



Jan Lucy, artist Don Thur and Dr. Mock.

## Carved bowl from ancient wood finds a home at Nipissing's Muskoka Campus

By Jan Lucy, Muskoka Campus Administrator

Over 8,000 years ago a primeval forest was growing over the area now known as Muskoka. When melt waters from a retreating glacier burst through the glacial wall, a cataclysmic torrent of water poured across the land, clearing the trees and leaving a path of destruction. One of the toppled trees was quickly encased in lime dust silt and sediment. This action had the effect of neutralizing the surrounding acidic soil, eliminating exposure to oxygen, preventing decay and preserving the tree.


The ancient pine tree was left intact until it was uncovered during an excavation project in September 2005 on a local Muskoka farm. The tree was found five metres below the surface. One half of the tree was donated to local Muskoka artisan, wood turner, Don Thur. His experience and instinct told him that this tree was older than any wood he had worked with in the past. Thur sent a specimen to the IsoTrace Radiocarbon Laboratory at the University of Toronto for carbon dating. He was surprised to receive the news that the tree dated to 6631 BC and was identified as one of the oldest specimens ever found in North America!

The enormity of this once in a lifetime opportunity to work with such ancient

wood was not taken lightly by Thur, who shared that he wouldn't allow anyone to watch as he made his first bowl from the material. A total of 10 potential pieces will be carved from this wood.

Thur's creations from other, younger pieces of wood have prestigious reputations as works of art having found homes with the King and Queen of Norway, former President George Bush, and at Buckingham Palace.

Thur called the Muskoka campus to inquire if Nipissing would be interested in receiving one of the bowls; the university was extremely pleased and honoured to accept such a unique work of art. Thur and his family have an affinity with Nipissing University in that his daughter is an alumna.

The finished bowl, named Glacius Pinus Strobes, has been purchased by an anonymous donor who gave the bowl to Nipissing's Muskoka Campus. The bowl is just over 48 cm in diameter and approximately 11 cm high. It was presented to Dr. Dennis Mock, Nipissing President and Jan Lucy, Muskoka Campus Administrator, on March 2, 2009. It will be kept on display at the Muskoka Campus for everyone to enjoy. 

## Distinguished Alumni Award

The Nipissing University Alumni Association's Distinguished Alumni Award recognizes outstanding volunteer support of our alma mater.

It honours an alumnus who has contributed extraordinary time and energy to Nipissing University.

To nominate an outstanding alumnus, please request a nomination package or more information from the Alumni Relations Office at: 705.474.3450, ext. 4573, e-mail: [alumni@nipissingu.ca](mailto:alumni@nipissingu.ca), or download the nomination package at [www.nipissingu.ca/alumni](http://www.nipissingu.ca/alumni)

**Deadline for nominations is May 1, 2009.**