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PROPOSAL
by
THE DAUB FIRMIN HENDRICKSON SCULPTURE GROUP
for
THE OKLAHOMA CITY
AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY PLAZA
submitted to
THE OKLAHOMA CENTENNIAL COMMISSION
MAY 1, 2006

SUMMARY

The Daub Firmin Hendrickson Sculpture Group is excited and honored to have the opportunity to offer our proposal for the Oklahoma City African American History Plaza. We believe that our proposal, if implemented, would create a state-wide and nationally recognized monument to one of the most profound histories within the history of the United States.

This document discusses our proposal in great detail and includes color sketches of all of the proposed monuments. Each sketch is accompanied by a brief discussion of its historical background and the reasoning behind our decisions.

The proposal anticipates a plaza containing 23 individual monuments set within large park-like spaces. The monuments will be connected by paths, the principal one of which is the Path of Oklahoma African American History. This path will lead interested visitors through the plaza by chronology and subject. Orientation pages in granite will provide information about each subject in text form.

The monuments are designed to provide a rather comprehensive visual, impressionistic and passionate history of the Oklahoma African American experience from the Trail of Tears in the early 19th century to the present. Monument designs align with the artistic, historical and emotional requirements of each subject, and provide variety.

A small amphitheater is proposed near the end of the Path of Oklahoma African American History, where school children or other groups may hold discussions about the plaza's content. The amphitheater provides an inspiring view of the state capitol through an iron arch containing the signature phrase of the plaza: "Freedom For All Forever."

In addition, we propose a state-wide poetry contest from which a few poems will be selected to incorporate into text portions of the plaza. Topics for the poems would be the historical subjects covered in this proposal.

We sincerely hope that everyone on the Committee will read through our entire proposal. It is not as daunting as it may appear—much of its length is occupied by illustrations—and the document is organized like a guided tour through the proposed plaza.

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PROPOSAL

For The Oklahoma City African American History Plaza Daub Firmin Hendrickson Sculpture Group

The Daub Firmin Hendrickson Sculpture Group is honored to have the opportunity to submit this proposal for the artwork to be placed in the African-American History Plaza at the Oklahoma State Capitol Plaza in Oklahoma City. We view this project as a significant event in the cultural and political history of Oklahoma—one that will play a role in the open recognition of the state's African American history, the story of its race relations and its transformation into a society that strives to embrace diversity. The plaza can and should be a source of inspiration to future generations in Oklahoma and be recognized across the nation.

The three members of our sculpture group propose a concept supported by detailed designs that we believe can satisfy the following goals.

Goals for the Project

The Daub Firmin Hendrickson goals for this project are:

- Capture the essence of the African-American experience in Oklahoma.
- Commemorate vital elements of our history, with insight and respect
- Inspire and educate children and adults
- Depict the history to appeal to children and adults according to their different needs
- Ground the plaza in thorough and accurate history, without compromise
- Rely on timeless artistic principles
- Maximize the circumstances of the site for the plaza, and take the site's environs into consideration
- Produce with high quality, deliver on time within budget, with professional communication throughout the process.

This proposal is organized into five sections.

1. Themes
2. Overall Design
3. Plaza Layout
4. Artwork Compositions
5. The Sculpture Group and Preliminary Budget

This proposal is written not only to describe the proposed plaza, but to explain our reasons for the decisions we have made. We are open to dialogue about the proposed design, and look forward to collaboration with the selected landscape architect.

1. THEMES

The African American experience is uniquely American, and Oklahoma's role in the shaping of that experience has been pivotal. In no other nation has such a large group of people been so arbitrarily categorized, persecuted and brutalized into servitude and humiliation, and isolated from opportunity for so long; yet over the course of one century recovered their rights as citizens—entirely through legal means.

The African American history of Oklahoma is unique within America. The experience with freedom by the Freedmen was unlike that for any other large group in America in one area in the nineteenth century. This undoubtedly strengthened both the resolve to resist white discrimination and provided Freedmen with a spirit of independence that fortified efforts to combat Jim Crow. The extraordinary opportunity to make a new life for themselves drew thousands of African Americans to the Oklahoma Territory land runs of the last decade of the nineteenth century. The experiences of many Freedmen and land-run African Americans—as soldiers, farmers, cowboys, town builders, politicians, and professionals in the Oklahoma area—created a new community culture that was not going to accept oppression, and that had the skills to make effective assaults on their oppression.

African American defiance and resistance rarely expressed themselves with violence, and violence, when expressed, failed to attain the goal of equal rights. Instead, through tireless insistence on their rights and tenacious recourse to the law, Oklahoma African Americans not only have secured their equal legal and political rights, but changed the law and the attitudes of most white Americans in the process, by moving the entire American system and culture closer to the center of its stated moral foundation. Progress has been remarkable, given the pervasive institutionalization of white discrimination.

Equally important, Oklahoma African Americans have made many significant achievements and contributions to their communities, the state and the nation.

In summary, the two overriding themes of our design for the Oklahoma African American History Plaza are:

- The struggle of a strong, capable and remarkably resilient population, experienced with rights, to secure for themselves their legal, political and social equality; to realize for their state and their nation “Freedom for All Forever.”¹
- The many achievements made by Oklahoma African Americans and their contributions to their state and country.

¹ “Freedom for All Forever” was the slogan of the *Searchlight*, the newspaper of the all-Black town Bookertee, in Okfuskee County, Oklahoma. The *Searchlight*'s editors were Prusilla Dunjee Houston, and Roscoe Dunjee, who was one of the most persistent and successful advocates and activists for African American rights in Oklahoma and the United States. See Tolson, 1972, p. 103

Finally, much of the history of African Americans in Oklahoma has remained hidden.

- Some of it, as in the case of the Tulsa Massacre, was deliberately destroyed.
- Much of it was never recorded because of the hardship conditions of life for many African Americans in Oklahoma.
- Most of it was ignored in official histories of the state, as in the high school history texts we read in our early research.

The plaza design highlights this fact.

2. OVERALL DESIGN

Our design proposes far more than a monument to Oklahoma African Americans—it proposes a history plaza, revealing the hidden story of Oklahoma’s African Americans in addition to the generally known. It employs art to evoke the entire spectrum of intellectual and emotional response—to stimulate well-deserved pride, memories, analysis, dismay, grief, and learning—all with high and lasting aesthetic value. Historical accuracy is at a premium.

Scope

Our design incorporates all of the elements listed by the Selection Committee, and much more. The history of African Americans in Oklahoma is revealing about the state and our nation, and holds many important lessons for present and future Americans of all backgrounds—we want visitors to get the whole picture. Since this history is so deep in its own right, the proposed plaza focuses entirely on Oklahoma.

Emphasis

Each element in the plaza possesses an expositional weight that is intended to contribute to our stated goals. These different emphases are based on a balance of all of our goals, and not a single criterion. For example, the defeat of Jim Crow is placed near the center of the plaza and occupies a large space. But some topics that may seem to some as far less significant—an African American cowboy, for example—receive dramatic treatment to satisfy both historical and other goals, including stimulation of interest in visitors’ Oklahoma background and in the importance of history in general.

The historical goals behind dramatic pieces like the Buffalo soldier, the farmer and the cowboy, address the creation of a strong African American culture in Oklahoma before statehood. We believe this culture contributed substantially to the leadership role played by Oklahoma African Americans in the determined fight for rights.

Content Enhancement from the Community

We plan to conduct a poetry contest for Oklahoma adults and children, to add selected poems to the plaza’s content. We will provide topics that align with the subjects depicted in the artwork.

Individuals

The design includes no sculptural depictions of specific individuals because the rules of the competition prohibit their use, even though our historical research has produced hundreds of names and many portraits. We have created the design so that many of the proposed artworks can depict individuals without disruption to it, if this rule were to change.

Formula

Our formula for the plaza is to be comprehensive and to address the visitor's attention to most topics separately. This has several advantages over a more condensed approach:

- The overall layout of the plaza will be more interesting.
- Each topic will receive the attention it deserves and be more readily understood.
- The effect of multiple works of art that build on our two basic themes will be cumulative, emotionally and intellectually.
- Multiple works enable imaginative landscaping, with areas of contemplation, sorrow, joy, and exultation. Visitors can be partially shielded from selected areas until the proper line of sight is established. They will be drawn from one area to another in anticipation.
- Visitors will be able to investigate topics at their leisure in one visit, or in as many visits as they please—they will not be overwhelmed by its volume.
- Teachers will have the option to limit their tours to cohesive sections of the plaza, and therefore to specific topics and periods of history.
- Locals will be able to form preferences for particular parts of the plaza. This has the added advantage of increasing the plaza's visitation rate.

For this reason, we propose 23 works of art, plus 18 granite text stelae in the form of pages torn from history.

Alternative formulas we considered include a single, possibly massive, sculpture group or perhaps a relief which depicts a cavalcade of history. We reject these approaches because they have a strong tendency to trivialize the subject matter. They work well for illustrations in encyclopedias and young people's text books, but not for a momentous plaza that needs to appeal to and inform all age groups, and attract national attention.

Styles and Materials

The plaza will engage multiple styles, each selected to work best with subject matter and with the profile of audience most likely to be interested. For example, the Buffalo soldier will be a realistic bronze figure with many details, the Freedom Fighters will be in a more modern style in granite, and the violence memorial will include an abstract flame. Each artwork description includes preliminary dimensions and materials.

Fully in-the-round sculpture is the most expected medium for outdoor artwork. It is unique in its advantage of 360 degrees of viewing angles, and is used in this proposal when called for. As with all selected materials, bronze should last for many centuries.

But, as with almost everything in life, there can be too much of a good thing. The plaza would become monotonous if all of its artworks were full figures.

Reliefs are usually the better medium for telling a story—they share that ability with paintings—and obviously work better than paintings outdoors. Like full figures, reliefs have a wonderful capacity to vary their appearance as the sun moves across the sky, which increases their drama.

We work with a broad range of patinas on our bronzes. Our patinas will vary with subject and composition, and within compositions, to highlight the intended mood of each sculpture.

Stone is the material of choice for certain sculptural styles. For example, we employ stone in the Freedom Fighters monument because stone helps convey the impression of solid strength, and because its 1930s style does not possess any delicate or suspended elements. Stone will also be used in decorative paving of monument circles in which color and the need to engrave text are effective.

Steel is used for our most abstract piece—depicting the flames of violence and destruction.

Photo and text etching on stone is a technique we will apply to subjects where sculpture or relief would be overkill and consequently look pretentious.

3. PLAZA LAYOUT

Our plaza layout reflects our decision to design many individual works of art. It benefits from the freedom to create a fascinating plaza which people can explore as they wish, or follow the chronological Path of Oklahoma African American History.

The specific plaza layout will be determined in collaboration with the selected landscape architect, but nonetheless its logical scheme must enhance the clarity of the historical information. The plaza's layout will encourage visitors to explore Oklahoma African American history in an organized manner, but of course will not force them to do so.

The plaza layout is divided into six areas, each of which contains multiple works of art.

- Territorial (pre-statehood): open spaces to reflect the openness of the land before the land runs and their fencing and development
- Black Towns: including the all-black towns, expulsions from mixed towns and out-migration
- Jim Crow Era and Violence Against African Americans
- Defeat of Jim Crow

- Achievements
- Rights Regained: allegorical sculpture and amphitheater

Figure 1 shows a plaza layout that would work with the proposed artwork. The red line shows the Path of Oklahoma African American History.

Figure 1. PLAZA LAYOUT



Each of the artworks in the layout is to be located at the end of its pointer line. Benches are indicated by the  symbol, and the granite orientation pages by the  symbol. Benches are assumed to be in the landscape part of the design.

Historical Orientation

A visitor will be able to enter the plaza from any point around the plaza's perimeter. But the Path of Oklahoma African American History begins at the point where a majority of visitors will enter, because most people will disembark in the parking lot just north of the plaza.

We have designed a symbolic system of markers to maintain historical perspective for visitors, including teachers who lead their classes through the plaza. Entering from the parking lot, the visitor will see a huge history book, lying on the grass, open, with its central section torn out. All of the intact pages will be light in color, while the stubs of the torn out pages will be black. The left white page will be inscribed with:

The (In)Complete History of Oklahoma

Form: Solid, large-scale sculpture
Material: Granite
Width: 8'
Depth: 4'

Please note that dimensions in this proposal are initial estimates.

Figure 2. HISTORY BOOK AT ENTRANCE



The black pages are missing from the book—symbolic of the fact that their contents were suppressed, soft-pedaled or ignored for many decades, in most cases. But visitors will soon notice that each plaza monument is preceded by an orientation page in black granite (a stele), as if it was one of the excised pages. (We studied several textbooks about Oklahoma history and politics, and found that they either omitted African American history altogether, or treated it insufficiently.)²

The orientation pages will provide historical background and context for each monument.

Figure 3 shows a historical orientation page.

Form: Solid sculpture
Material: Black granite
Width: 3' 6"
Depth: 2' 4"

² Examples are: Dale, 1949; McReynolds, *et al*, 1967; and Gibson, *et al*, 1981. For example, we counted 27 photos in Dale's textbook that feature people—not one includes an African American. All 14 people-featuring illustrations are devoid of African Americans. We do not assume any malice on the part of the authors. Arrell Gibson, for example, encouraged Jimmie Lewis Franklin's research. But in this author's personal opinion they provided insufficient treatment, and consequently deprived Oklahomans of vital perspective on their heritage, however unpleasant.

Figure 3. SAMPLE HISTORY ORIENTATION PAGE



Near the exit from the Path of Oklahoma African American History another huge book will lie on the ground, except that it will be in possession of all of its pages. The left open page will be black, to symbolize African American history, and the right page will be white to symbolize white history. The edges of the rest of the book will be a mix of black and white pages. Of course, this final book symbolizes the awakening of interest in the complete history of the United States, black and white. The open pages will be inscribed with:

The Complete History of Oklahoma

Figure 4 shows the book at the exit to the Path of Oklahoma African American History.

Form: Solid, large-scale sculpture
Material: Granite
Width: 8'
Depth: 4'

Figure 4. HISTORY BOOK AT EXIT TO HISTORY PATH



Path-Turning Orientation

The Path of Oklahoma African American History will generally guide visitors to the left, because of the natural preference of most people to look to their left and to turn to their left.

Orientation of Reliefs Relative to Sun

The plaza site is aligned north-south. All reliefs need to be placed in an orientation that maximizes the most effective highlighting and shadowing of their contours, which is within 25 degrees of east-west, with the relief face on the south side.

Views of Plaza from Streets

The History Plaza will be situated in a visually critical location in front of the state capitol. Most visitors who wish to see the plaza will arrive by motor vehicle, because the nearby neighborhoods are defined by low-density housing which will generate very little foot traffic. The boulevard is one-way on the approach from the south, which directs traffic around the east side of the site.

North-bound traffic needs to see at least one significant monument in the plaza, and none of the plaza's monuments should present a poor side to the street. We have positioned two of the major monument circles and the amphitheater arch so that they are aligned with the capitol.

South-bound traffic will see the Buffalo soldier, Freedman farmer, Deputy Marshal, and the Cowboy on their way past the plaza.

4. ARTWORK COMPOSITIONS

This section introduces each of the separate monuments in the order in which they would be seen by a visitor walking the Path of Oklahoma African American History.

Trail of Tears

We think it is important to make it clear to visitors how the first African Americans came to make their permanent homes in Oklahoma. Therefore we depict a scene from one of the several Trails of Tears that resulted from the removals of the Five Civilized Tribes from east of the Mississippi. Our experience indicates that nearly all people today are surprised that American Indians had slaves, and how their removal brought large numbers of African Americans to Oklahoma early in the nineteenth century. This subject is highly relevant and dramatic. It should set visitors' minds into a serious focus for what will follow.

Form: Relief
Material: Bronze
Width: 8' 4"
Height: 3'

Figure 5. TRAIL OF TEARS



Revolt of 1842

African American slaves rebelled against their Indian slaveholders in 1842 (some sources say 1841)³. We have added this subject to the plaza because it is important to show visitors that African Americans, even long before the Civil War, did not accept their condition passively, but fought for freedom. The rebellion was put down by Indian territorial militia. The rebellion relief emphasizes defiance in the unequal fight.

Figure 6. REBELLION OF 1842



Form: Relief
Material: Bronze
Width: 3'
Height: 2' 9"

³ Franklin J. L., 1982, p. 8.

Civil War: The Battle of Honey Springs

Indian Territory African Americans escaped from their slaveholders in significant numbers during the Civil War to join the Union army in Kansas. They were formed into the Kansas First Colored Volunteers Infantry Regiment and trained for front-line duty. At the battle of Honey Springs in what is now Oklahoma they stood as if in military-parade formation while the rebel lines approached. In Civil War battles a defending formation often could win if its men could stand their ground and fire off three or more disciplined rounds at the enemy, even as colleagues fell mortally wounded. The African Americans from Oklahoma performed so well that their white officer wrote that they were the finest troops he had commanded. This relief is dedicated to their courage and solidarity in the fight for freedom.

Form: Relief. The first soldier is fully in-the-round. The second is one-half in-the-round. The third is about one-quarter, and the rest are in progressively lower relief.

Material: Bronze

Scale: 1.085 life size (first soldier)

Width: 16' 11.7"

Height: 6' 5.6"

Figure 7. CIVIL WAR: The Battle of Honey Springs

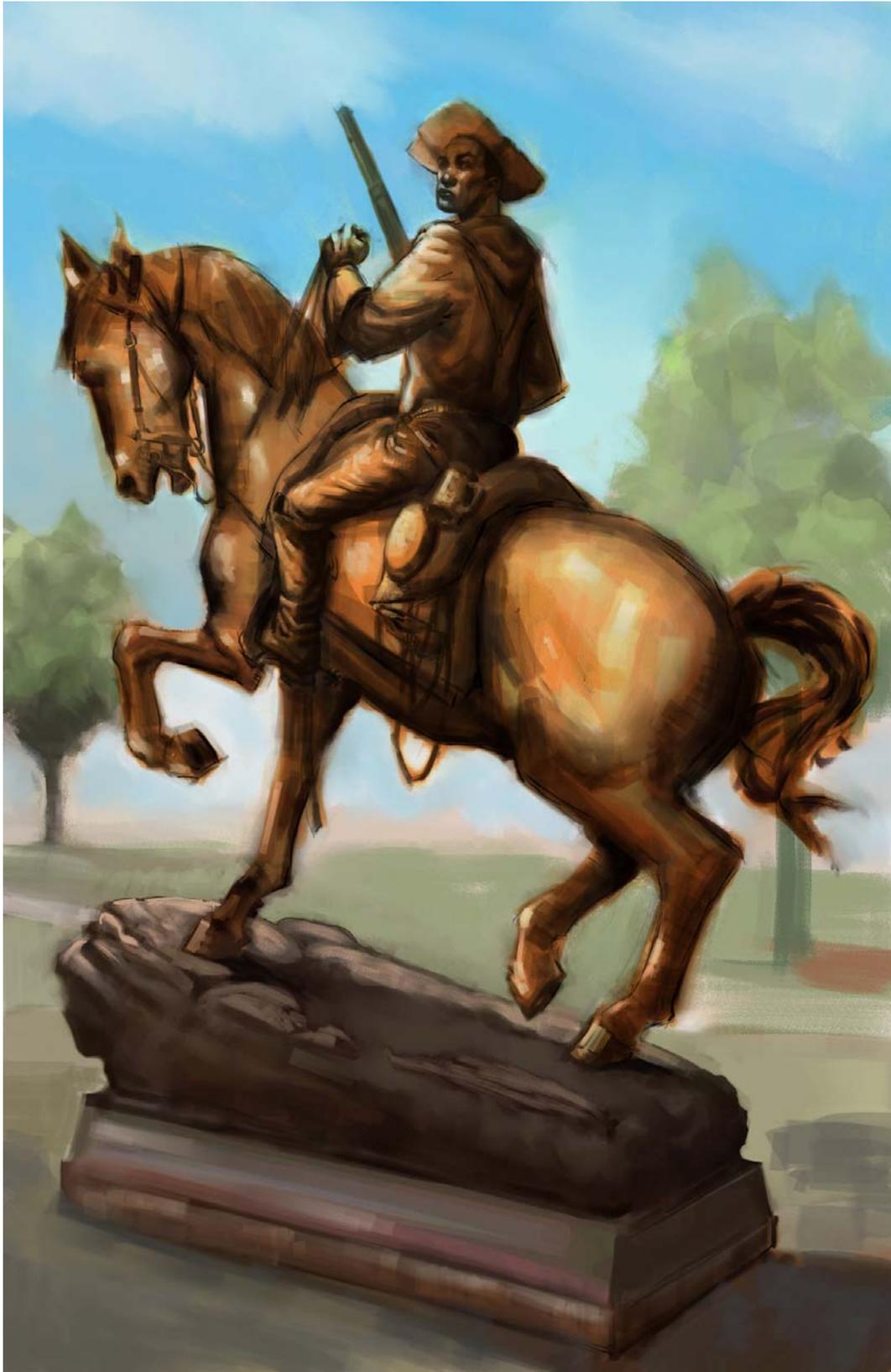


Buffalo Soldier

Buffalo soldiers were African American Federal troops deployed in what is now Oklahoma during the period between the Civil War and statehood. They were constituted into cavalry and infantry units, which guarded wagon trains, fought American Indians, fought and arrested desperadoes, kept settlers out of the territory before the land runs, and maintained order during the land runs. We have elected to give them prominence with an equestrian sculpture because: a) they played an important role in building Oklahoma; b) they demonstrated once again that African Americans are every bit as capable as troops as whites; c) they instilled pride in the African American community; and d) the equestrian sculpture's drama will appeal to children and increase their interest in the history plaza.

Form: Fully in-the-round
Material: Bronze (horse, rider & rock); Limestone or concrete (base)
Scale: 1.085 life size
Height: 9' 2" (sculpture)
Height: 12' (sculpture + rock and base)
Length: 8'

Figure 8. BUFFALO SOLDIER



U.S. Federal Deputy Marshal

African American Federal Deputy Marshals played a critical role in territorial law enforcement in cases where troops were not necessary. A number of the African American marshals became famous in the territory for their tracking and shooting acumen, and for quality of detective work. This artwork will present the viewer with an image of a highly capable, honest and extremely tough African American lawman.

The figure is perched on a rock lookout, from which he is surveilling badmen. He exudes the look of confidence of a professional who has seen a lot in life, but is unafraid.

Our preferred landscape for the deputy marshal is to place him on top of a high rock mound. This mound would enhance the plaza's landscape and enhance the marshal's intrigue. Of course, we will collaborate with the selected landscape architect on all such decisions.

Form: Fully in-the-round
Material: Bronze (figure & rock)
Scale: 1.085 life size
Height: 7' 1" (sculpture including bronze rock)

Figure 9. U.S. DEPUTY MARSHAL



Independent Freedman Farmer

Many Freedmen of the Indian Territory were successful farmers or cattle ranchers, and farming was the principal source of African American income. To emphasize the independent spirit and accomplishments of the Freedmen, we depict a Freedman farmer in the form of a woman plowing her field behind a mule. This composition is dramatic and critical—it illustrates the hard work of Freedmen farmers and their determination to remain independent of the oppressive Southern white culture of the time. The depiction of the farmer as a woman is accurate. Freedmen women worked the farm just as did the men.

Form: Fully in-the-round
Material: Bronze
Scale: 1.085 life size
Height: 6' 2.3" (farmer, including hat)
Height: 6' 8.5" (mule)

Figure 10. INDEPENDENT FREEDMAN FARMER



Cowboy

The African American cowboy Bill Pickett invented bulldogging, and was one of the most famous cowboys of all time.⁴ Our intentions in devoting a large in-the-round sculpture to an African American bulldogger, (not necessarily Bill Pickett), are to:

- Honor all of the African American cowboys who worked their trade in Oklahoma—to remind people that African Americans played a major role in that quintessentially American pursuit
- Increase interest of children in their own history
- Add an upbeat, dramatic and action-oriented work of art to the plaza

The Cowboy is about to flip a steer. He is digging furrows into the ground with his heels.

Form: Fully in-the-round
Material: Bronze
Scale: 1.085 life size
Height: 4' 1" (to tip of tail)
Length: 10' 2" (including base)

⁴ There are many references on African American cowboys. See, for example, Katz, 2005, chapter 7.

Figure 11. COWBOY



All-Black Towns

As with all of the topics in this proposal document, there is insufficient space to provide a thorough discussion, but we have attempted to provide synopses which outline the bases for our decisions.

All-Black towns were the combined product of Edward P. McCabe's vision and the burning desire of African Americans, primarily from the South, to escape white oppression. Some of the towns were well stocked with almost every kind of expertise they needed, from farmers to lawyers, soon after establishment.

The significance of the All-Black towns in Oklahoma lies primarily in their direct contributions to Oklahoma, their reinforcement of independent spirit, as a symbol of freedom from white injustice, and as havens where future African American leadership was nurtured.

Our proposed All-Black towns monument is an open frame of steel, forming an abstracted façade for a town. Visitors to the plaza will be able to see through the walls, and even walk through them if they so choose. We think that children may be particularly delighted by this monument, and that may make them pause to think about its meaning for them.

The buildings in the façade are symbolic of the range of activities and achievements in these towns: a church, school, business, and local government office. A railroad train (also constructed of open frame), is stopped at the depot behind the façade. This signifies the early development of rail connections to the towns, which supported their economic health until many of the railroads failed.

A second layer of open frame will be positioned in front of the façade, with enough room for visitors to pass through. This layer will depict, in larger-than-life size, some of the key activities that made the towns unique in the nineteenth century: an active (even activist) reverend, a school teacher leading her charges and a newspaper boy shouting out the headline announcing local elections. The two layers together represent a vibrant, independent community. A large map of Oklahoma in terrazzo occupies the oval that lies between the town and the Expulsions relief facing it. The map displays the locations of the All-Black Towns and of the expulsions.

Form: 2-dimensional open frame
Material: Steel
Scale of people: 1½ life size
Scale of buildings: approx. ½ life size
Height: 19' (to top of church steeple)
Length: 60'

Figure 12. ALL-BLACK TOWNS



Expulsions

The land runs of the 1890s brought many thousands of Southern whites to the Oklahoma Territory, who brought their racist attitudes with them. African Americans were subjected to violent elimination of the freedom to choose locations at which to live through dire warnings to leave an area on short notice or to never enter an area, such as in Osage territory in 1893. Many of these actions took the form of outright expulsion from African Americans' homes. Examples include: Lexington in 1892, Davis in 1897; Pottawatomie county in 1898; Sapulpa, Tecumseh and Braggs in 1901; Lawton, Shawnee, Langston, Blackwell, and Norman and Greer counties in 1902; Holdenville and Claremore in 1904; and Waurika in 1907.⁵

The Expulsions relief is composed to retain historical accuracy and also to evoke at least some of the horror of terrorism. It is located opposite the All-Black Towns monument because its events occurred in parallel with the development of the All-Black Towns.

Form: Relief
Material: Bronze
Width: 5'
Height: 2'

⁵ Tolson, 1972, pp. 61-68.

Figure 13. EXPULSIONS



Out-Migration

Thousands of African Americans became disillusioned with their prospects in Oklahoma, especially in the decade after statehood. Some moved to Kansas or the North; others to Mexico and Canada. A relatively small number sold their homes and followed Chief Sam to Texas in the hope of emigrating to Liberia. A few religious leaders admonished their parishioners to stay and stick it out.

Overall, the experience of the emigrants was unfortunate. Neither Canada nor Mexico were much more welcoming than was the United States. The Chief Sam emigration to Liberia was realized by only a handful of people—a much larger number had to trek back to Oklahoma penniless after waiting in vain for the transport to return to pick them up.

We include a small monument to these emigrants—our composition depicting a rather dejected man with all of his worldly possessions, as symbolized by his duffel bag and a cooking pot tied to his coat, waiting for the ship that never came.

Form: Fully in-the-round
Material: Bronze (figure & duffel bag) No base
Scale: 1.085 life size
Height: 3' 9.3"

Figure 14. OUT-MIGRATION



Jim Crow Era

The Jim Crow Era represents one of the monstrous crimes against humanity—and it happened right here in Oklahoma. It was transplanted virtually in one piece from its origins in the Deep South, as white in-migrants from that region quickly outnumbered African Americans in the Territory. The state constitutional convention only postponed Jim Crow clauses so that President Roosevelt would sign the state’s certification—as soon as the first legislature convened it passed Jim Crow legislation. By 1910 the African Americans of Oklahoma were disfranchised and segregated.

The figure is in the center of a 25-foot platform made of 7 dark-red granite slabs, divided by black-granite dividers.

The figure inside the ring is an allegory of the African Americans of Oklahoma with their freedom of action and expression oppressed by the state and many of its white citizens. The African American population is not crushed, and is pushing back with all of its strength. But the full force of the state and of the majority of society is formidable.

The sides of the black granite column on which the figure stands are inscribed with the two key forms taken by Jim Crow: “Disfranchisement” and “Separate But (Un)Equal.”

Six of the granite sections that form the platform are inscribed with significant Jim Crow legislation. The front section contains the title “Jim Crow Era.”

The six legislation sections contain:⁶

- Senate Bill No. 1 (1907) (separate coaches and waiting rooms)
- Senate Bill No. 65 (1908) (anti-miscegenation by African Americans)
- Grandfather Clause (1910) (disfranchisement)
- Tulsa Ordinance (1916) (prohibiting freedom of housing)
- Shipley Bill (1955) (permitting counties to bus African American children out of white districts)
- Anti-Busing Legislation (1970) (to end busing for integration purposes)

We are open to suggestions about content.

Sculpture		Platform	
Form	Fully-in-the-round	Form	Engraved text
Material	Bronze	Material	Dark red granite, light granite dividers
Width	6’ 6”	Diameter	25’
Height	6’ 6”		

⁶ Tolson, 1972, pp. 147, 152, 154, 201, among others.

Figure 15. JIM CROW ERA
Front View



Figure 16. JIM CROW ERA
Aerial View, at Slight Angle



Tribute To Service Workers

This monument is a relatively small, elegant column in granite, with low reliefs on three sides and a text dedication on the fourth side. Each of the reliefs depicts a different form of service worker.

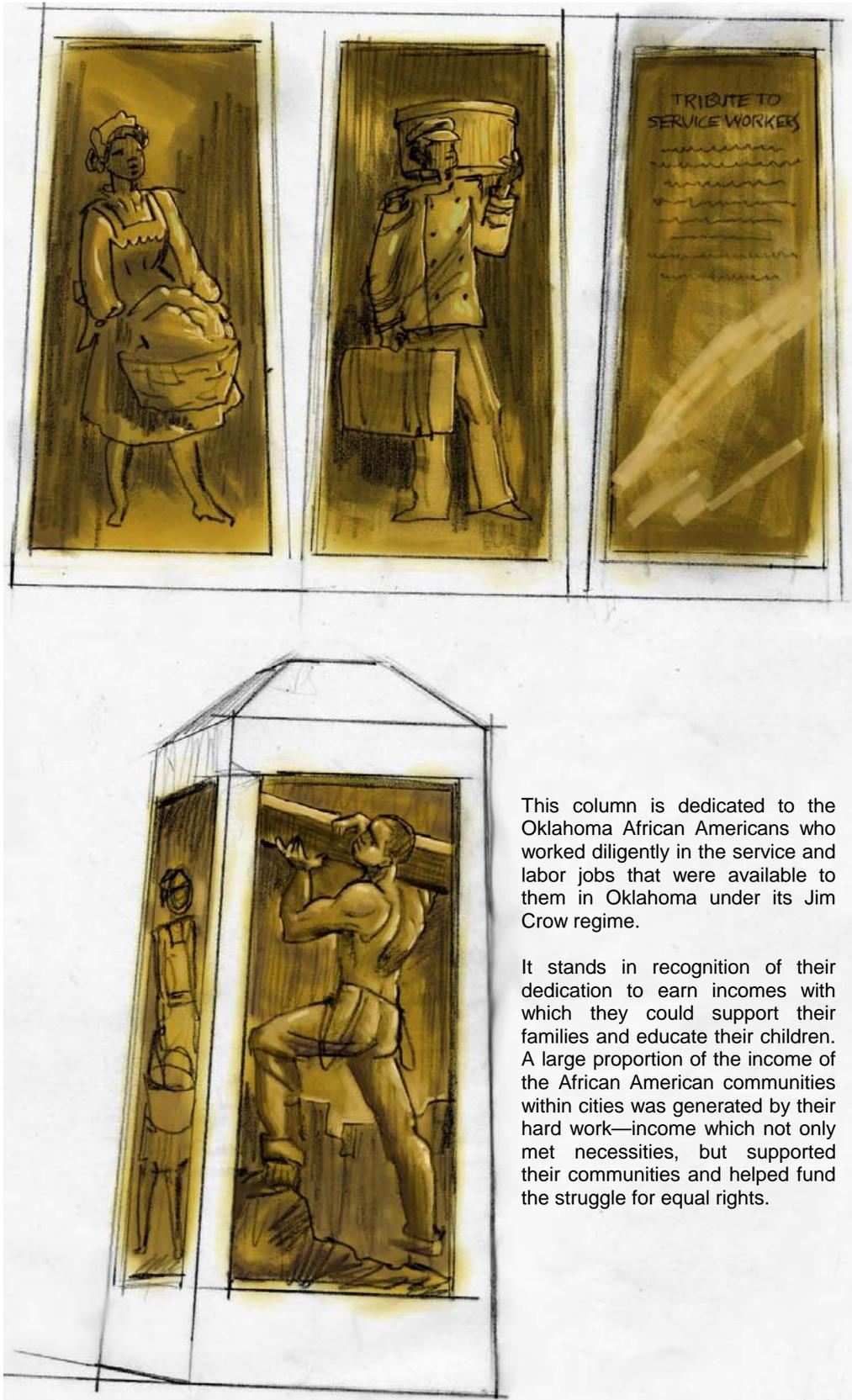
The following inscription is engraved into the fourth side:

This column is dedicated to the Oklahoma African Americans who worked diligently in the service and labor jobs that were available to them in Oklahoma under its Jim Crow regime. It stands in recognition of their dedication to earn incomes with which they could support their families and educate their children. A large proportion of the income of the African American communities within cities was generated by their hard work—income which not only met necessities, but supported their communities and helped fund the struggle for equal rights.

The column is in limestone. The reliefs are in bronze to highlight their features and for durability.

Form: Reliefs on column
Material: Bronze (reliefs)
Limestone (column)
Width: 5'
Height: 6' 5" (column)
Height: 4' 6" (each relief)

Figure 17. TRIBUTE TO SERVICE WORKERS



This column is dedicated to the Oklahoma African Americans who worked diligently in the service and labor jobs that were available to them in Oklahoma under its Jim Crow regime.

It stands in recognition of their dedication to earn incomes with which they could support their families and educate their children. A large proportion of the income of the African American communities within cities was generated by their hard work—income which not only met necessities, but supported their communities and helped fund the struggle for equal rights.

Violence Against African Americans

Violence against African Americans in Oklahoma was extreme and assumed several forms. Expulsions began in the Territory after the first of the land runs—we have already discussed our proposed relief to record that terrorism. Lynchings also began in Oklahoma at the same time, although most of them were of white cattle rustlers. The number of lynchings and other acts of violence against African Americans in Oklahoma skyrocketed with the approach of statehood and in the first decade after. The Ku Klux Klan regenerated in 1915, was revived in large numbers in Oklahoma in 1922, attained a state membership of 150,000, and perpetrated horrific crimes against African Americans during the 1920s; after which it lost its appeal.

Our proposed memorial to the victims of violence addresses three issues:

- Prominence: violent enforcement of racists' fear and mob anger deserves to be exposed in a permanent public space.
- Perspective: the memorial should not glorify the perpetrators in the eyes of racists who may visit the plaza. We designed several versions of a monument of shame, focusing on the KKK, but ultimately decided to fold their crimes into an encompassing portrayal of violence. We do not want to create an inadvertent altar to them.

The elements of the memorial are:

- Lynchings: description and history
- Tulsa Massacre: description of the events, without apology to the white mob and government collusion
- KKK: the extent of its membership and its atrocities
- Interference in government: the control of the state and local governments exercised by the KKK
- Oklahoma Freedom Center arson of 1970: to remind people that violence is a recent phenomenon

Form: Photo etched text and photos on wall that lies behind a large abstract flame

Material: Granite wall and Cor-Ten steel flame

Length of wall: 21'

Height of wall: 6' 5"

Width of flame: 7' 7"

Height of flame: 8' 5"

Figure 18. VIOLENCE AGAINST AFRICAN AMERICANS



Defeat of Jim Crow

Of course, the struggle for equality in all dimensions continues. But one of the great victories for humankind in history has been the defeat of Jim Crow and segregation—in both its official and unofficial forms. It is remarkable and should be a matter of pride for Oklahomans that African Americans (and some whites) were early and persistent leaders in the fight for equality. (More successful U.S. Supreme Court civil rights cases originated in Oklahoma than in the rest of the nation.)⁷

Our proposed monument to this victory is placed near the center of the plaza and is carved in granite. The stone sculpture depicts four categories of African American citizens who organized and fought Jim Crow and unofficial segregation throughout the twentieth century. It is labeled “Freedom Fighters.”

The underlying theme is that African Americans defeated the Jim Crow regime, over many decades, through nonviolent legal action.

The four allegorical African American citizens represent, from right to left (when facing the sculpture):

- Black newspapers: holding a paper with the headline “Governor: Take Action!”
- Lawyers: holding a law book
- Citizen advocacy groups: holding a petition to the president and Congress
- Civil rights activists: holding a boycott sign. This honors the groups that staged sit-ins and boycotts beginning in the late 1950s.

The four constitute a human phalanx, arms linked in wedge formation, resolutely marching forward to confront and defeat Jim Crow. The concept makes it clear that victories gained required the participation all of these forces (and more) to attain their goals.

The groups that played critical roles in the struggle are named on one of the Walls of Achievement elsewhere in the Plaza.

The stone sculpture is placed in the center of a 25-foot platform made of Oklahoma red granite, divided by light granite dividers. Six of the granite sections are inscribed with the names of civil rights legal actions that originated in Oklahoma, and other civil rights actions that occurred in the state. One section contains the title “Defeat of Jim Crow.”

Sculpture		Platform	
Form	High relief	Form	Engraved text
Material	Granite	Material	Oklahoma red granite, black granite dividers
Width	6’ 8”	Diameter	25’
Height	7’ 5”		

⁷ Stated in film on sit-ins in Oklahoma History Center

Figure 19. DEFEAT OF JIM CROW
Front View of Sculpture

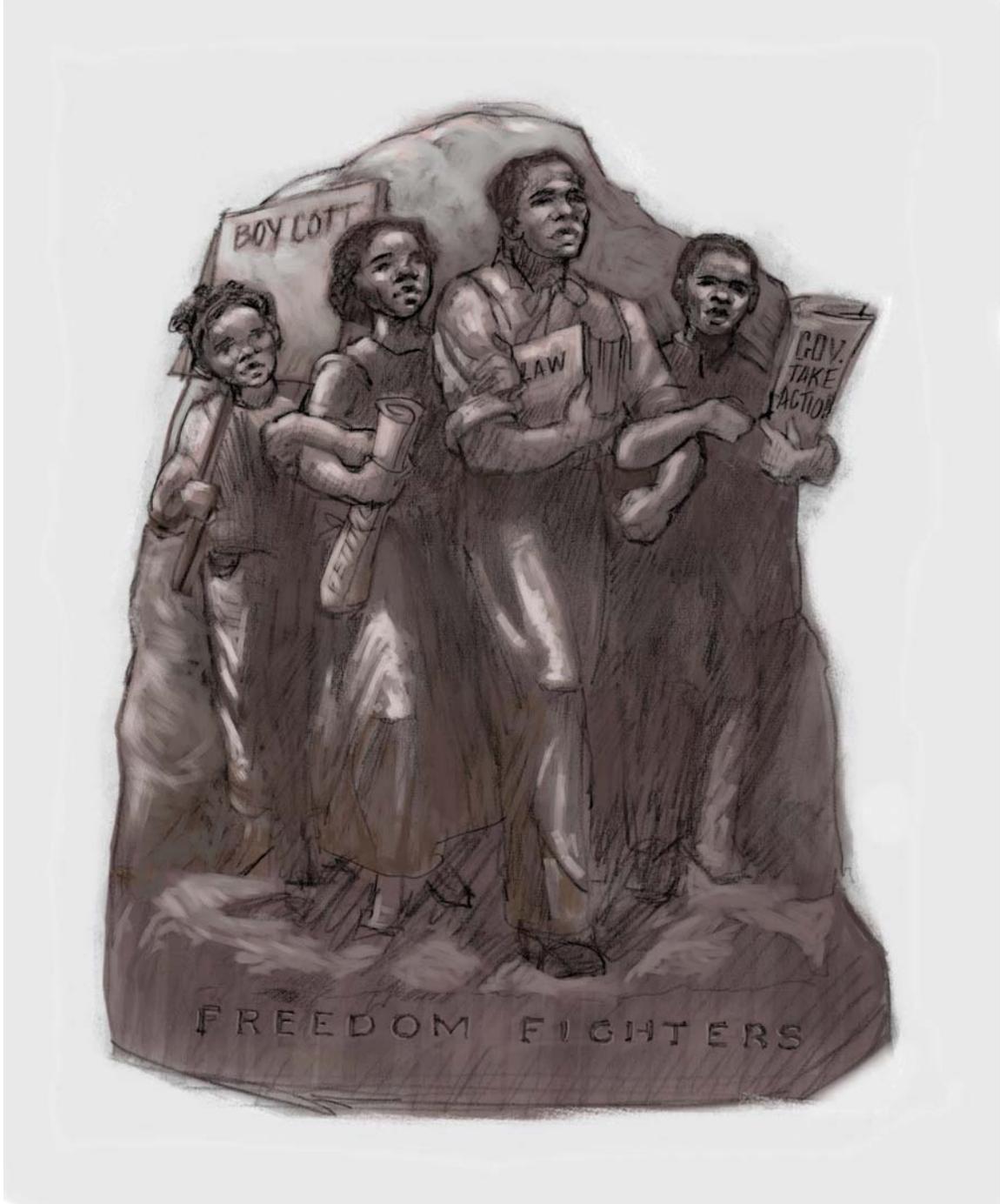


Figure 20. DEFEAT OF JIM CROW
Aerial View, at Slight Angle



Civil rights actions engraved in the red granite:

- Guinn vs. United States (1915)
- B. C. Franklin's defense of African American allotment rights, and cases after the Tulsa massacre; Black Dispatch editorials and funding of legal cases
- Lane vs. Wilson (1939)
- Sipuel vs. Oklahoma vs. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma (1948)
- McLaurin vs. Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma (1950)
- 1958 sit-ins and subsequent boycotts

We are open to suggestions about content.

Achievement Walls

Oklahoma's African Americans have made impressive contributions to their communities, their state and the nation during their long history in the region. The community has benefited from its own:

- Successful businesses, small and large, e.g., small businesses in Oklahoma City's Deep Deuce and Tulsa's Black Wall Street
- Churches active in civil rights (e.g., the Appeal for Human Justice sermon of Reverend F. K. White, and social activities such as clubs, sports, and music)
- Fraternal orders, e.g., Prince Hall Masons, Knights of Pythias, Odd Fellows
- Women's clubs
- Social clubs, e.g., Scouts, YMCA
- Elected representatives in the Territory
- Representatives elected since 1964
- Appointed officials
- J. Coody Johnson's state fairs in the second decade of the twentieth century
- Authors, playwrights, poets, and scholars
- Musicians, especially the great jazz artists of the Deep Deuce
- Educators, e.g., the OANT, teachers, the Black colleges, and Langston University
- Black newspapers (so important as an African American voice and in the civil rights struggle)
- Advocacy groups, e.g.: Black Baptist Ministers, Oklahomans for Progress, Negro Protection League, Afro-American Suffrage League, Constitutional League, Youth Council, Urban League of Oklahoma, NAAC of Oklahoma, Oklahomans for Progress, etc.
- Sports figures

Extra space on the walls will be reserved for future additions.

We will have to work with the Committee to see how much detail it wishes to see in the Achievement Walls, including which, if any, individuals should be honored.

The walls will be made of a collage of two colors of granite: Oklahoma red granite as the surface of each wall, and a darker red for the photo etched text and photos.

Form: Photo etched granite
 Material: Oklahoma red granite as background; darker red granite for text and photos
 Height: 7'
 Length: 16'
 Width: 2'

Figure 21. ACHIEVEMENT
Wall 1

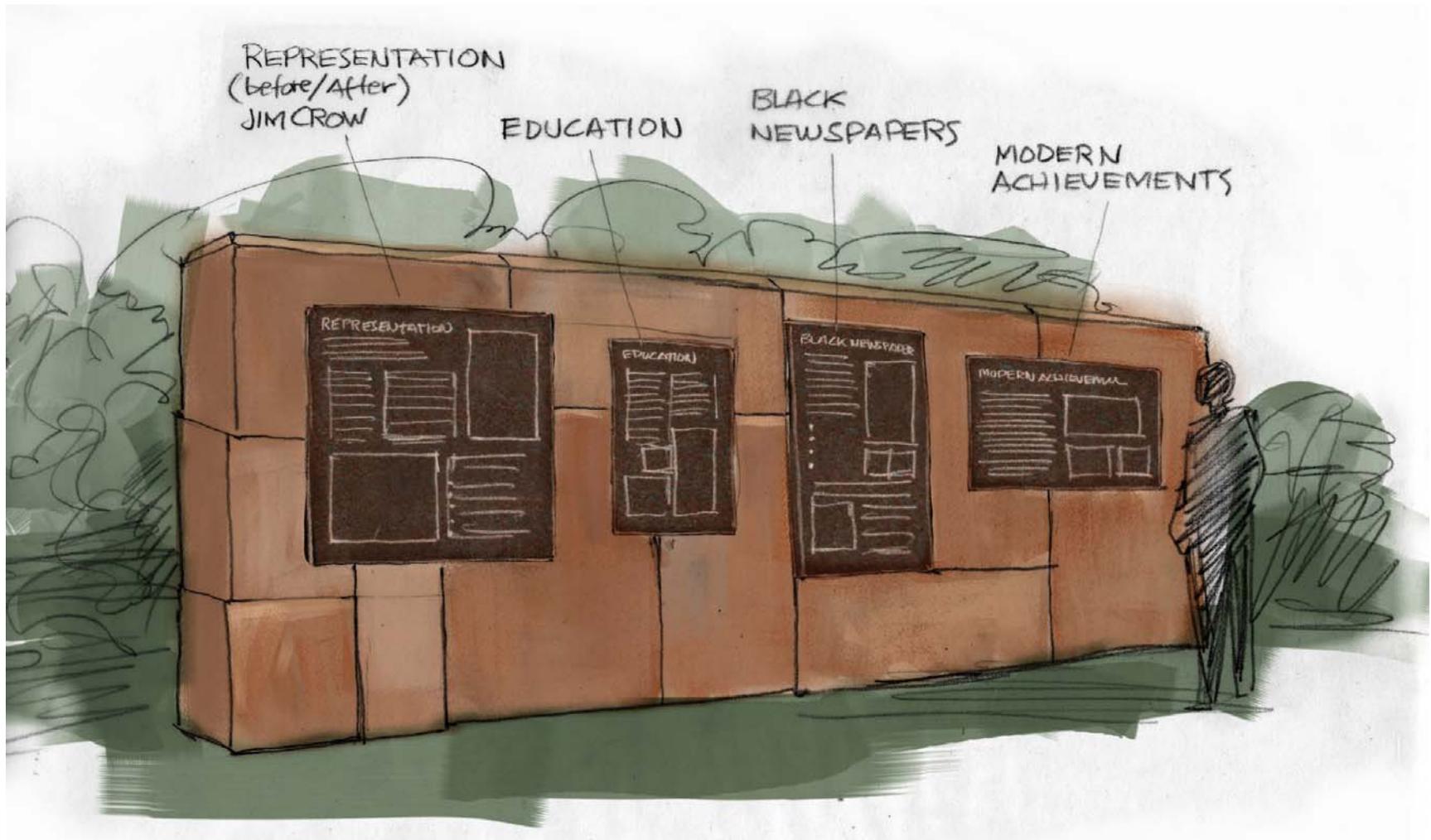
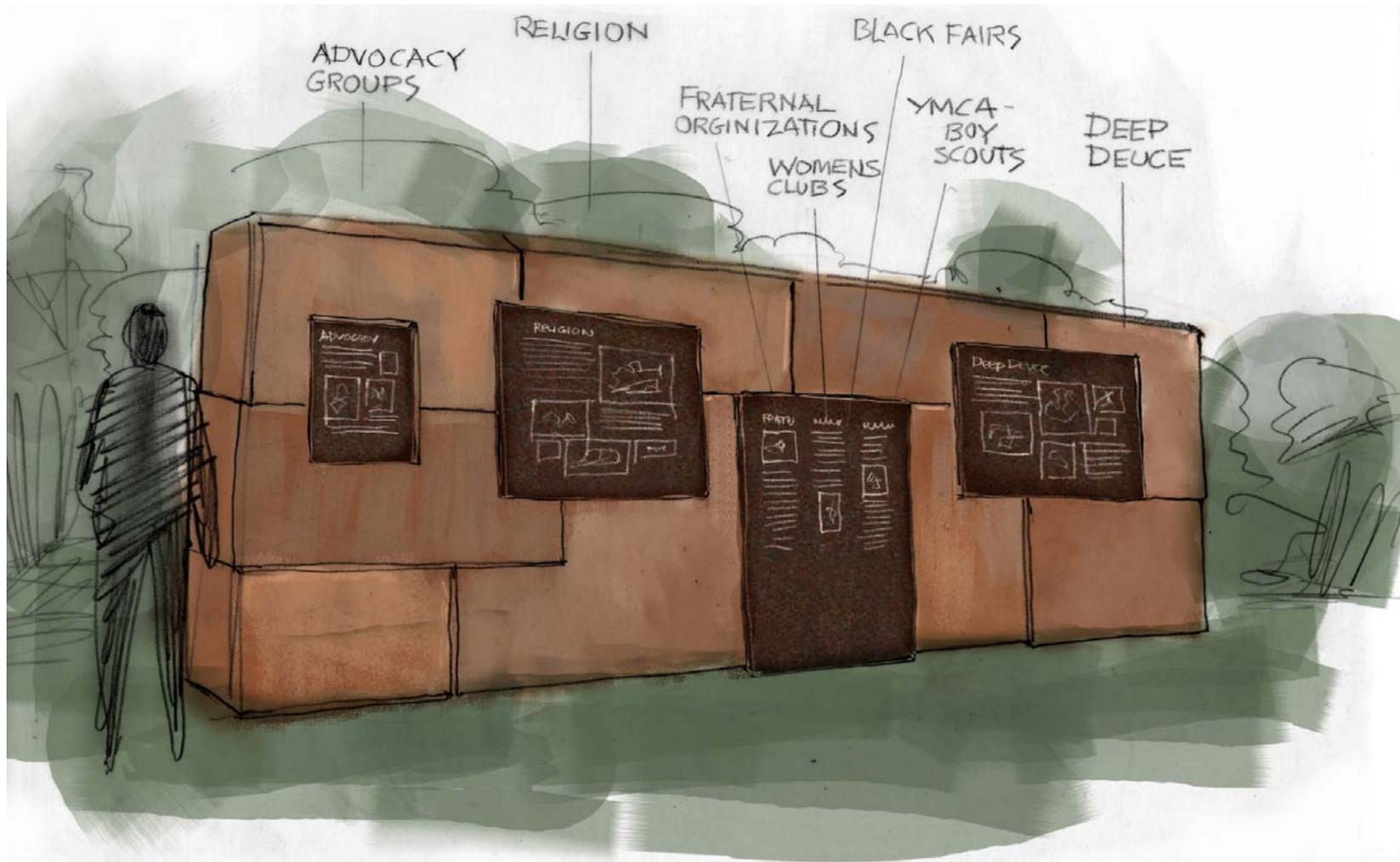


Figure 22. ACHIEVEMENT
Wall 2



Rights and Representation Regained

The historical part of the proposed plaza concludes with an uplifting allegory of inspiration, to celebrate the reclaiming of precious rights that most Americans take for granted. The allegory is of the phoenix, the mythological Egyptian bird that spent centuries in the desert, was consumed in flames, then rose from the ashes, reborn. The analogy with the African American experience in Oklahoma is striking.

The sculpture is of an African American woman-phoenix rising from a circular structure that could be either a flower garden or a fountain. Her arms have transformed into wings, (she is a phoenix, not an angel); she has stretched them upward; and she tilts her head skyward as she rises. Her torso and legs transfigure into a tapered column etched with outlines of the flames she is leaving behind.

The title of the monument is engraved in the middle of her tapered column:

Rights and Representation Regained!

A poem we find to be appropriate, at least in its meaning, for the back of the rising African American phoenix, is:⁸

Through slavery's lashes and expulsions' loss,
Greenwood's ashes and the burning cross

We have protected our land and tilled our fields
We have built our towns and won our appeals

We educate our children and they educate theirs
We teach them to work and to say their prayers

We defeated Jim Crow and ended segregation
We have become full citizens and improved our nation

We contribute our intelligence and our creativity
To the state of our birth—our land of nativity

We fight for our rights, we link arms together
We stand up and shout: Freedom For All, Forever!

Alternatively, this could be a place for one of the poems from our proposed Oklahoma community submissions.

Form: Fully-in-the-round
Material: Black granite
Height: 12' 2"

⁸ "Rise Up From The Ashes: Rights Regained", Firmin, R., 2006

Figure 23. RIGHTS AND REPRESENTATION REGAINED!
(Side View and Front View)



**Figure 24. RIGHTS AND REPRESENTATION REGAINED!
NIGHTTIME VIEW (Side View and Front View)**



Amphitheater and Arch

The last proposed artwork is a small amphitheater designed to accommodate one or two classes of children, or a small audience for an outdoor play or poetry reading. It will also serve as a scenic and inspiring site for lunch gatherings. Its primary purpose is for education related to African American history.

The amphitheater will be recessed into the ground so as to not impose its structure onto the plaza.

The arch's two pillars rise from the sides of the amphitheater stage—connected by a decorative-lettering iron arch. The arch lettering spells out the slogan of the *Sentinel* newspaper: "FREEDOM FOR ALL FOREVER". The span of the arch is dimensioned so that it will frame the capitol building for viewers in the amphitheater. This visually ties the entire plaza into the state government and its present-day concepts of law and justice. The two supporting pillars will be inscribed with three words each in V-groove lettering.

Viewed from the amphitheater:

Left pillar: Family
Faith
Community

Right pillar: Education
Law
Resilience

These words are intended to summarize the foundations that have sustained the African American community in Oklahoma.

Archway:

Form: Iron arch supported by two pillars
Material: Granite on concrete, or limestone
Height: 7'

Amphitheater:

Form: Semicircular, shallow steps sunk into gently sloped mound
Material: Concrete
Capacity: Sufficient to hold two classrooms of children

Figure 25. AMPHITHEATER



5. DAUB FIRMIN HENDRICKSON SCULPTURE GROUP

Our partnership brings together three sculptors with a set of experiences and talents that are unusual in the fine arts: Eugene Daub, acclaimed master sculptor of public monuments with 30 years experience; Rob Firmin, historical researcher and software entrepreneur-turned sculptor; and Jonah Hendrickson, apprentice to Mr. Daub with 10 years experience. We have extensive, proven experience in monumental sculpture and the creation of art for public spaces. We have deep capability to conduct research to create monuments of historical validity and artistic interest. One of the team's unusual talents is the fact that it is equally skilled at the full spectrum of sculpture—from in-the-round figures to high and low relief, and all projections in between.

Finally, we have thorough experience in guiding complex projects with advanced project management, which reduces financial, delivery and quality risk.

Because of the substantial research effort dedicated to our proposals, we only respond to RFQs that intrigue us. This is one such project.

Similar Projects

We have worked on many similar projects, as the enclosed portfolio examples can only partially demonstrate. Our recent public art projects include :

- Large historical monuments: eight monuments dedicated to American history
- Cultural, ethnic and gender diversity: one exclusively African-American monument (2 times life size); commemoration of York, the African-American who participated in the Lewis and Clark expedition, in two unrelated large monuments; a commemoration of the Tuskegee African-American fighter unit of WW II; an African-American commemorative medallion; and life-size soldiers representing service in four wars, including Asians, African-Americans, Navaho, Caucasians, and Hispanics.
- Community themes: a Japanese-American community monument in three cities
- Reliefs: (excellent medium for telling a story), e.g., a 17' x 8' Lewis and Clark; a biographical set of reliefs around the base of Phineas Banning's figure; a multi-panel history of Guam in WW II in stone; portraits; and many medallions
- Large military monuments: three, plus a military medallion with cavalry soldiers
- Allegories: four, including large-scale figures in a state capitol's rotunda
- Portraits: Subjects from a wide range of backgrounds, including presidents, business leaders, academics, a general, community leaders and activists, and many others.

Approach to Projects

First, we are an artist group that practices both artistry and discipline.

Our prime operating rule is to communicate effectively with our sponsors. We clarify requirements, and are open to suggestions. We maintain regular contact so that neither party drifts off track.

We devote considerable time to research the substance of any potential project. Oklahoma's African-American history is fascinating and a critical component of the state's heritage—we are eager to have begun to apply our research expertise to this subject. We merge strict adherence to our defined goals with artistic discipline, imagination, and artistic and emotional expression. We create and review prototypes and test uncertain elements. Our resulting compositions are then sculpted, critiqued and refined. We do all of our own artistic work. We work as a team, with shared responsibilities as well as specialized focus, and we work extremely well together.

We apply our project-management expertise—refined through Rob Firmin's 25 years in the high-tech computer software industry in his first career—to the entire process, from research to installation of completed sculptures. This substantially reduces risk to our sponsors. Rob's resume is filled with experience in management, project management, financial planning, and historical research. He uses many computer-based tools for these purposes, some of which he created.

We also have experience in design and construction of landscape models for public art projects. We have built these models ourselves, and in collaboration with landscape architects. We would enjoy working with the landscape architecture team selected by the Committee.

Preliminary Budget

A preliminary rough estimate for artwork for all of the proposed monuments is \$2.4 million for all artwork. Landscaping elements are not included, given the Committee's separate selection of a landscape firm.

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