



City of Charleston
South Carolina

JOSEPH P. RILEY, JR.
MAYOR

BARBARA W. VAUGHN
DIRECTOR
PUBLIC INFORMATION

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Groundbreaking Announced for The Denmark Vesey & The *Spirit of Freedom* Monument

CHARLESTON, S.C. – The official groundbreaking ceremony for The Denmark Vesey & The *Spirit of Freedom Monument* will take place on Monday, February 1 at 11 a.m. at the gazebo in Hampton Park, 30 Mary Murray Boulevard. The program speakers will include Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.; Charleston City Councilman Rev. Jimmie S. Gallant, III; Ellen Dressler Moryl, Director City of Charleston Office of Cultural Affairs; Rev. Joseph A. Darby, Senior Pastor at Morris Brown AME Church; Dr. Bernard Powers, Jr., College of Charleston History Professor and Colorado artist Ed Dwight who created The Denmark Vesey & The *Spirit of Freedom Monument* design as well as the S.C. African-American Monument in Columbia, S.C.

The monument will honor Denmark Vesey (1767-1822), an enslaved African-American who won a lottery which earned him enough funds to purchase his physical freedom. Vesey allegedly engaged many members of the African-American community and four whites in an organized attempt to overthrow slavery in Charleston, using the biblical example of Moses as an example. Vesey was ultimately betrayed by one whose interests lay with the enslavers rather than the enslaved, and in 1822 he was hung along with 34 others for this valiant attempt to gain freedom of enslaved African-Americans in Charleston.

The Denmark Vesey & The *Spirit of Freedom Monument* Committee was formed 14 years ago to inaugurate a project that would honor Vesey and in the process give contemporary recognition to the Denmark Vesey conspiracy, an event for which antebellum Charleston was so well known and to place it in its historical perspective; educate and promote an abiding understanding of the African-American experience and demonstrate the universality of men and women's desire for freedom and justice irrespective of race, creed, condition or color.

"The Denmark Vesey & The *Spirit of Freedom Monument* will give Charleston's citizens and visitors alike the chance to better understand Vesey's place in history. His courageous quest for liberty and self determination illustrates the indomitable spirit of humanity's desire for freedom," says Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr.

The Denmark Vesey Spirit of Freedom Monument Committee is an independent, non-profit organization incorporated in the state of South Carolina. The organization receives, manages and distributes restricted and unrestricted endowment gifts, deterred gifts and special gifts – all aimed toward building and

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maintaining outstanding historical and cultural programming for all Americans. The committee has received major gifts and financial support from the City of Charleston, the County of Charleston, and private citizens for the construction of the monument. The project has been officially endorsed by (the late) John Hope Franklin (University of Chicago) and South Africa's Bishop Desmond Tutu.

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FOR MORE INFO:

Barbara W. Vaughn, Director
Media Relations/Public Information
Phone: (843) 724-3746 Fax: (843) 724-3734
Email: vaughnb@ci.charleston.sc.us