Hometown

Statue
Continued from D-1

bronzes, but it is cement, and it is breaking down."

Steve Kiedrowski of Trempealeau, who represents the
Zimmerhakl family on the
committee, agreed. "There
are not many cities in Wis-
cconsin that have colorful
statues," he said. "I believe
La Crosse is synonymous with
that statue."

He distributed a letter
from Stefan Jay Zimmerhakl,
son of the artist. "The statue
shows nothing but pride and
strength, which can be see-
ing but positive in regards to
a historical representation of the Winnebagoes that walked
the hallowed grounds of the
La Crosse County area," Zimmerhakl said in the letter.

"Anyone who feels the Big
Indian is offensive and is a
stereotype is either ashamed
of their ancestors and their
past or are totally unaware of
the true image of their roots."

But Stewart and Marian
Blackdeer, a UW-La Crosse
student and member of the
Native American Student As-
sociation, argued that the statue
hurts their people because it
is a stereotype. Studies have
shown that a large part of
Native Americans' problems
stem from the images they
have of themselves, Blackdeer
said. "It is saying to the
younger generation, This is
what we think of you."

No matter what the city
does, people will be hurt, said
Robert Boshhardt, regional
archaeologist with the Missis-
sippi Valley Archaeology
Center.

But the pain to those who
will miss the statue will not
be as strong, Stewart said, as
the pain of "children I see
crying that they are hurt by
these kind of images."

The committee is expected
to decide on a recommenda-
tion Dec. 4. The final decision
will be up to the La Crosse
Common Council.

The Committee to Consider the Future of the Statue Hiawatha were
not able to agree Wednesday on the statue's fate.

Committee disagrees
on fate of 'Hiawatha'

By JOAN KENT
Of the Tribune staff

The lines are drawn among
some members of the Committee
to Consider the Future of the
Statue Hiawatha, but the group
did not make a decision on the
fate of the controversiarl statue
at its Wednesday meeting.

The committee is charged with
making a recommendation by the
end of next month on what to do
about the deteriorating statue at
the north end of Riverside Park.
Wednesday's meeting was the
committee's first since a public
hearing last month, during which
residents voiced their opinions
on whether the city should keep
and repair the statue created 40 years
ago by the late Anthony Zimmer-
hakl, a well-liked artist.

Members disagreed Wednes-
day on the opinions voiced at
the hearing. "A majority of the
people who spoke were in favor
of getting rid of the statue," said
Matt Stewart, president of the
Native American Student
Association at the University of
Wisconsin-La Crosse. He wants
the statue removed.

"I believe a count of the
people who attended would be
60 to 80 in favor of keeping it,"
counterpart Dean Morton, a retired
cable television company
executive who wants to retain the
statue.

The committee gave short
shift to Mayor John Medinger's
suggestion to replace the statue
with one of either Chief Black
Hawk or Cpl. Mitchell Red Cloud
Jr. "I do not believe it is our
charge to decide whether to put
up another statue," Morton said.

Stewart suggested a memorial
to Zimmerhakl be erected
because people who want to keep
the statue want to honor his
legacy as a teacher.

Committee Chairman John
Satory said he disagreed that the
statue was offensive. "It has been
here 40 years," he said. "It has
been part of La Crosse. If it was
warring, it could be taken as
derogatory, but the statue has a
peace pipe."

"If we destroy that, we do not
have anything to go back and
remember the past," Satory said.
"I look at it as a preservationist.
It would be nice if it had been

See STATUE, D-3