

Miles Davis Statue no longer a dream!

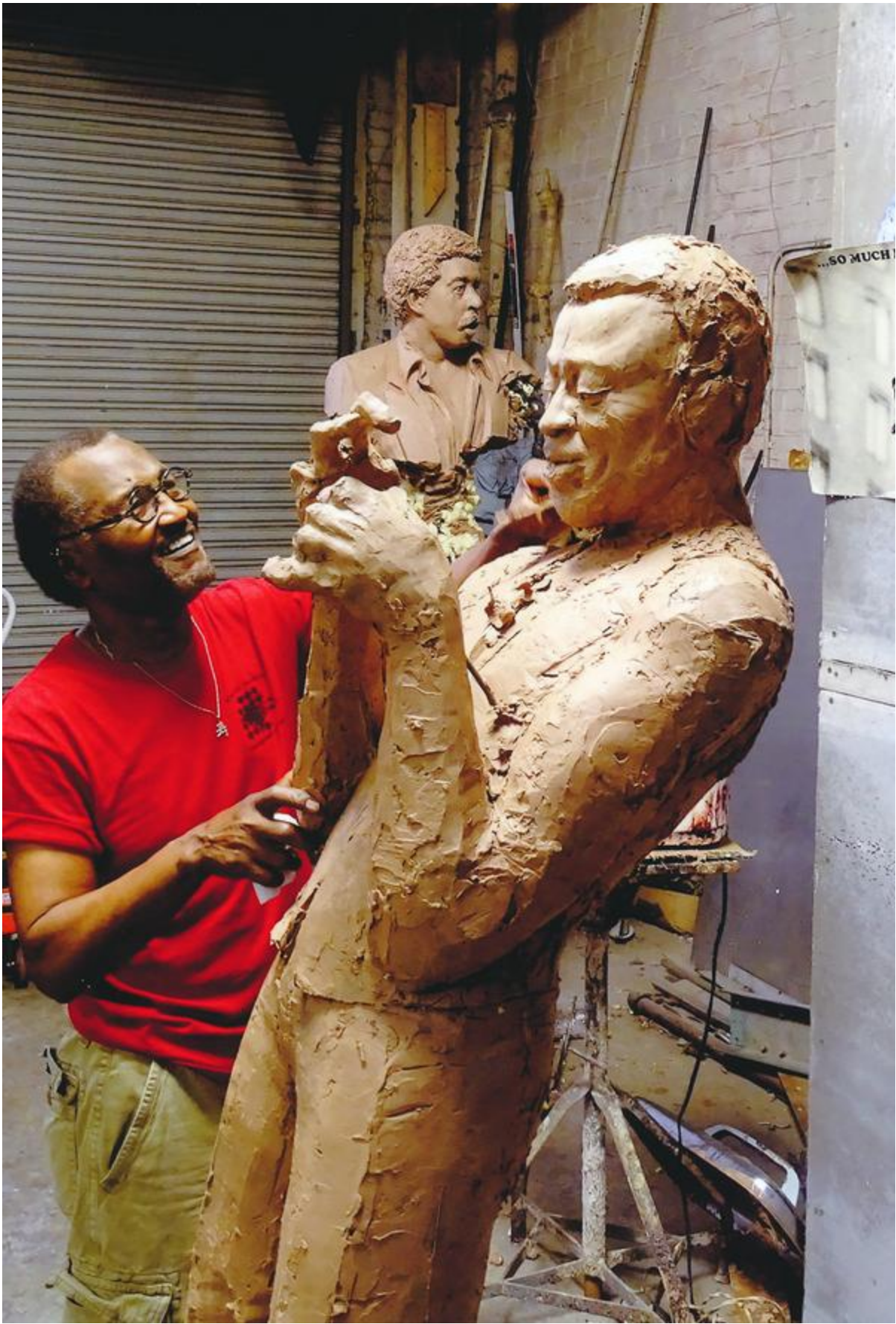
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The dinner with sculpture artist, Preston Jackson, was a huge success for the Miles Davis Memorial Project, moving the dream of a Miles Davis statue closer to a reality. It was a beautiful evening with the cool sounds of jazz floating through the air above the city of Alton Saturday night. Thanks to the sponsorship of the Simmons Hanly Conroy law firm, guests were abuzz about the exquisite table settings and in awe of the beautiful view across the Mighty Mississippi.

The evening began with cocktails and delectable appetizers. Guests were lured outside to the rooftop patio with their cameras to take advantage of the spectacular view. The program began with Jim Killion telling the story of the first black doctor in Alton, Dr. Samuels, and his connection to this project. Dr. Samuels delivered Miles Davis on May

26, 1926 in a small house on Milnor Avenue. Jim said, “Dr. Samuels also delivered me many years later.” Jim indicated other instances where we honor influential people and civic leaders who have contributed to the history of our community. He then asked the question, “Why Miles Davis?” After all, even though he was born on Milnor Avenue in Alton, Illinois on May 26, 1926, his family only lived in Alton for another year after his birth. Can we claim Miles Davis as one of our own? That answer is loud and clear...Yes, we can! This is the undisputed place of his birth and he deserves to be recognized as one of Alton’s most influential citizens. Miles Davis always recognized Alton as the city of his birth. Jim went on to inform everyone of the accomplishments of Miles’ career and the fact that he began playing with renowned musicians at a very young age and his career spanned almost 50 years. Miles’ influence and impact on the world of jazz extended well beyond the borders of the United States. He is revered in nearly every country around the world. His extensive discography includes 48 studio albums, 36 live albums, 35 compilation albums, 17 box sets, 3 soundtrack albums, 57 singles and 3 remix albums. He held a musical exploratory edge for most of his 65 years. And, of course, his Kind of Blue album was recognized as the greatest jazz album of all time and added to the Library of Congress’ National Recording Registry. In 2009, Miles was recognized by the U.S. House of Representatives with a resolution honoring the 50th anniversary of his Kind of Blue Album and “reaffirming jazz as a national treasure.” He was inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2006 and received a Grammy Lifetime Achievement Award in 1990 highlighting his eight Grammy Awards.



It is time for the city of his birth, Alton, IL., to honor his life and his exceptional artistic career. He was not perfect as a human being, but his artistic contributions are historic and legendary. He is Alton's other giant.

Currently Miles Davis is commemorated with statues in the countries of France and Poland. Amazingly, this will be the only one on public display in the United States.

After Jim's presentation, dinner began at 7pm with the jazz sounds created by Jim Manley on trumpet, Arthur Toney on piano and Travis Mattison on guitar. Preston Jackson joined in later with his guitar to impress the group with his musical talents.

Chef Ryan, of Gentelin's on Broadway, created a spectacular five course dinner with perfect wine pairings served with each course. He was recognized later in the evening as the other "Artist" present in the room.

Following dinner, Pat Ackman and Karen Wilson presented Preston Jackson with the signed contract and the first installment to begin work on the sculpture. However, earlier, Preston informed committee members and presented pictures showing that he had already begun working on the piece prior to our signed commitment. Pat Ackman informed the guests that the project is gaining momentum. With this event, the planned Trivia Night scheduled for September 12th, 2014, at the Commons on Lewis and Clark Campus, the current IndieGoGo crowd funding site and a possible grant from the State of Illinois, the project would be very close to its estimated goal of \$120,000.00. She said, "However, we're not there yet and still need continued community support so we can schedule the unveiling in May, 2015."

The IndieGoGo site will be open to accommodate donors until September 4th, 2014. Two of our most exciting donors, so far, are famed West Coast trumpeter, Bobby Shew and our own Dale and Carol Neudecker. Thanks to Mr. Shew's comments and contacts in the world of jazz, we have had donors all over the U.S., and from Europe as well. The Neudeckers purchased the limited print of a painting by Jin G. Kam, known for his images of legendary jazz and blues artists. We are hoping to have a special section of bricks on the statue plaza for musicians and Miles fans from around the world. Please visit IndieGoGo at www.indiegogo.com/projects/miles-davis-memorial and help us keep the momentum going.

For further information on our upcoming events, to make reservations for Trivia Night or to donate on IndieGoGo, please call the Pride, Incorporated office at 618-467-2375 or go online at www.prideincorporated.org.