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SHE BUILT NYC: DE BLASIO ADMINISTRATION ANNOUNCES SHIRLEY CHISHOLM, FIRST BLACK WOMAN TO SERVE IN CONGRESS, SELECTED FOR NEW CITY-FUNDED MONUMENT

Monument will be erected at the Parkside entrance to Prospect Park in Brooklyn

NEW YORK—Today, First Lady Chirlane McCray, Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen, and the Department of Cultural Affairs announced that a monument to U.S. Rep. Shirley Chisholm, the political trailblazer who was both the first black Congresswoman and the first woman to seek the Democratic presidential nomination, will be erected at the Parkside entrance to Prospect Park. This is the first monument commissioned as part of She Built NYC, an initiative to construct public monuments honoring the New York City women who have changed history [which kicked off](#) with an open call for nominations in June 2018. The announcement that Rep. Chisholm was selected as the first She Built NYC honoree comes on the 94th anniversary of her birthday and the 50th anniversary of her election to the House of Representatives.

“Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm’s legacy of leadership and activism has paved the way for thousands of women to seek public office,” said **First Lady Chirlane McCray**. “She is exactly the kind of New York woman whose contributions should be honored with representation in our public spaces, and that is now being realized with She Built NYC.”

“Shirley Chisholm was an American original—a fearless trailblazer who broke barriers and had an unrivaled commitment to justice,” said **Alicia Glen, Deputy Mayor for Housing & Economic Development**. “From standing up to Congressional leadership to taking bold bipartisan action, Rep. Chisholm made sure everyone knew she was ‘unbought and unbossed.’ There is no one more deserving than Rep. Chisholm of a statue honoring her life and legacy; may New Yorkers of all backgrounds be inspired by her story.”

“Monuments in New York City’s public spaces do not reflect the full breadth of our rich history and diverse population, and that’s something we’re committed to changing,” said **Cultural Affairs Commissioner Tom Finkelpearl**. “In recognizing Shirley Chisholm – an inspiring leader, true trailblazer, and consummate Brooklynite – this new artwork will be an important step toward fulfilling Mayor de Blasio’s call for greater representation in our public realm. We’re

committed to working with residents to create monuments that express more completely who we are as New Yorkers, and who we want to lift up as embodiments of our shared history and values.”

At women.nyc, members of the public submitted nearly 2,000 nominations of women, groups of women, and events in women’s history they believed should be permanently memorialized through She Built NYC. Ninety-eight percent of respondents said they would like to see a woman honored who was committed to social reform or justice. The most frequently used word in the submissions was “first,” followed by “leader” and then “advocate.”

An advisory panel with individuals representing a broad range of expertise and backgrounds helped refine the public submissions list and provided recommendations to the City. The selected artist who will design Rep. Chisholm’s monument in early will be announced 2019. The monument will be installed by the end of 2020.

“It was a privilege to chair the She Built NY Advisory Committee whose members reviewed 1812 unique nominations of women-identified leaders from every possible profession,” said **Pauline Toole, Commissioner of the New York City Department of Records and Information Services and Chair of the She Built NYC Advisory Committee**. “I am grateful for the spirit, insight and creativity of the Committee. With this announcement, the nation’s most diverse city is taking a big first step recognizing the many women leaders who transformed New York.”

“Shirley Chisholm was a New Yorker dedicated to ensuring equal participation for all at all levels of society, regardless of gender, race, and socio-economic status. It is essential that we continue to honor her legacy and carry on her life’s work,” said **Jacqueline Ebanks, Executive Director, Commission on Gender Equity**.

“Before she became the first black woman elected to Congress, and before she co-founded the Congressional Black Caucus and the New York chapter of the National Organization for Women, Shirley Chisholm was a Brooklynite. A monument to her in her home borough and in a district she once served will make the perfect addition to the soon-to-be renovated Parkside entrance of Prospect Park,” said **NYC Parks Commissioner Mitchell J. Silver, FAICP**. “Parks is honored to be included in the journey of She Built NYC, and we thank Deputy Mayor Alicia Glen and First Lady Chirlane McCray for their advocacy.”

"Shirley Chisolm earned her reputation as a trailblazer the hard way - by getting out in front of an issue and following it through. She played out her life on a large stage where her every movement was scrutinized and every decision questioned. Her career was a series of "firsts." "First Blacks" bear the burden for their own destiny, as well as that of every other African American who hopes to follow. Shirley Chisholm bore that burden better than most. Through her feisty spirit, dogged persistence, and unwillingness to compromise the truth, she made a powerful difference in more lives than she would ever know. She had a real connection with the people of Brooklyn, and dealt with difficult issues and circumstances with the courage, frankness and flair that was her trademark. This is an honor suited to Shirley Chisolm, the trailblazer," said **David N. Dinkins, 106th Mayor, City of New York**.

"When I was a little boy I used to attend meetings for what was then the council of elected negro Democrats. Often there was only one woman in the meeting and she never let the men push her around for one second. It taught me to respect the strength and determination of women equally to the ability of men. There were two women who thought me that "My mother and Shirley Chisholm. I am so pleased that the First Lady Chirlane McCray and Deputy Mayor Glenn and all of you honor her this afternoon," said **Honorable David Paterson, 55th Governor of New York.**

"Shirley Chisholm was an iconic figure, a visionary and a dedicated public servant. Her labor and contributions to Brooklyn, the United States Congress, and the Nation continue to bear fruit today. Chisholm paved the way for many other women—myself included—to run, win and serve in elected office. "This statue will serve as a monument to an extraordinary woman and political powerhouse who helped those who were vulnerable and underrepresented. I can think of no other leader more deserving of a permanent home in Prospect Park. "Generations of Brooklynites will be able to look upon the statue and be inspired—as I was—to dedicate their lives to public service," said **Congresswoman Yvette Clarke.**

"For too long, we have not done enough to honor the significant contributions of women in our city and our nation," said **Congressman Jerrold Nadler.** "Today's announcement of a permanent statue honoring the life of Shirley Chisholm, a trailblazer who was the first black woman elected to Congress, is an important first step in correcting that omission. Rep. Chisholm worked tirelessly on behalf of women and minorities at a critical time in our nation's history, and today's announcement is an important first step in recognizing the important contributions that women have made to our nation."

"I am so pleased that She Built NYC has chosen for their first monument a statue in honor of the great Rep. Shirley Chisholm. A trailblazer who paved the way for many women and made a lasting impact on our nation and on New York City, Rep. Chisholm was a leader I have always looked up to. Her leadership and her proud declaration that she was unbought and unbossed will continue to inspire young women and New Yorkers for many years to come," said **Congresswoman Carolyn Maloney.**

"Former Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm was a fighter for women and minorities, and her legacy has paved the way for future generations of women to be leaders in our nation," said **Congresswoman Grace Meng.** "This monument will be a wonderful and fitting tribute to the important contributions she made to our country and it will be a firm reminder to women in New York City and across the nation that nothing is impossible. I'm proud to applaud this project and I am thrilled that it will be the first monument to be built as part of She Built NYC initiative."

"The life and legacy of Shirley Chisholm is more relevant than ever. Unbossed and unbought, Ms. Chisholm was the people's candidate who fought valiantly against gender discrimination and unfair pay for domestic workers. In many ways her memory has encouraged young people throughout the country to run for office. Congresswoman Chisholm was an icon, whose work changed the status quo of electoral policies in both parties. This monument will inspire other

young Brooklynites to serve their community with the same integrity and courage the Honorable Ms. Chisholm showed for so many years," said **Congressman-elect Max Rose**.

"The Honorable Shirley Anita Chisholm was an iconic, courageous, trailblazing woman of firsts during her heroic and inspiring life of public service. As such, there is no finer or more fitting New Yorker to be represented as the first woman honored with a monument through the She Built NYC Initiative. I am proud that future generations who pass through Prospect Park will be greeted with the timeless words, wisdom and uncompromising presence of the revered and beloved Stateswoman, Shirley Chisholm," said **New York State Senator Leroy Comrie**.

"I commend She Built NYC for their successful efforts in achieving this honor for a dynamic trailblazer who paved the way for women to follow in this great city," **Senator Roxanne J. Persaud** said. "Shirley Anita Chisholm was truly an inspiration for women, one worthy of a monument and much more."

"I had the great good fortune to get to know Representative Shirley Chisholm, I will never forget her kindness to me. She was warm, and gracious, and extended a helping hand to me when I was a new member of the state legislature. Her support for women in government was well known; she was a leader, and an inspiration," said **Assembly Member Nolan**.

"When constituents visit my community office, the first photo they see is one of the late Congresswoman Shirley Chisholm. It is there for our present day inspiration as we confront challenges at all levels. I commend Mayor Bill De Blasio, First Lady Chirlane McCray, and the City's Department of Cultural Affairs for their leadership in assuring that Shirley's work and values will be enhanced through this physical tribute of a statue in her honor. Shirley was a trailblazer on numerous fronts, a fiercely proud and persistent advocate for social change, human rights, and equality. She remains one of my greatest and most valiant heroines and a role model for young people who want to make a difference their community," said **Assembly Member Rebecca Seawright**.

"A monument is so much more than just a piece of stone. It is embodied history, it is recognition, it is achievement rendered as art and, most importantly, it sends a strong message to young girls that women can be all kinds of heroes," said **Assembly Member Aravella Simotas**. "Shirley Chisholm was a giant hero who broke through what seemed like an impassable barrier and she made New Yorkers proud. Shirley has long been one of my heroes, and it is only fitting that I will now be able to bring my young daughter to Brooklyn and teach her about Ms. Chisholm's legacy."

"Shirley Chisholm was a trailblazer -- the first black woman elected to Congress, a feminist icon, and the true pride of Brooklyn. A champion for education and children, and fundamental to expanding the food stamp program, she made critical contributions to protect hard working people and families in her Brooklyn district and in our country. She taught women everywhere to pull up their folding chairs and make a seat at the table. I am thrilled that there will be a monument in Prospect Park immortalizing her legacy." said **Assembly Member Jo Anne Simon**.

“There are few New Yorkers more deserving of a monument than the great Shirley Chisholm, and there is no place better to erect it than the entrance to Prospect Park, right in the heart of the congressional district she represented and championed. This honor is overdue, as are similar honors for so many of our city’s outstanding women, people of color, immigrants, and members of our LGBTQ+ community,” said **Brooklyn Borough President Eric Adams**. “I hope the celebration surrounding this great announcement inspires the commissioning of plenty more monuments that reflect our rich diversity and bring us closer together.”

"As Brooklyn's Backyard, we are deeply honored to welcome this important monument to a true Brooklyn hero, Shirley Chisholm," said **Sue Donoghue, President of Prospect Park Alliance**. "We thank the Mayor, First Lady Chirlane McCray and the Department of Cultural Affairs for selecting Prospect Park as the site for this commemoration, which will serve as a critical focal point of our restoration of the Parkside and Ocean Avenue entrance to Prospect Park."

As the first black Congresswoman in U.S. history, Rep. Chisholm was a both leader and advocate for residents of New York’s 12th Congressional District and the country at large. During her time in Congress, Rep. Chisholm served on several House committees, including Agriculture, Education and Labor, Veterans’ Affairs, and Rules (where she was the first Black woman and the second woman ever to serve). Her notable achievements in Congress include working to expand access to food stamps, helping to create the Special Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants, and Children, helping to pass Title IX, which prohibits gender discrimination in the funding of education and related programs, and extending minimum wage requirements to domestic workers.

Rep. Chisholm became the first black major-party candidate to run for President of the United States in the 1972 U.S. presidential election. She was also the first woman to ever run for the Democratic Party’s presidential nomination.

Shirley Chisholm was born Shirley Anita St. Hill on November 30, 1924 in Brooklyn, New York. She was the oldest of four daughters of Charles St. Hill, a factory laborer from Guyana, and Ruby Seale St. Hill, a seamstress from Barbados. Following her graduation from Brooklyn’s Girls High School, now known as Boys and Girls High School, she studied sociology at Brooklyn College and earned her B.A. in 1946. She also earned an M.A. in early childhood education from Columbia University.

The recommendations of the [Mayoral Advisory Commission on City Art, Monuments, and Markers](#), formed in 2017, emphasized the need for additive measures and public dialogue to ensure monuments and markers on City property are given accurate and inclusive historical context. It also called for expanding the stories, histories, and narratives currently represented on public property in New York. The Department of Cultural Affairs has committed up to \$10 million over the next four years to commissioning new permanent public monuments and commemorations. This monument is the first of more to come.

The initiative is part of Women.NYC, which was launched in May 2018 to ensure that New York remains the best city in the world for women to succeed.

About Women.NYC

When women succeed, the Greatest City in the World gets greater. That's why the City of New York launched Women.NYC in May 2018, a groundbreaking initiative that not only inspires women to advance in their careers, but also provides them with the real tools they need to succeed. From free, expert legal and financial resources to mentorship to grants, Women.NYC offers a growing portfolio of resources for working women – and builds on the successful policies that have made New York the best city for working women. Join millions of women across the five boroughs, and make your #NYCPowerMove with Women.NYC.

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