

Senator Sean Ryan, in partnership with a steering committee of community stakeholders, is excited to announce a call for proposals for a sculpture in honor of Shirley Chisholm. The selected public artwork will be sited on the grounds of Forest Lawn Cemetery, Ms. Chisholm's final resting place.

This proposed public initiative will demonstrate Shirley Chisholm's incredible legacy to the entire Western New York community and beyond. The statue will help to convey who Ms. Chisholm was and what she meant; both to Buffalo and to the entire country. The statue will capture her legacy, her impact on our community, and her demonstration that women – particularly Black women – are capable of anything; even (and especially) if it has never been done before.

Background

Shirley Chisholm was born Shirley Anita St. Hill in Brooklyn, New York on November 30, 1924 and died on January 1, 2005 at the age of 80. Inscribed on the crypt of the Former U.S. Representative is the phrase “unbought and unbosserd,” which was her campaign slogan when she became the first Black woman to run for president in 1972. Shirley Chisholm was a trailblazer in politics whose legacy spans the nation and includes our very own city of Buffalo, New York.

Chisholm was born to her parents, Charles St. Hill and Ruby Seale and grew up in Brooklyn, New York. After excelling in high school, Shirley attended Brooklyn College and graduated cum laude with a Bachelor's degree in sociology. In 1964, she began her long and successful career in politics, running for and winning a seat in the New York State Assembly. Four years later, she ran for U.S. Congress in a newly drawn district around Brooklyn, New York and subsequently served for seven terms.

In 1972, Chisholm campaigned for the Democratic presidential nomination. She brought her “unbought and unbosserd” attitude to her campaign, despite a concerted effort against her from the Democratic establishment. She took legal action after she was banned from participating in televised primary debates, and was only able to give one speech. Though she ultimately withdrew her campaign, she received 10% of the total delegates' votes.

During her political career, Shirley was a tireless champion of women, minorities, and the poor. She fought for education and wage reform, and touted herself as the “people's politician.” While in Congress, Shirley fought for programs like Head Start, school lunches and food stamps. She was one of only 19 Representatives willing to hold hearings on the Vietnam War. She was a founding member of the Congressional Black Caucus and the National Women's Political Caucus. She rose through the ranks of Congressional leadership to become the Secretary of the House Democratic Caucus. After she retired from Congress in 1983, Chisholm taught at Mount Holyoke College. Shirley said she wanted to be remembered as a “catalyst for change” and “a Black woman who dared to be herself.”

Chisholm lived for many years in Amherst, New York, after marrying former New York State Assemblymember Arthur Hardwick. Hardwick was a prominent local business and civic leader for many years in Buffalo and Western New York. He held the distinction of being the first African American from Erie County to be elected to the New York State Legislature. During his time in the Legislature, he worked with Attorney General Robert F. Kennedy to expose the conditions endured by the state's migrant workers and authored legislation for the first worker's compensation bill for migrant workers.

Forest Lawn Cemetery is located at 1990 Main Street, in the heart of the Elmwood Village. Forest Lawn was one of the first deliberately designed and professionally landscaped rural cemeteries in the United States. This is a visible, high-traffic, publicly accessible location, and it is where Shirley Chisholm is entombed next to her husband, Arthur Hardwick.

Shirley Chisholm published her memoir “[Unbought and Unbosserd](#)” in 1970.

The following links contain additional information on Shirley Chisholm's life and legacy:

[https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/C/CHISHOLM,-Shirley-Anita-\(C000371\)/](https://history.house.gov/People/Listing/C/CHISHOLM,-Shirley-Anita-(C000371)/)

<https://www.uncrownedcommunitybuilders.com/person/shirley-4>

<https://www.womenshistory.org/education-resources/biographies/shirley-chisholm>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/smithsonian-institution/unbought-and-unbossed-when-black-woman-ran-for-the-white-house-180958699/>

<https://www.adl.org/education/educator-resources/lesson-plans/shirley-chisholm-unbought-unbossed-and-unforgotten>

https://buffalonews.com/news/politics-and-a-womans-place-for-shirley-chisholm-campaigning-isnt-a-career-its-a-cause/article_ffe0bf41-6c45-512b-b36f-f5ee4601259e.html

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y3JCX3WxBik&t=162s>

Theme

The artwork must be of substantial size (specifications below) and presence, and may be a work of either Barre grey granite, bronze, or a combination of both. The purpose is to be a symbol celebrating the legacy of Shirley Chisholm and her impact on our community and country.

The sculpture will capture the essence and power of Shirley Chisholm, presenting the totality of her life in a way that informs the viewer on who she was. This should be an active portrayal of Shirley Chisholm that takes into account her professional accomplishments. This sculpture will provide an opportunity for discourse around Shirley Chisholm's contributions and afford an educational opportunity not just on her legacy, but the legacy of other notable Black female trailblazers. Included as part of the statue will be a QR code that, once scanned, will bring the visitor to a Forest Lawn memorial webpage dedicated to the history and legacy of Shirley Chisholm with a biography and archived images and video.

Below is a selection of images of Shirley Chisholm as well as other public works of art in her honor:





Requirements

- Materials can either be Barre grey granite, bronze, or a combination of both. Barre grey granite may be polished, unpolished, thermal finished, or a combination.
- Memorial size is not to exceed 7' total height from the level of the earth by 10' total width, left to right, including the base.
- Statue should be figurative and vertical in orientation.
- The selected site is 6 feet from the sidewalk in front of Birchwood Mausoleum.

- Statue will have a granite base on a concrete foundation.

The Competition

Artists are not required to be producers of sculpture material and may work in conjunction with a producer to be identified by the committee upon selection. The competition will be held in two phases: Artists will be expected to submit qualifications, sketches, and a selection of images of their past artistic activities in Phase I. Semifinalists will be selected to present in Phase II. Once a final artist is selected, they will be required to present their concept to the public with the support of the steering committee.

Eligibility

This request for qualifications is open to all artists or artist teams working in New York State, with a preference for Western New York. Artists submitting qualifications should demonstrate a level of experience and professionalism that is commensurate with the project scope and budget. Preference will be given to artists/artist teams who self-identify as Artists of Color.

Selection Committee

A committee representing community stakeholders will review all submissions for the competition and make recommendations.

Purchase Awards/Honoraria

The competition will result in an award of up to **\$150,000** for artist fees, design, fabrication, and installation of the artwork.

A VIRTUAL INFORMATION SESSION WILL BE HELD ON OCTOBER 20TH AT 12:30PM VIA ZOOM TO GO OVER ALL REQUIREMENTS IN DETAIL AND ANSWER ANY QUESTIONS INTERESTED ARTISTS MAY HAVE

Register at: <https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZcocuivrDgrHt1I4cneqN0WGps-iMylsS4m>

Selection Process/Entry Guidelines

Phase I:

- 1) Artist's CV and/or website
- 2) Up to 8 digital images (TIFF or JPEG) of artworks that communicate the quality and characteristics of the sculpture if commissioned. (These images can include past work as reference.)
- 3) Sketches indicating the general characteristics of the proposed commissioned artwork.
- 4) A comprehensive proposal including a maximum of two pages of text describing the intent, characteristics, material, scale, any required care and maintenance, and a description of the applicant's connection to the subject matter; specifically why being involved in this project is meaningful for their work.
- 5) A preliminary budget listing fabrication and design costs, artist fee, shipping and installation, and self-insurance costs. A sample template is provided here, but the applicant may add or edit line items as necessary. The budget should demonstrate the applicant's ability to outline stages in the process toward a completed project, and estimate costs thoughtfully.

* Artists are required to participate in an on-site visit of the statue location in Forest Lawn. Forest Lawn has selected the following dates/times for artist visits:

- Wednesday, October 6, 2021 at 4:00 PM
- Sunday, October 17, 2021 at 3:00 PM
- Saturday, October 23, 2021 at 3:00 PM

DUE DATE: PROPOSALS ARE DUE DECEMBER 1, 2021

Submissions can be emailed to Zainab Saleh at: zainab.saleh@gmail.com. To receive feedback on applications in progress, drafts should be emailed prior to November 15, 2021.

[NO maquettes or models will be considered in this phase.]

Phase II

Two selected artists will receive a stipend of \$1,500 to complete the Phase II application process. All submissions will be retained by the steering committee. For Phase II, the artist will submit:

- 1) Up to two maquettes that may be contained in 2' x 2' x 2' display cases.
- 2) Detailed budget including estimated fabrication and design costs, artist fee, shipping, installation, and self-insurance costs. Artist(s) must connect with Tom Koch at Stone Art for his estimate per Forest Lawn requirements.
- 3) A production schedule including installation time.
- 4) Statement of intention that, should the artwork be selected and paid for, copyright will be transferred to Forest Lawn Cemetery.

DUE DATE: PHASE II PROPOSALS DUE FEBRUARY 15, 2022

TIMELINE

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| a. October 1, 2021 | Distribute RFP |
| b. December 1, 2021 | Phase I proposals due |
| c. December 31, 2021 | Phase I finalists announced |
| d. February 15, 2022 | Phase II proposals due |
| e. Spring 2022 | Selected artist(s) notified & public announcement of selected artist |
| g. Fall 2022 | Sculpture installed at Forest Lawn Cemetery |

*If no acceptable submission is identified, we reserve the right to re-open the commission.

For any questions regarding the sculpture, please contact Gabrielle Harrington, Director of Community Affairs for Senator Sean Ryan, at gharring@nysenate.gov & Zainab Saleh, Curator & Project Manager, at zainab.saleh@gmail.com.