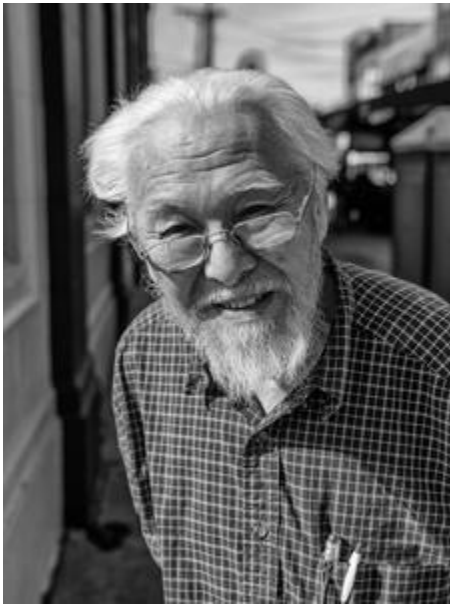


# Drive Starts to Name Park After Towata, However, Other Locations Needed

by Dan Brannan, Content Director  
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ALTON - A petition drive has been started soon after legendary artist Art Towata's death on Nov. 21 to rename the city park at State Street and Fourth Street in Alton to Towata Park. However, the park is owned by Hayner Library and is managed by a private endowment. Because of that, the name of the park, unfortunately, can't be named after a specific individual, Mary Cordes, assistant director of Hayner Public Library said.

"We think something in the city should be named to honor Mr. Towata, unfortunately, because it is not a city-owned park, but a district-owned park, we can't do it there. We would love to see Mr. Towata honored by the city in some way. We hope to see other options considered."

Steven Stanich started the petition drive and he said on the page he has deep respect for Towata. Stanich said Towata's legacy "should be preserved and honored."

Towata for years owned and operated the Towata Fine Art Gallery at 206 W. Third St. in Alton. His artwork was known throughout the country and worldwide. He put Alton on the map in the art world during his 65 years of living here. Towata received his bachelor of arts and master's in fine arts from Southern Illinois University-Edwardsville.

He was confined for three years during World War 2 in a camp for Japanese children in the U.S. after the war broke out in 1941. Some of his most legendary paintings came from his experiences at the Manzanar camp.

On the petition page, Monica Mason made this comment about Art Towata and preserving his legacy:

"Arthur Towata embodied a life long commitment and dedication to his artistic practice. He stands as a shining example of the vision, the talent and the discipline required to make works of art of the highest level of aesthetic expression. Sometimes the word "artist" is tossed about with such frequency that the word can lose its power. As a contrast, Towata never stood for the falseness of fame or the role of "celebrity artist"; he stood for the quiet and humble ritual of creating as a means to celebrate his connection to the visual world. I applaud this proposal to honor him with a renaming of this street."