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Leaders working on return of Sacred Red Rock to Kaw Nation to speak at Lawrence event Saturday

by Lawrence Times



August Rudisell/Lawrence Times

The Sacred Red Rock sits at Robinson Park, March 28, 2023.

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Also: James Pepper Henry to speak on repatriation

Leaders of the project to return the Sacred Red Rock to the Kaw Nation will provide updates on the process and take questions from community members at an event coming up Saturday afternoon in Lawrence.

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The 28-ton red Siouxan quartzite boulder has been at Robinson Park near Lawrence City Hall since it was taken from its natural location at the intersection of the Shunganunga Creek and Kansas River near Tecumseh about 94 years ago. It was then turned into a monument that honored the majority white people who settled in the area.

The Sacred Red Rock holds deep historical, cultural and spiritual meaning to the Kaw People. In December 2020, the Kaw Nation submitted a formal request to the Lawrence City Commission for the return of the boulder. City leaders in March 2021 formally apologized and committed to the boulder's unconditional return to the Kaw Nation.

The **Mellon Foundation**, which supports arts and humanities projects in communities, **announced** in April 2022 a \$5 million grant to make the project possible. An announcement about the project at the time provided an anticipated timeline to move the boulder in April or May 2023.

“Ceremonies and gatherings will include a visit to In ‘zhúje ‘waxóbe’s original location along the Kansas River, preparations and prayers proceeding and during the move, and ceremonies to welcome the Rock to Allegawaho Park,” according to the **previous news release**.

The event is set for 3 p.m. Saturday, April 1 at the Lawrence Public Library auditorium. Snacks will be provided, and all participants are welcome, according to the release.

“The event will feature presentations from leadership team members, an introduction to the project activity guide and responses to community questions,” according to KU’s news release. “After the event at the library, audience members are invited to walk over to explore Robinson Park.”

James Pepper Henry, vice-chairman of the Kaw Nation, **told Lawrence city commissioners** in April 2022 that “The last thing the Kaw Nation, the Kaw people want to do is to erase ourselves even further from the conversation in Lawrence, Kansas. And so we would like to have a presence in some way or another, be recognized, along with the other Indigenous communities that have had occupation in that area for time immemorial, and be recognized at Robinson Park.”

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The project is led by members of the Kaw Nation in collaboration with the city of Lawrence, University of Kansas, Spencer Museum of Art, Kanza Heritage Society and others. For questions and event accommodations, contact Project Coordinator Mandy Frank at mandy.frank@ku.edu.

More information on the project is available on the project website, sacredredrock.com.

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In addition, Pepper Henry, who is also executive director of Oklahoma City’s First Americans Museum, will speak during an event Friday as part of KU’s [Repatriation Series](#).

KU staff members discovered in September that the university is still in possession of Indigenous ancestors’ remains that need to be returned, and the university has been working on that process. (Read more background in the articles [at this link](#).)

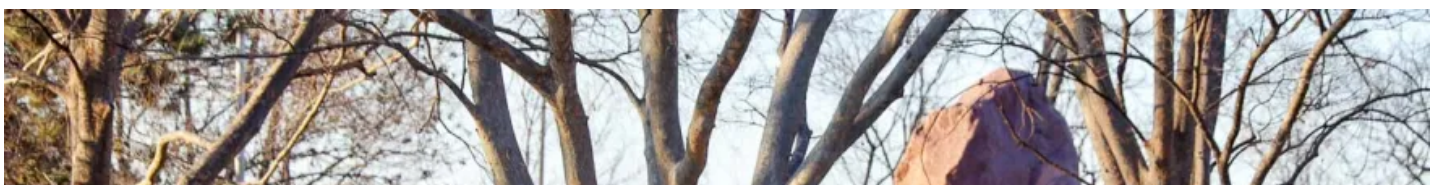
“Repatriation from a Tribal and Museums Perspective” is set for 3 to 4 p.m. Friday, March 31 in the Malott Room on the sixth floor of the Kansas Union. It will also be available via Zoom; register [at this link](#).

More coverage:



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The Sacred Red Rock sits at Robinson Park, March 28, 2023.



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