

City Park Alliance

King Monument in City Park

Denver City Park – Martin L. King, Jr. Memorial

Enter City Park from 17th Avenue, 2 blocks east of York Street

This memorial to Dr. King was commissioned by the City of Denver. It will feature a central, core element where Dr. King is metaphorically standing on the shoulders of Rosa Parks, Gandhi, Frederick Douglass and Sojourner Truth. On the main pedestal is a tribute to Dr. King's Nobel Peace Prize. On each side of the main pedestal are two bas-relief panels that highlight the history of African Americans - from slavery to the marches of the 1960s.

In addition, four granite historic panel elements will highlight historic facts and Dr. King's quotations on: Slavery, The Struggle, Justice and Living The Dream. Each of these panels will feature a bronze sculpture that depicts, in visual form, the theme of the historic elements.

The sculpture assemblage is twenty-six feet tall, and the materials are granite and cast bronze.

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Beginning in 1955 with the Montgomery Bus Boycott until his assassination in 1968, Dr. King was the most renowned leader of the American Civil Rights Movement. Through powerful sermons and speeches, and by leading non-violent demonstrations, protests and marches, he challenged a nation to examine its moral conscience. He elevated the American dream to include all people.

Frederick Douglass A former slave, Frederick Douglass became one of the greatest figures in the 19th Century. Douglass sought to change the course of American social development to embrace the solid principle that all American people ought to be free and equal. An abolitionist, journalist, distinguished orator, and diplomat in the mid to late 1800's, his writings inspired Dr. King.

Mahatma Gandhi As the leader of India's struggle to free itself from British colonialism, Mahatma Gandhi demonstrated to the world how people could embrace non-violence as an effective tool for positive change. His speeches and nonviolent actions over a twenty-year period lead to India's independence in 1946. Dr. King applied Gandhi's principles to the civil rights struggle in the United States to advance the non-violent resistance movement.

Sojourner Truth A former slave, this black woman crusaded for the abolition of slavery and women's rights. After the Civil War she continued lobbying, speaking for the equality of women, minorities and also for the delivery of promised property to Black soldiers of the war.

Rosa Parks Acclaimed as the Mother of the modern civil rights movement, Ms. Parks was arrested in 1955 for refusing to give her seat to a white man on a public bus in segregated Montgomery, Alabama. This courageous act led to a boycott lasting 381 days of the Montgomery public transportation system and the beginning of the modern peaceful protest movement.

Memorial Site Surrounding the central statue are standing tablets upon which are engraved timelines in civil rights history in America and quotes from King's speeches. Each tablet creates a small alcove for smaller statues representing phases in American black history. Benches are placed in front of the tablets. In the stone walkways, on the north is a bronze Liberty Bell; on the south is a bronze outline of a slave ship containing figures showing how the slaves were placed below deck. Small flowerbeds complete the site.

The Memorial was funded through a combination of Public and Private resources and was successfully constructed due to interagency cooperation. The Mayor's Office and The Denver Art, Culture, and Film Foundation raised private donations for over half the cost. The City Council approved funds from the Capital Improvements Budget. The Parks and Recreation Department and the Department of Public Works (Street Construction Division and Wastewater Management) also contributed to construction costs and provided in-kind labor, equipment and materials. The memorial costs exceeded 1 million dollars and fund raising took over 3 years.

The 28-foot tall Memorial was designed and sculpted by the Internationally renowned sculptor, and Denver resident, **Mr. Ed Dwight**.

