



Whittier Union HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

To Achieve and Maintain Excellence...

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: Sept. 1, 2020 **CONTACT:** Juliette Funes, William Diepenbrock **PHONE:** 909-445-1001

Whittier Union Teacher Creates New Female Sculpture to Promote Campus Diversity

WHITTIER – Pioneer High School has welcomed a new bronze icon on campus – Titania – whose uplifting presence completes a spirited triumvirate on the school’s center quad that includes the Titan Torch and Titan sculpture.

Both iconic bronze sculptures – which serve as a source of pride and inspiration to students and staff – were designed and created by Pioneer resource teacher John O’Brien.

“Pioneer High has received a new mascot and she is fabulous! Titania brings a whole new dynamic and aesthetic to the campus and sends a message of diversity and inclusiveness,” Principal Lilia Bozigian said. “I am so thankful to have such a terrific and diligent artist in John O’Brien, who has made such a huge impact here at Pioneer.”

O’Brien – who worked as a professional sculptor for 15 years before joining Whittier Union in 2004 – began working on Titania in 2015. The meticulous work – over 1,000 hours in total – entailed creating a life-size wax figure, which was then molded and cut into 12 sections. These were cast in bronze and welded back together by Francisco Heredia at Original Cast Foundry in Buena Park.

Embedded onto Titania are symbols that resonate with Pioneer students. The torch, which Titania holds in her left hand, is engraved with the words, “Believe in Yourself” and points the way toward the future. On her right hand, Titania holds a sword with a Lion on the hilt, symbolizing both Pioneer’s famous Leo’s Club and the work needed to make that future happen.

The sculpture was funded with donations from the Class of 2020.

“I look at the sculptures as symbolic touchstones for the students, a way to give them strength and courage. Titania teaches us to believe in ourselves,” O’Brien said. “I’m very proud of my work, but I couldn’t have done it without the tremendous support from the District and our amazing principal and admin team.”

Titania stands on a podium that was constructed and installed by the Whittier Union SEC-Facilities department, led by manager of construction services Danny True.

PHOTO CAPTION

– MORE –

090120_WUHSD_TITANIA: Pioneer High School teacher and sculptor John O'Brien created a female sculpture named Titania, joining the male Titan sculpture that has stood on the campus quad for the last 10 years. The bronze sculpture was funded with donations from the Class of 2020.

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OUR MISSION:

The Whittier Union High School District provides all students with an engaging, quality standards-based instructional program delivered by a well-trained staff resulting in improved student achievement. Whittier Union High School District works to achieve and maintain excellence in providing a comprehensive education for all students.

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