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City of Downey

Press Release

City to Hold an Unveiling Ceremony for Bronze Bust of John Gately Downey

Downey, CA, December 1, 2010

When: Tuesday, December 7, 2010, 4:30 pm

Where: In front of Downey City Hall, 11111 Brookshire Ave

What: An unveiling ceremony for a bronze bust of former Governor John Gately Downey.

The City of Downey will be holding a special dedication ceremony to unveil a bronze bust of the City's founding father, John Gately Downey. The sculpture was produced by Mark Rode, using the same mold as the bust that was created and recently unveiled in the former Governor's birthplace, South County Roscommon, Ireland. It was unveiled by the United States Ambassador to Ireland, Dan Rooney and his wife Mrs. Patricia Rooney. Funds for the sculpture came from the City's Art in Public Places fund.

John Gately Downey was the seventh Governor of California and the first of foreign birth. He was born on June 24, 1827 in County Roscommon, Ireland and immigrated to the United States in 1842. Governor Downey settled in Los Angeles in the early 1850s, where he was active in business, local and state government. He was Governor from the years 1860 to 1862, during the commencement of the Civil War and preserved California in the Union. His banking and railroad influence helped build the economic foundation of Southern California. He was also founder of the University of Southern California. The City of Downey was named in his honor in 1873. He died on March 1, 1894 and is interred at Holy Cross Cemetery in Colma, California.

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For Immediate Release