

# Presence in Absence

## Ruth Abernethy's sculptures for Highway of Heroes Trees for Life Campaign

Ruth Abernethy's bronzes unveiled at the Port Hope and Trenton On Routes on November 9, 2022 represent 67 members of the Canadian military. "It's all divisions, all ethnicities and genders," says Ruth Abernethy, the sculptor. "We tried to be as broad as we could in the representation and the picking of the portraits."

The bronze portraits were created with negative space backed by awning fabric that is lit at night. The portraits have a key to locate those represented. At the unveiling in Port Hope, a military family was already seeking "their person" showing that indeed there is a powerful presence in each person's absence.

The unveiling of the sculptures represented the end of a long and very successful Trees for Life campaign that saw 2.5 million trees planted in the 401 corridor from Trenton to Keele Street in Toronto. The trees mark the passage of 158 heroes who made the trip from Trenton to Toronto in a hearse. The additional millions of carbon dioxide capturing trees also mark the volunteers who have served in the Canadian military since the War of 1812 (symbolically represented by Ruth's 67 portraits).

Mark Cullen is Co-Founder and Chair of **Trees for Life**. 🐾

### Guide to Presence in Absence Silhouettes



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Ruth Abernethy by Zach McGibbon/Quinte News



## Mark Cullen Spearheads Successful Highway of Heroes Tree Campaign

There have been tree installations at the Light Armoured Vehicle (LAV) Monuments in Bowmanville and Cobourg; Newcastle Public School, Clarington created their own "Highway of Heroes" and school children planted 30 trees; the Camp X Intrepid Park in Whitby had 600 new trees planted; the Battle of Vimy Ridge Planting enhanced the site of the Pringle Creek water treatment plant in Whitby; the Ontario Regiment Museum in Oshawa saw over 700 trees planted and the On Route Service Centres in Port Hope and Trenton have landscaped installations around Ruth Abernethy's sculpture installation, *Presence in Absence*. 🐾