

## ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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For more information, please contact:  
Shelley Johansson, Marketing Manager  
Johnstown Area Heritage Association  
P. O. Box 1889  
Johnstown, PA 15907  
(814) 539-1889  
sjohansson@jaha.org  
[www.jaha.org](http://www.jaha.org)

# **“Man of Steel” statue finds new home at the Heritage Discovery Center**

***Dedication ceremony set for Sunday, October 19 at 2:00 p.m.***

The “Man of Steel” sculpture has been moved to the Heritage Discovery Center in accordance with the last wishes of one of its creators, Charles Zilch. On Sunday, October 19 at 2:00 p.m., the Johnstown Area Heritage Association (JAHA) will host a dedication ceremony for the statue in memory of Charles Zilch. The public is invited to the ceremony and the reception immediately following.

In 1989 The “Man of Steel” sculpture was created by Zilch and fellow steelworkers Dennis Waltz, Larry Ramach and Robert Scarsella as a lark, imitating the work of sculptor James Wolfe. Mounted on the remains of the “H” blast furnace in the Franklin Mills, the 12-foot sculpture soon took on a much larger meaning, representing the struggles and triumphs of local steelworkers.

“Look at him again! There is no doubt that he presents a most ragged figure. He is not pleasing to the eye. He has been devastated by flood, ravaged by recession and depression. He has survived the threat and rumor of plant closing. He has endured. Truly he must be Man of Steel,” Zilch wrote in a Bethlehem Steel Corporation newsletter dated June 1989.

Zilch passed away in April 2003 of cancer believed to be caused by exposure to toxic levels of asbestos and manganese while on the job. One of his dying wishes was that the “Man of Steel” statue be salvaged and moved to the Heritage Discovery Center.

Zilch’s daughter, Debra Ann Zilch, obtained permission to remove the statue from its former location. Richard Burkert, executive director of JAHA, was pleased to offer the statue a new, permanent home. The Johnstown Welding & Fabricating Company

volunteered to restore and repaint the statue in its original colors, and installation at the Heritage Discovery Center will be completed in the week before the dedication ceremony. It will be located in front of the Center, next to the flagpole.

Two of the statue's surviving creators, Robert Scarsella and Larry Ramach, will be in attendance at the ceremony, along with many of Zilch's family members, friends and former co-workers.

The public is invited to attend the dedication ceremony and reception on Sunday, October 19, 2:00 p.m. at the Heritage Discovery Center, 7<sup>th</sup> & Broad Street in Cambria City. Light refreshments will be served.

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