

Monumental # Women

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New York City Public Design Commission Approves First Statue Depicting Real Women in Central Park

Six-Year Effort by Volunteer-Led Nonprofit *Monumental Women* Raised \$1.5 Million to Build a Statue of Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Statue to be Unveiled on August 26, 2020, the Centennial Anniversary of the Ratification of the 19th Amendment, When Women Won the Right to Vote

New York, NY – October 21, 2019 – The New York City Public Design Commission today approved the preliminary design for a statue honoring women’s rights pioneers Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. The statue will be located in Central Park and will be the first statue depicting real women in the park’s 166-year history.

The statue was conceived, created, and funded by Monumental Women's Statue Fund, an all-volunteer led nonprofit made up of women's rights advocates, historians and community leaders.

Monumental Women began working to develop the statue and secure a prominent location on Central Park’s famed Literary Walk in 2014. The organization also raised \$1.5 million in private funding to pay for the statue, which is being designed by nationally-recognized sculptor Meredith Bergmann.

The statue has the support of local community boards, community and government leaders, including Manhattan Borough President Gale Brewer, who has been a leading advocate for the approval of the statue, and countless other individuals, foundations and organizations in New York City and across the country.

“With this statue we are finally breaking the bronze ceiling. It’s fitting that the first statue of real women in Central Park depicts three New York women who dedicated their lives to fighting for women’s rights,” said **Pam Elam, President of Monumental Women**.

“This statue conveys the power of women working together to bring about revolutionary change in our society. It invites people to reflect not just on these women and their work

for equality and justice, but on all the monumental women who came before us. We are pleased to have broken through every city bureaucratic barrier to make this happen.”

The statue will be unveiled on August 26, 2020, the centennial anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, when American women won the constitutional right to vote. Monumental Women will be working with the City and nonprofit organizations to plan a series of events around the unveiling of the statue. Monumental Women will also be continuing its other goals of initiating a Women's History Education Campaign and challenging municipalities across this country to re-imagine their public spaces to honor all women and people of color.

Meredith Bergmann, sculptor of the Women's Rights Pioneers Monument, said: “Like the women I’m portraying, my work is meant to raise questions and to provoke thought. My hope is that all people, but especially young people, will be inspired by this image of women of different races, different religious backgrounds and different economic status working together to change the world.” Bergmann's works also include the Boston's Women's Memorial, the September 11th Memorial at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine in New York City and more.

“Today is truly a monumental moment,” said **Manhattan Borough President Gale A. Brewer.** “We will finally have a statue in Central Park depicting real women, and I couldn’t be more proud to have taken part in this process. This would not have been possible without the hard work of Monumental Women and all the people—mostly women and girls—supporting them.”

“As someone who has dedicated much of my life to breaking down sexist barriers that keep women from participating as full and equal members of society, I’m thrilled that we’re finally so close to breaking down one more,” said **Brenda Berkman, Captain, New York City Fire Department (retired), and Monumental Women board member.** “This statue isn’t just about addressing a historical inequity – it’s about helping girls and women recognize their own power so that they can continue the unfinished business of creating a fair and just society for all.”

Judaline Cassidy, Founder of Tools & Tiaras Inc., and Monumental Women board member, said, “It’s important for girls to see themselves represented, and to see women respected and celebrated. It gives them something to work toward and aspire to, and it equips them to be the next generation of leaders. I’m so happy knowing that very soon, girls visiting Central Park will have their own strength and power affirmed by this statue. I’m proud to be a Monumental Women Board Member and pleased to be a part of this important moment in New York City History.”

“Congratulations to my sisters at Monumental Women for this hard-fought victory,” said **Meridith Maskara, Chief Executive Officer of the Girl Scouts of Greater New York.** “When local Girl Scouts troops learned back in 2016 that there were no statues of real women in Central Park, they decided to do their part to help crack the bronze ceiling by raising their voices and educating the public. They even donated cookie money to help

make this statue a reality. Truth, Stanton and Anthony represent the same qualities that we build in our girls: courage, confidence, and character, and a commitment to making the world a better place. I look forward to continuing my work on the Monumental Women Board of Directors.”

In the lead up to the centennial anniversary of the ratification of the 19th amendment, Monumental Women is running the #100YearsWomenVote campaign on Instagram, highlighting key people and events from the long fight for women’s suffrage. Follow Monumental Women on Instagram at @monumentalwomennyc as well as on Facebook and Twitter.

In addition to the Central Park statue, Monumental Women is pushing for the creation of a New York City Women's Rights Trail throughout all five boroughs. To learn more about Monumental Women or to get involved, visit: monumentalwomen.org