



Hon. Marquis A. Harrison
Chairperson
Minah Whyte
District Manager

CITY OF NEW YORK MANHATTAN COMMUNITY BOARD 10

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March 6, 2025

Sue Donoghue
Commissioner
New York City Department of Parks & Recreation
830 Fifth Ave
New York, NY 10065

Re: **Augusta Savage Commemoration By Monumental Women**

Dear Commissioner Donoghue,

Community Board 10 is writing this letter in support of Monumental Women’s Initiative to commemorate Augusta Savage through a work of public art. We are hopeful this tribute will be in one of the CB 10 parks. It is particularly fitting to honor Ms. Savage at a site within the borders of CB 10, where she lived and worked.

Augusta Savage (born Augusta Christine Fells; February 29, 1892 – March 27, 1962) was an American sculptor associated with the Harlem Renaissance. She was also a teacher whose studio was important to the careers of a generation of African American artists who would become nationally known. She worked for equal rights for African Americans in the arts. As the creator of busts of prominent African Americans such as W.E.B. Du Bois and James Weldon Johnson, Savage also focused on representing everyday people from Harlem (e.g. “Gamin”, untitled “Girl With Pigtails”). Her monumental plaster sculpture “Lift Every Voice and Sing” (renamed “The Harp” by others), created for the 1939 World’s Fair held in Queens, New York was viewed and admired by more than 5 million fair attendees. Ms. Savage endured the travesty of having her masterpiece demolished after the World’s Fair end because she had no money to store it or have it cast in bronze.

Ms. Savage was an important part of the Harlem Renaissance and one of America’s foremost African American women artists. She worked as a sculptor and educator and fought against sexism and racism. Eighty-five years after its debut, Savage’s pivotal and inspiring story and artwork deserves to be known by a new generation.

In honor of Black History Month 2024 and the leap year February 29th birthday of Augusta Savage, Monumental Women announced the formation of a coalition to honor Ms. Savage’s achievements in art, her opposition to sexism and racism in the arts and her commitment to educating the next generation of African American artists.

Monumental Women, a 501c(3) all-volunteer nonprofit was created in 2014 with the initial goal of breaking the bronze ceiling and creating the first statue of real women in Central Park’s 167-year history. The Central Park monument of Women’s Rights Pioneers Sojourner Truth, Susan B.

Anthony, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton was unveiled on August 26th, 2020, the centennial anniversary of the ratification and certification of the 19th “Votes For Women” amendment to the constitution. Monumental Women’s experience with carrying through the complicated process of forming partnerships, raising substantial funds (almost entirely private), conducting a design competition, gathering the many necessary community endorsements and city permits - all while meeting their timeline in the midst of a pandemic (2020) — demonstrates they are capable of successfully managing the many challenges of creating a piece of beautiful and inspiring public art in New York City. The project timeline is proposed for 2025-2028.

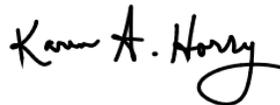
Monumental Women presented the proposed project at the Manhattan Community Board 10 Parks and Recreation Committee on February 12th, 2025.

Manhattan CB10 finds Monumental Women’s Augusta Savage Initiative collaborative project, which will honor and encapsulate the profound and historic legacy of Augusta Savage to be of phenomenal merit. On March 5, 2025, Manhattan Community Board 10’s General Board convened on March 5, 2025 and unanimously voted in-support of the project.

Sincerely,



Hon. Marquis Harrison
Chairperson
Manhattan Community Board 10



Hon. Karen Horry
Chair
Parks and Recreation Committee

cc:

Tricia Shimamura
Manhattan NYC Parks Borough Commissioner