

## Miles Davis Memorial Project Progresses Towards Its Goal

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The Miles Davis Memorial Project Kind of Blue Dinner and Auction, hosted by Pete and Jody Basola, was held on March 22<sup>nd</sup>, in the Commons at Lewis and Clark Community College. Project chair, Patricia Ackman, said the event raised over \$21,000.00 thanks to the generous donors, contributors and attendees.

Last year the Miles Davis Memorial Project committee began raising funds to create a plaza in the entertainment district on W. Third Street in downtown Alton. The plaza will feature a life-size sculpture of jazz legend Miles Davis. This fund-raiser puts the project two-thirds of the way to having enough money to commission the sculptor, Preston Jackson, to begin working on the sculpture.



The Project is a collaboration between The Miles Davis Jazz Committee of the Alton Museum of History and Art and Pride, Incorporated. Project leaders hope the placement of the sculpture in downtown Alton will draw in visitors from around the area and across the country. Alton will be the only city in the United States to have a publicly displayed statue of Miles Davis. There are only two other public statues of Davis, one in France and the other in Poland. "The success of the event shows the community's deep commitment to the arts and creating increased tourism revenue for the Alton area," Ackman said.

The site of the sculpture will be a handicap friendly music plaza designed with memorial bricks and granite blocks laid in the design of a music staff and the sculpture will stand on a music note. The area will be surrounded with limestone blocks, to blend in with the existing fountains and landscaped to further compliment the downtown streetscape.

The fund-raiser included a dinner, silent and oral auction and a brief educational program of Davis' history. Music was provided by Third Coast Jazz & Blues band.

Miles Davis was born in Alton, Illinois May 26, 1926. His father was a dentist and his mother played piano and violin. He graduated from Lincoln High School in East St. Louis, Illinois and attended Julliard School of Music in New York City. He was regarded as one of the most

innovative, influential and respected figures in the history of music. As an American jazz musician, trumpeter, bandleader and composer he was in the forefront of several major developments in jazz music; Bebop, Cool jazz, Hard bop, Modal jazz and Jazz fusion. At the time of his death in 1991 his career had spanned nearly 50 years and produced over 100 albums. In 2009 the U.S. House of Representatives passed a resolution recognizing and commemorating Miles' album Kind of Blue on its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary honoring the masterpiece and reaffirming jazz as a national treasure. Kind of Blue is the largest selling jazz album of all time. He passed away in 1991 and was posthumously inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2006.

Funds continue to come in from cash donations and the sale of commemorative bricks and granite blocks that will appear on the sidewalk next to the sculpture. Several other fund-raising projects are in the works.



*Miles Davis Memorial Project*

For additional information about the Miles Davis Memorial Project, contact **Pride, Incorporated** at **618-467-2375**. Donations can be made to the Miles Davis Memorial Project through the Pride, Incorporated website [www.prideincorporated.org](http://www.prideincorporated.org) or by mail to Pride, Incorporated, 5800 Godfrey Road / Alden Hall, Godfrey, IL 62035.

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