



## **VICTORY THROUGH HONOUR**

*Ellen Neel (1916–1966), 1948*

Ellen Neel ‘Kakasolas’ was born November 14, 1916, in Alert Bay, BC. Ellen’s parents were Charlie Newman ‘Nulis’ from the Kwagiulth, ‘Namgis and Heiltsuk people; and Lucy James ‘Lalaxsa’ from the Kwagiulth and Kwickwasutaineuk people. Ellen was the oldest of three children; her two younger sisters were Margaret (Peggy) Newman and Louisa Newman.

Ellen began carving at an early age, approximately 12 years old, learning from her maternal grandfather, Charlie James ‘Yakuglas.’ Her carving and designing lessons took place after school, on weekends and during various holidays throughout the school year. Ellen attended St. Michael’s Indian Residential School in Alert Bay and was known for having completed her time there with top grades.

While the exact numbers are not known, it is estimated that during the course of her approximately 25-year career, Ellen carved at least 25–30 totem poles ranging from 4’ to 18’—these were direct commissions that were installed in locations around the world.

Ellen was at the forefront of advocating for the rights of Native artists, and for promoting other Native artists whenever she had commercial retail space available for hers and her family’s work. In addition to her support of Native artists, Ellen was also a strong advocate for education—always encouraging Native peoples from across the country to pursue education.

Today, Ellen’s grandchildren and great-grandchildren continue the family tradition of carving, painting and the creation of a wide range of artworks for ceremonial purposes and for commercial sale.

*Issued on the occasion of the 75th anniversary of the gifting of the Victory Through Honour totem pole to the students of UBC, and the gifting of the Thunderbirds name to the Varsity Teams of UBC.*

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## **THUNDERBIRD TAKES FLIGHT**

*Deanna-Marie Point, 2023*

The thunderbird was created by Mother Earth and Father Sky to communicate their love for each other. It was the messenger between the two and showed the love and life on earth. Father Sky controls the weather and the four seasons. Without the seasons, we could not survive. If someone saw thunder and lightening in the sky, it meant that Mother Earth was sending a message to Father Sky. And if they were lucky enough to spot the thunderbird, it brought wealth and good fortune.

### **ABOUT DEANNA-MARIE POINT**

Deanna-Marie Point is a xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam) artist with experience in 2D design, jewelry carving, mural painting, and other visual mediums. She comes from a family of artists—her mother is a master weaver trained in Musqueam weaving and design, and her father is a carver. Deanna was raised with cultural and ancestral teachings, which deeply inform her artistic practices. At a young age, Deanna developed a passion for visual art and would sit with her father and his teachers to learn about traditional Coast Salish art and its history. Her work has been featured throughout Musqueam territory, including on TELUS fleet vehicles and virtually in a fictional representation of Musqueam's soccer field for the the *FIFA 23* video game.

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