



In Honor of Alton Native Miles Davis

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As we approach Memorial Day weekend this year, we celebrate what would have been the 87th Birthday of one of the greatest musical legends of the 20th Century, Miles Davis. In our community, we find it important to honor the footsteps of those who have come before us. With talents unmatched, and the lives of many people touched through his music, today we honor, remember and celebrate an Alton native, Miles Davis.

Miles Dewey Davis was born on May 26, 1926, to an affluent African American family in Alton, Illinois. His father, Miles Henry Davis, was a dentist. In 1927 the family moved to East St. Louis, Illinois where Miles Davis graduated from Lincoln High School in 1944. In the fall of 1944, following graduation from high school, Davis moved to New York City to study at the Juilliard School of Music.

Miles Dewey Davis III (May 26, 1926 – September 28, 1991) was an American jazz musician, trumpeter, bandleader, and composer. Widely considered one of the most influential musicians of the 20th century, Miles Davis was, with his musical groups, at the forefront of several major developments in jazz music, including bebop, cool jazz, hard bop, modal jazz, and jazz fusion.

The National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS) has honored him with eight Grammy Awards, a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award, and three Grammy Hall of Fame Awards. In 1986, the New England Conservatory awarded Miles Davis an Honorary Doctorate for his extraordinary contributions to music. Miles Davis was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2006.

With so many world honors and two other statues rendered world-wide, the Miles Davis Memorial Project was born. According to Pat Ackman, Chairperson, "our goal is to use this project as a catalyst to improve the aesthetics of our city and to propel forward other similar endeavors that may attract visitors from afar to share in our historic and unique community."

The Miles Davis Memorial Project Committee and its collaborators are proud to announce that plans are underway for a sculpture of Miles Davis to be created and placed in our historic entertainment district on Third Street in Downtown Alton. Derrick Richardson, committee member, is proud to share in the planning of a project that will "honor the genius of his music and that such a world renowned musician was born in Alton, Illinois."



In an announcement earlier this week by the Steering Committee of the project; sculptor Preston Jackson was chosen unanimously to create this piece of history for our community. Preston is a scholar, jazz musician, and talented artist whose awards and recognition are as impressive as his talented creation of the multitudes of historic figures that have been created in Peoria, Chicago, Maywood, and Springfield, Illinois among many other site locations. More information about the project and sculptor will be available along with his other works of art on our Miles Davis Memorial Project Facebook Page. Joy Kessler, assistant to Preston Jackson shares "In his commissioned work, Preston is renowned for his large-scale sculptures telling history in a way that is appropriate for all ages and understood by both young and old. Preston is known for his attention to detail in his finely crafted figurative sculptures." During the selection process it was learned that Miles Davis has been of importance to Preston since age 14 and having the opportunity to sculpt him is a dream come true for him as a jazz musician as well as a renowned award winning sculptor.

Fundraising initiatives are underway as well as public awareness campaigns at upcoming events such as special events and attractions at Jazz on Broadway, Alton Block Parties & more! This project is for and by the community; we would like for all of our community members to play a part in making our entertainment district come alive. We hope that this incredibly designed statue, by Preston Jackson, will serve as inspiration and a reminder to embrace music and the arts as well as give honor to a man who was born among us and aspired to greatness.

For More Information about the Miles Davis Memorial Project, please contact Pat Ackman at (618) 466-1079 or moongate643@hotmail.com or find us on [Facebook](#) !

