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Community Members and City Leaders Unveil Restored ‘Black Family’ Statue During Juneteenth Celebration

BELOVED MOUNTAIN VIEW LANDMARK RETURNS 50 YEARS AFTER ITS ORIGINAL INSTALLATION

SAN DIEGO – The City of San Diego and the Mountain View community unveiled the restored Black Family statue today at Neal Petties Mountain View Community Park, kicking off the community’s Juneteenth Celebration and marking the return of a landmark that has inspired generations of Mountain View residents.

“The return of the Black Family statue is a powerful and proud moment for Mountain View,” said Councilmember Henry L. Foster III. **“Rossie Wade created a lasting symbol of Black family, unity, strength and belonging, and this community refused to let that legacy disappear. To see this landmark back in the park, restored and ready for future generations, is a reminder that our history deserves to be protected, celebrated and carried forward.”**

The project was funded through a State of California grant secured by then Assemblymember Akilah Weber Pierson and managed by the City of San Diego’s Economic Development Department Cultural Affairs Division.

“Today’s unveiling honors not only the extraordinary artistic legacy of Rossie Wade, but also the enduring strength, unity and resilience of the Black families and communities he sought to celebrate through his work,” said State Senator Akilah Weber Pierson, M.D. **“By restoring this landmark, we are preserving an important piece of San Diego’s history and ensuring that Rossie Wade’s vision continues to inspire pride, connection and belonging for years to come. I was proud to secure funding to support this restoration, but this achievement is truly the result of years of persistent advocacy from community members and leaders who understood the importance of protecting this symbol and ensuring its legacy endures for generations.”**

Monica Montgomery Steppe, who was a City Councilmember when the grant was secured and the project was initiated, spoke at today’s unveiling.

“The Black Family Statue is a powerful reminder that our public spaces should reflect the people and stories that shape our communities,” said County Supervisor Monica Montgomery Steppe. **“Now more than ever, we need landmarks that help us remember what grounds us. For many of us, that begins with family.”**

Created in 1974 by artist Rossie Wade, the original statue depicted two parents and their two children standing tall toward the sky. It served as a meet-up location for residents. Over many years, the wooden statue deteriorated, leaving behind only its brick base and plaque.

Years ago, when community member Jeffery Hayes discovered a photo of the statue that once stood there, he connected with Wade’s daughters to see about possibly recreating it.

“I recognized the community value in the symbolic statues, and I have a picture of my wife as a little girl with the statues behind her,” said Hayes, who is also chair of the Neal Petties Mountain View Community Park Community Recreation Group. **“This connection fueled my commitment to replace the statue and maintain the base and plaque. I took it upon myself to watch over the Black Family, and I became its protector, caretaker and champion. This day of restoration brings joy to my spirit!”**

Jeffery Hayes and Rossie Wade’s daughters then contacted the San Diego College of Continuing Education’s Educational Cultural Complex (ECC). Mike Bradbury, a welding instructor there, worked with an instructional assistant to bring the work back to life, this time in carbon steel so it would last for many more years.

“I created a smaller version of statues that Rossie had made for the ECC decades ago, which we showcased at the 2024 MLK Parade. During that process I, too, fell in love with what these statues represented for this community,” Bradbury said. **“It gave me an opportunity to meet folks that have lived here all of their lives and remember the original Black Family and how it was a welcoming invitation to come and gather. Being asked to be a part of this process is quite an honor and one that I will carry with me for the rest of my life.”**

Saturday’s ceremony brought together elected officials, community leaders, project partners, members of the Rossie Wade family, representatives from the San Diego College of Continuing Education and Mountain View residents. Rossie Wade’s daughters, Carol Wade and Lynn Wade, participated in the unveiling ceremony.

“The Black Family Statues standing proud on the corner of 40th and Ocean View Blvd. were a visual statement for all to see, and we rejoiced in them as a marker, an imprint on the community,” said Rossie Wade’s daughters, Carole Boyce and Lynn Brown. **“Now recreated in steel, they are a lasting symbol of unity and togetherness we hope this community will embrace and cherish as we do his**

memory. We are grateful for the funding that made this possible and the vision that Jeffrey Hayes had to restore this community landmark.”

“The return of the Black Family statue is about honoring Rossie Wade’s artistic legacy as well as this community’s history,” said Rachel Laing, Assistant Deputy Director for the Economic Development Department Cultural Affairs Division. **“It’s a testament to the piece’s significance that it was never forgotten by the community and inspired them to do the work to bring it back to this prominent corner in Mountain View.”**

As part of the public art project, Cultural Affairs worked with the Parks and Recreation Department to install a boulder bench where community members can sit, reflect and visit with others, as well as improve the landscaping around the area. An ADA accessibility project is also in the works close to the statue; once it’s complete, landscaping will be upgraded further.



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