

Kanata EMC

Local artist presents tulip to U.S. Ambassador

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EMC News - Artist Jill Alexander was inspired to dream big dreams and those dreams are coming true each day for the Kanata Civic Art Gallery artist. She is the official artist for the Tulip Festival and recently presented her 2009 'Obama tulip' to United States Ambassador to Canada David Jacobson. She was also able to pass on to Jacobson a photo book on the tulip for President Barack Obama and Oprah Winfrey.

Alexander reminisced how Oprah talked about the book 'The Secret' for the very first time a few years ago and it changed her way of thinking.

"I had my "Ah Ha" moment. I realized that your thoughts become things. All these things were really of my doing because I was putting it out there. I wanted her to know for that reason

because what she believes in helped me. I wanted her to know about the tulip and why it was so significant," said Alexander.

In early 2003 she decided to go into art on a full-time basis. Prior to that, she had worked in retail for 21 years. She was encouraged to take her art into the Kanata Civic Art Gallery.

"I walked into the gallery from there and was encouraged to be juried. I was conflicted whether or not I should do it but I got in and then I got into other galleries and it just snowballed from there," said Alexander.

Judi Miller, chair of the Kanata Civic Art Gallery, thinks it is a pleasure to have Alexander as a member of the gallery. She feels she adds an array of whimsical illustrations and most often big bright and joyful creations.

"I think she just lends an array of vibrancy to the gallery, her work is different than anyone else's there and it's always a joy to have something different," said Miller. "She is thoughtful, she is not just doing a tulip but she has put some thought into. She thinks about what she wants to say and expresses that through her artwork. I think it's great to get out there and say something."

The 'Obama tulip' was created for the president's visit to Canada in 2009 and was to be a gift to the American people. Although there was discussion that the tulip would be sent to the White House, Sophie Nadeau, U.S. Embassy Media Relations Manager, says that the tulip will be on display at the U.S. Embassy in Ottawa.

"It is fantastic and we want to keep it here. It's a thrill. Jill has worked so hard on it and we are proud to be a part of her artistic work. The ambassador is in love with the tulip and it's a great piece of work," said Nadeau.

Nadeau is confident that the White House has had a look at the photo book and the second was sent to Winfrey, a close friend of Jacobson.

This year Alexander created a tulip to commemorate the 100th anniversary of the Canadian Navy. The Navy may move that tulip to Halifax for when Queen Elizabeth II visits Canada or she may see it when she tours Ottawa.

Alexander considers herself a seasonal resident of Castleford and is currently in the process of building a house there where she will have a studio looking out over the Ottawa River. In her perfect world she will soon have studio tours, workshops and do some book illustrations. For now she continues to dream big and wonders who the next person is she will capture with her brush.

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Courtesy of Matt Alexander
Official Canadian Tulip Festival Artist Jill Alexander presents U.S. Ambassador David Jacobson her 'Obama Tulip,' a gift for the American People.

"The Governor General, the Pope or the Queen... I can see an amazing tulip for the Queen with the emblems and the crown. It will all come to me when it is time."

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