

One hundred-thirteen years after her death, Paiute activist Sarah Winnemucca recently crossed the paths of two people laboring to portray her.

Last week, Adrienne Wahnetah, a 15-year-old student at Carson High School, met Benjamin Victor, a 25-year-old sculptor from South Dakota.

Wahnetah, dressed in American Indian clothing, stared up at a 6-foot-4 sculpture Victor has worked on for four months in a corner of the Nevada State Library and Archives.

Wahnetah will wear the same native

clothing as the statue in Saturday's Nevada Day parade when she portrays her great-great-aunt Winnemucca.

"It's beautiful," she said as she peered with intent curiosity at the statue.

The likeness between Wahnetah and the image before the sculptor was stunning. And when the girl spoke, her knowledge of Winnemucca flowed.

"What I admire about her the most probably was the way she stood up for her people and had to fight for them," Wahnetah said.

She recently re-established the Native American Club at Carson High and is co-host of a talk-show 9 a.m. Saturday mornings on KPTL AM 1300 that works to bring ethnic groups together.

Victor, who said he has experienced moments of complete agony and total ecstasy while working on the Winnemucca sculpture, has four months of work to

go, including bronzing, until it becomes part of the Statuary Hall in the U.S. Capitol in Washington, D.C.

He will be the youngest sculptor to have his work permanently displayed there.

"It's such a huge honor," he said. "I don't think anything I ever do will replace the specialness of this piece."

Winnemucca, born in 1844, worked toward peaceful relations between her people and Anglos. Her grandfather, Chief Truckee, wanted peace with the newcomers, but her father was wary of them. She spoke out for her people wherever she went, until her death in 1891.

Victor's statue shows Winnemucca with a shell-flower, from which her Indian name comes, in her outstretched right hand and a book tucked against her hip with her left hand.

Winnemucca was the first American Indian woman to write a book in English,

he said.

After reading a book on Winnemucca's life, Victor decided she should be in motion and used wind as a symbol.

Wahnetah and Victor found much to talk about when they met. Victor asked her about the fringes of her dress, and if she thought they were similar to those Winnemucca wore in a photo.

Wahnetah gave Victor a bag of pine nuts, a traditional Paiute food. She asked him about the statue, how difficult the details on the bottom of the dress were to do, and how tall it was.

"How tall are you?" Victor asked her.

"Five-two," she said.

"Sarah Winnemucca was just a little under 5-2," Victor said.

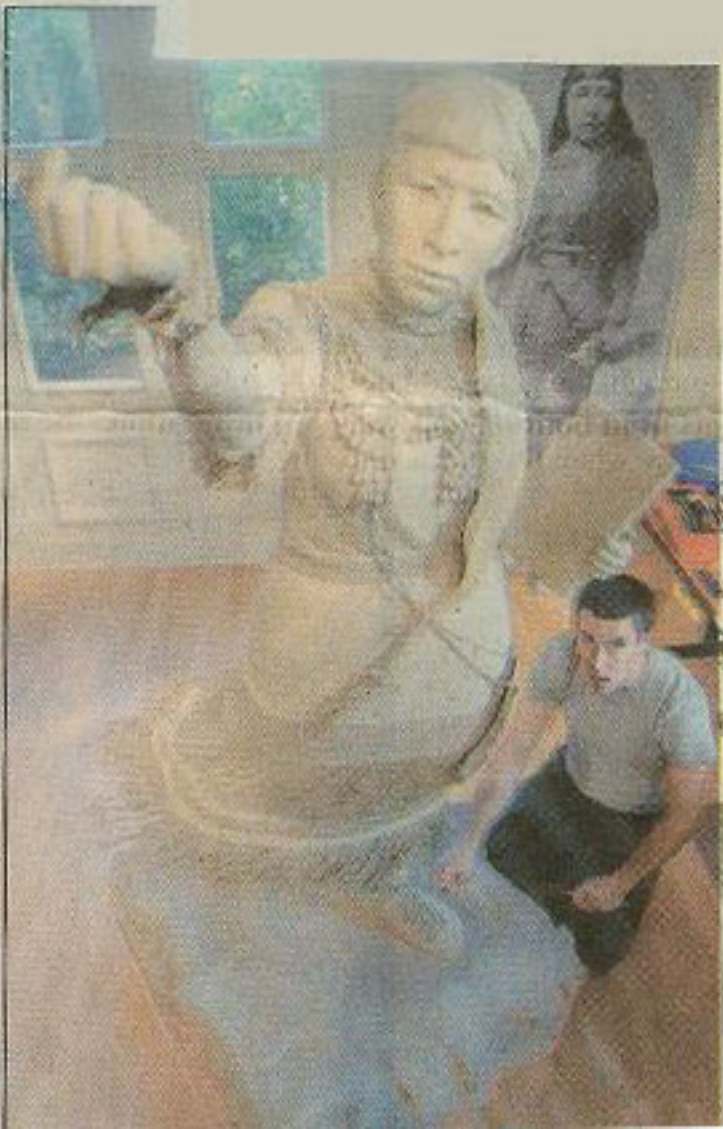
Most of the other Statuary Hall pieces, like the statue of Sen. Patrick McCarran, a

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## South Dakota

sculptor Ben Victor works on the base of his sculpture of Sarah Winnemucca at the Nevada State Library and Archives. He will be the youngest sculptor to have a piece in Statuary Hall at the U.S. Capitol



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Nevada attorney and state Supreme Court judge, are 8 or 9 feet tall.

Victor, who has American Indian blood, told Wahnetah and her mother, Lisa Grayshield, that Wahnetah's great-grandmother, Louise Tannheimer, also a descendant of Winnemucca, visited him recently.

Wahnetah and Victor will share a convertible in Saturday's parade with Reno Justice of the Peace Barbara Finley, a member of the Nevada Women's History Project, which promoted the making of the statue.

"I'm really pleased Adrienne will portray (Sarah Winnemucca)," her mother said. "She's a leader. She's a strong young woman. I think she definitely has some of Sarah Winnemucca's spirit."

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