Brampton . Municipal offices for Brampton were moved to the Civic Centre , and the statue moved into the Chinguacousy branch of the Brampton Library , within the same building . Shirley Morriss was the curator of the facility , until 1991 .

Tom Drynan was named Executive Director of the Brampton Public Library system in July 1993 . In August that year , Drynan decided to evict the sculpture , after three years at the entrance of the art gallery at the Brampton Library branch . In a letter to community services commissioner Donald M.

Gordon , Drynan wrote : " I am sure that the statue has artistic merit and needs to be preserved . However , it is quite inappropriate in its present location within the newly renovated gallery . Its presence dominates any other exhibits which are placed in the area . I hope we can find a solution without having yet another tempest in a teapot . "

A report was approved by Brampton City Council during a council meeting on August 16 , 1993 . The report suggested that in British Columbia , such sculptures are frequently displayed outdoors . As Chinguacousy Park bears an Aboriginal name , it was deemed appropriate for the sculpture to be used at the entrance of the nearby area . It was to be bolted to a 1 @. @ 5 @- @ metre high (five @- @ foot high) tree stump .

At some point before May 2010 , the sculpture was moved into the Chinguacousy Park greenhouse . Former mayor Peter Robertson questioned where the statue was located , during a 2011 meeting about the " Southwest Quadrant Renewal " , an expansion of Brampton 's City Hall .