

Monumental # Women

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Jane Alexander, Viola Davis, America Ferrera, Rita Moreno, Zoe Saldana and Meryl Streep to Portray Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony & Elizabeth Cady Stanton in ‘Talking Statues’ Monologue to Accompany First Statue of Real Women Set to Be Unveiled in Central Park on August 26, 2020 by Monumental Women.

Actors Voice Women’s Rights Pioneers in English and Spanish-Language Monologues.

New York, NY – Today Monumental Women, the all-volunteer nonprofit group bringing the first statue depicting real women to Central Park, is pleased to announce that award-winning actors Jane Alexander, Viola Davis, America Ferrera, Rita Moreno, Zoe Saldana and Meryl Streep will portray Sojourner Truth, Susan B. Anthony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton in English and Spanish-Language ‘Talking Statues’ monologues that will accompany the *Women’s Rights Pioneers Monument*. The Monument featuring Truth, Anthony and Stanton is set to be unveiled on Central Park’s Literary Walk on August 26, 2020, the centennial anniversary of the ratification of the 19th Amendment, when women won the right to vote.

Actors Jane Alexander and America Ferrera will voice Susan B. Anthony, Viola Davis and Zoe Saldana will voice Sojourner Truth, and Meryl Streep and Rita Moreno will voice Elizabeth Cady Stanton.

Monumental Women began working to develop the *Women’s Rights Pioneers Monument* and “break the bronze ceiling” by securing a prominent location on Central Park’s famed Literary Walk in 2014. The organization raised \$1.5 million in private funding to pay for the statue, which is being designed by nationally-recognized sculptor Meredith Bergmann. In the statue, Bergmann shows Anthony, Stanton, and Truth working together when they met to advance the fight for equality, justice, and women’s rights. They are depicted as equals, working together at a table, with each taking on an essential element of activism: Sojourner Truth is speaking, Susan B. Anthony is organizing, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton is writing. The *Women’s Rights Pioneers Monument* honors three New York women who dedicated their lives to women’s rights and to women winning the franchise, though none of them lived long enough to see it happen.

‘Talking Statues’ is a project started by documentary filmmaker David Peter Fox in Copenhagen in 2013, to tell the stories behind statues through short monologues. The public can easily

access the monologues by scanning a QR code on a smart-device or by downloading the Talking Statues app on a mobile device. The app is part of Monumental Women's education campaign to educate Park visitors, young people and schoolchildren around the world about women's history. Scriptwriter Joanne Parrent crafted the 'Talking Statues' narration as a conversation between the three women as portrayed in the Monument by using speeches and writings of Truth, Stanton and Anthony.

Monumental Women President Pam Elam expressed excitement and gratitude: "Combining the voices of six of the greatest artists of our time with the spirits of the three Women's Rights Pioneers we honor in our Monument is a dream come true. We are thrilled to have the support of Jane Alexander, Viola Davis, America Ferrera, Rita Moreno, Zoe Saldana, and Meryl Streep since they bring not only great artistry but, through their own work for equality and justice, bring a commitment to carrying on the work of the valiant women who came before us."

Monumental Board member and Talking Statues Project Manager Brenda Berkman expressed her thanks to all the narrators, staff and supporters who made this recording possible, even in the midst of a pandemic. "Everyone worked really hard to create this tool for educating the public, especially young people, about women's history. Technological challenges were overcome. Special thanks go to our editor, Emily Dombroff, for all her expertise and hard work."

About the Actors

Jane Alexander is an award-winning film, television and theater actress, writer and conservationist. Alexander, a Tony award winner, has performed in over a hundred plays on Broadway, off-Broadway, London and in regional theaters nationwide. In 1994, Alexander was inducted into the Theatre Hall of Fame. Her film career includes four Academy Award nominations, for "The Great White Hope," "All The President's Men," "Kramer vs. Kramer" and "Testament." In over 40 television movies she has been honored with two Emmys, for the roles of Alma Rose in "Playing For Time" and Sara Delano Roosevelt in "Warm Springs." She was most recently seen on Broadway in *Grand Horizons*. A dedicated conservationist and birder, Alexander has served as a Park Commissioner for New York State and is currently on the board of the Audubon Society. Her book *Wild Things, Wild Places*, documents her travels with field biologists around the world.

Viola Davis is an award-winning actress of film, television and theater. She is the first black actress to win two Tony Awards for "Fences" and "King Hedley II", an Oscar for "Fences" and an Emmy for the ABC series "How to Get Away with Murder". In 2015, Davis received the Screen Actors Guild Award for "Outstanding Performance by a Female Actor in a Drama Series," in addition to becoming the first African American actress to receive the *Primetime Emmy Award* for "Outstanding Lead Actress in a Drama Series." Davis was recently seen in Amazon Studio's family comedy, "Troop Zero," and will next be seen in Netflix's "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom," based on the play of the same name by August Wilson. In 2012, Davis and her

husband founded JuVee. The Los Angeles-based and artist-driven company produces film, television and digital content across all of entertainment, with its focus being to give a voice to the voiceless through strong, impactful and culturally relevant narratives.

America Ferrera is an award-winning actress, director and producer known for her breakthrough role as “Betty Suarez” on ABC’s hit comedy, *Ugly Betty*. For her performance, Ferrera was recognized with a Golden Globe, Emmy and SAG Award, as well as ALMA and Imagen Awards. Ferrera most recently produced and starred in the NBC workplace comedy, *Superstore*. She also executive produced and directed episodes of NETFLIX’s new Latinx dramedy, *Gentefied*. A longtime activist, Ferrera most recently organized the ‘Letter of Solidarity’ with Eva Longoria in response to the El Paso, Texas shooting in 2019. Over 200 Latinx community leaders signed, urging others to turn this time of despair into a time of action. In 2017, she worked as one of the driving forces alongside other powerful women in Hollywood to establish the TIME’S UP movement.

Rita Moreno has won all four of the most prestigious awards in show business: an Oscar, a Tony, two Emmys, and a Grammy. Her career spans more than six decades, beginning with her Broadway debut at age 13. Moreno has starred on Broadway and London’s West End, appeared in more than 40 feature films, countless television shows, and has performed in numerous regional theaters including her one woman show, *Life Without Makeup* at the Berkeley Repertory Theatre. Currently, Moreno stars in the Latino remake of Norman Lear’s classic sitcom, *One Day at a Time* on POP TV. She also co-stars and serves as an Executive Producer in the Steven Spielberg remake of *West Side Story*, scheduled for a December 2020 release. Most recently, Moreno received the Peabody Career Achievement Award and the Kennedy Center Honor for her lifetime contributions to American culture. She was also awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President George W. Bush and the National Medal of Arts by President Barack Obama.

Zoe Saldana is a film and television actress, awarded a star on the Hollywood Walk of Fame in 2018 and best known for her starring role as Neytiri in the record-breaking film “Avatar.” Saldana recently reprised her role as Gamora in 2019’s box office hit, “Avengers: Endgame” and previously starred in “Avengers: Infinity Wars.” Saldana’s other film roles include “Live By Night,” “Star Trek: Beyond,” the third installment of the 2009 hit in which Saldana played Nyota Uhura and “Columbiana.” She will reprise her role as Neytiri in the highly anticipated sequels “Avatar 2, 3 and 4” slated for release in 2021. Behind the camera, Saldana spends her time with Cinestar, a film production company she founded with her two sisters. Cinestar produced the NBC Mini-Series “Rosemary’s Baby,” the AOL Digital series “My Hero” and THE HONOR LIST. When not in production, Saldana engages in philanthropic work involving children’s development, well-being and confidence building, and was previously the global ambassador for Shot@Life, an organization that aims to ensure that children around the world have access to life-saving vaccines. Saldana is currently focused on BESE (pronounced “Bee-Seh”), her digital platform that provides a voice for Latinx youth through Facebook, Twitter, Instagram as well as, YouTube videos and podcasts.

Meryl Streep is an award-winning actress whose career has cut its own unique path from theatre through film and television for more than 40 years. She began her professional career on the New York stage, where within three years of receiving her MFA with Honors from Yale University she made her Broadway debut, won an Emmy for “Holocaust” and received her first Oscar nomination for “The Deer Hunter.” She has won three Academy Awards and in 2018, in a record that is unsurpassed, she earned her 21st Academy Award nomination for her role as Katherine Graham in “The Post.” She was most recently seen in HBO’s second season of “Big Little Lies” and Greta Gerwig’s Oscar-nominated “Little Women.” She has been named a Commandeur de L’Ordre Des Arts et des Lettres and a Kennedy Center Honoree, and she has received both the National Medal of Arts and the Presidential Medal of Freedom from President Obama. In 1989 Streep co-founded the consumer advocacy group Mothers and Others, that for ten years worked to promote sustainable agriculture, establish new pesticide regulations, and ensure the availability of organic and sustainably grown local foods. She also lends her efforts to Women for Women International, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Donor Direct Action, Women in the World Foundation, and Partners in Health.

About the Scriptwriter

Joanne Parrent is an author, screenwriter and activist, who co-founded the first feminist credit union in Detroit, Michigan. She first learned about the courageous and tireless work for women’s rights of Anthony, Stanton and Truth in the 1970s and has championed efforts ever since to get their stories told for current and future generations. She is proud to have worked with the amazing team at Monumental Women on the Talking Statue app for the Central Park statue of these three extraordinary women.

About Monumental Women

Monumental Women’s future goals include a Women’s History Education Campaign, a Challenge to Municipalities across this country to re-imagine their public spaces to honor all women and people of color, and the creation of a New York City Women’s Rights Trail throughout all five boroughs. Follow Monumental Women on Instagram and Facebook @monumentalwomennyc, as well as Twitter at @MonumentalWomen.

To learn more about Monumental Women, visit: monumentalwomen.org