

# Sojourner News

*Update Report of the Sojourner Truth Memorial Statue Committee —February 2002*

## Bronze Casting of Truth Statue Underway

Thomas Jay Warren, the sculptor chosen to create the statue of Sojourner Truth, has finished the full-sized sculpture and it is currently in the casting process at Fedde Bronze Works in Denver, Colorado.

“We are thrilled with the statue that Jay has created. It captures the power of Sojourner Truth’s spirit and will serve as an enduring tribute to her advocacy for freedom, equality, and justice,” said Nancy Felton, Chair of the Statue Committee.

The clay sculpture was completed last fall after Warren sent several batches of photographs to the Committee and modified the sculpture slightly based on the group’s feedback. The statue, which is about 7 feet tall, is now being cast in bronze through a process known as “lost wax casting.”

The first step of this process is to create a rubber mold of the clay sculpture. Dividing the statue into sections - the head, eyeglasses, upper torso, arms, cane – Warren painted rubber onto the clay. The skirt was sectioned into 10 parts. Layers of rubber were painted on until the rubber mold was 1/3 to 1 inch thick.

The rubber mold is then covered with plaster to create a “mother mold” which supports the rubber. Into the rubber mold, by section, liquid wax is poured to create a copy of the original clay sculpture. When it sets, the wax copy, about 1/4” thick, is removed from the rubber mold. At this point, the wax mold is sent to a foundry for the completion of the casting process.

Wax pipes and funnels are attached to each section. This is called “spruing.” It creates a “plumbing system” into which, eventually, liquid bronze will be poured. The sections, with the piping attached, are then dipped into ceramic shell tanks, creating a ceramic mold of each wax section. The ceramic molds are fired in a kiln and become extremely strong. During the firing the wax melts and is drained from the ceramic molds.

Liquid bronze, heated to 2000 degrees Fahrenheit, is poured into the ceramic molds. After cooling, the ceramic molds are broken off and the piping system (which is now bronze also) is cut off. The result is a bronze reproduction of each section of the statue. The sections are then welded together, and the seams ground down.

The foundry returns the statue to the sculptor, who applies a patina by heating the bronze and applying chemicals to it. This final process allows the artist to obtain varying shades of color in the completed statue. The shade of the dress and skin will differ subtly, for example.

According to Warren, this casting method has remained basically the same for 3000 years. The process takes several months. When complete, the bronze statue, which is hollow, will weigh about 1,000 pounds. It will be stored at Warren’s studio in Denver until the Florence memorial site is ready for the statue to be installed during the summer.

### *Gallery to Host March 10 Fundraiser*

In support of the Sojourner Truth statue, and to help raise the final funds needed to complete the project, R. Michelson Galleries will host a fundraising party at 132 Main Street in Northampton on Sunday, March 10 from 4-6 pm.

The event will feature Richard Yarde’s new watercolor painting of Sojourner Truth. Yarde, recipient of the 2001 Massachusetts Artist of the Year Award, is a resident of Northampton and participated in the selection of the sculptor for the Sojourner Truth statue.

According to the *Boston Globe*, “Mr. Yarde has become one of the great American watercolorists of the 20<sup>th</sup> century.” Yarde was awarded a 1995 Academy Award in Art from the American Academy of Arts & Letters. His paintings have been collected by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York, The National Museum of American Art in Washington D.C., and The Museum of Fine Arts in Boston.

Yarde’s painting of Sojourner Truth, which measures 39” x 24,” will be for sale at the event. Limited edition prints will also be for sale and the artist will be available to sign prints. The gallery will donate 20% of sales during the event to the statue effort.

Yarde and landscape architect Nancy Denig, whose firm designed the memorial site, will speak briefly at the event.

On display will be a full-size color drawing of the memorial site plan, photographs of sculptor Thomas Jay Warren’s completed statue, and his two maquettes. Refreshments will be supplied by local restaurants.

Guests are asked to bring their checkbooks. The goal of the event is to raise the \$40,000 still needed to pay for excavation of the site, installation & landscaping of the statue and surrounding stonework, and creation of plaques commemorating Sojourner Truth and the Northampton Association of Education and Industry of which she was a part.

For more information about the March 10 event, please return the coupon on reverse, visit our website at [www.noho.com/sojourner](http://www.noho.com/sojourner), or call 413-585-1010.

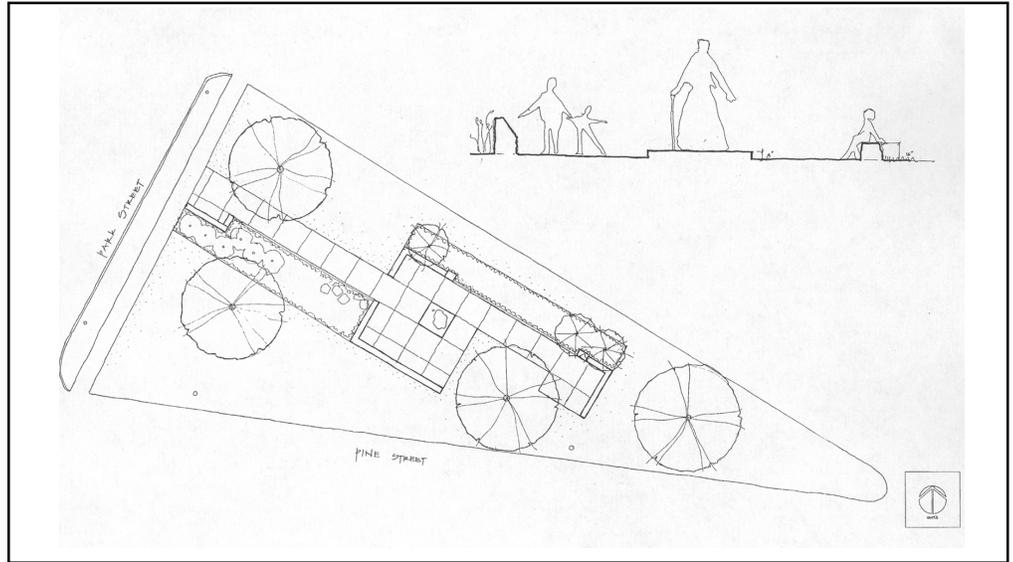
# Memorial Site Plan Completed by Denig Design Associates

The finalized plans for the Sojourner Truth Memorial site at the corner of Pine & Park Streets in Florence were recently approved by the Northampton Board of Public Works. The Northampton City Council will soon consider a resolution formally accepting the statue and memorial site as a gift to the City when completed.

Groundbreaking is scheduled for the spring and the Committee plans to dedicate the memorial in September.

Denig Design Associates of Northampton designed the memorial site. A stone walkway will serve as the entrance to the site from Park Street. The sculpture will stand atop an 8" pedestal of dark granite, set within a central terrace framed by granite seatwalls and a lush array of garden plantings. Informational plaques, about Sojourner Truth and the Northampton Association for Education and Industry of which she was a part, will be placed throughout the site.

Nancy Felton commented: "Nancy Denig and her associates, Martin Ringey & Heather Cruddace, have created a beautiful plan for the memorial site, and we are very grateful for the generous donation of their design services."



**Yes! I'd like to help!** *Your tax-deductible contribution will help pay to excavate the memorial site, install & landscape the statue and surrounding stonework, and create bronze informational plaques.*

I enclose a financial contribution of \$\_\_\_\_\_.  Please send me more information about the March 10 fundraiser.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (d) \_\_\_\_\_ (e) \_\_\_\_\_ email \_\_\_\_\_

*Tax-deductible contributions may be made to: "Sojourner Truth Memorial Statue Committee" and sent to the Committee at P.O. Box 60405, Florence MA 01062. For more information, please call Monica Green at 413-585-1010.*



**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

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