

Tracy Munson was awarded the sculpture commission of Chipeta, a Tabeguache Ute and wife of Chief Ouray, for the city of Grand Junction. The sculpture will be installed May 2010 in the entrance lobby of the new Chipeta Elementary School at 950 Chipeta Avenue in Grand Junction.

Chipeta was born June 10, 1843 near the present Conejos, CO. She was a young girl of 16 when she married Chief Ouray, who was several years her senior. Ouray and Chipeta were respected, peaceful leaders, willing to negotiate to keep peace with the invading white settlers. She was known for her promotion of peaceful conflict resolution. She traveled with her husband to Washington, D.C. and was photographed on more than one occasion, an unusual thing for an Indian woman of those times. Chipeta died on August 17, 1924. and was buried on a reservation in Eastern Utah, the Utes having been removed from the Uncompahgre Valley. Her body was later moved to Montrose, Colorado where the local chapter of the D.A.R. purchased land from Ouray's original homestead and erected a tomb for "Queen" Chipeta. Thousands of locals attended her service and her pallbearers were some of the town's leading citizens.

Watch this space for progress on this exciting project and true honor!