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Ray Bradbury Statue Committee Announces Three Finalists

Finalists chosen from over 41 submissions by public artists and design firms

Waukegan, IL – The Ray Bradbury Statue Committee is pleased to announce that three finalists have been chosen to submit proposals for a planned statue to commemorate the life and achievements of Ray Bradbury. Bradbury, who spent his formative years in Waukegan, will be honored with a statue on the grounds of the Waukegan Public Library. The finalists are: Clay Enoch, of Loveland, Colorado; Mid Ocean Studios, of Providence, Rhode Island; and Zachary Oxman of Rockville, Maryland. Each finalist will travel to Waukegan in early summer for an interview with the Ray Bradbury Statue Committee, with the final decision to be announced in early fall.

"We deliberately chose three very different finalists with a wide range of skills. We're confident that with the finalists' experience and strength of previous work, they will create something that will celebrate the life and work of Ray Bradbury," says Richard Lee, chair of the Ray Bradbury Statue Committee and Executive Director of the Waukegan Public Library.

The finalists will visit the site in early summer to view landscaping considerations, traffic flow, and building architecture, and interview with the Committee. Then, they will submit proposals for the statue design and any associated landscaping to the Committee for a final evaluation. The selection process is expected to be completed by early fall.

Last year, the Ray Bradbury Statue Committee (RBSC) issued a request for qualifications to sculptors of public art. The Committee, composed of community and arts leaders, received 41 responses to its RFQ from artists throughout the United States and around the world, including from as far away as New Zealand.

In April, the RBSC met to discuss the application packets and select three finalists to present proposals for the project. Finalists were chosen based on the strength of their qualifications, including similar project experience and a portfolio of work. Making a decision wasn't easy. "We were so impressed by the depth of talent, breadth of work, and wealth of experience represented in our candidates' portfolios," says Lori Nerheim, committee member. "We're grateful to the artists and professionals who assisted the Committee with the decision-making process, including John Kinkade, founder of the National Sculptors Guild, Kathy Dowell, Director of Arts & Humanities



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Programming at Mid-America Arts Alliance, Madhuri Shukla, Managing Director of Chicago Public Art Group, and Donald Clark, Professor of Art at Minnesota State University, whose advice was invaluable.

Sculptors are expected to work within the stated budget of \$125,000. The full amount will be fundraised for the project.

Bradbury's Waukegan childhood served as the inspiration for works like *Dandelion Wine*, where Bradbury turned a nostalgic and poetic eye to old-fashioned small-town America. Waukegan also pops up in more surprising works, too, like *The Martian Chronicles*, where Bradbury reimagines Waukegan as the hometown of astronauts stranded on Mars. And outside of his writing, Bradbury often spoke of the hours he spent at the Waukegan Public Library, then housed in the Carnegie Building on Sheridan Road. While the Library moved in 1965 to its current home at the corner of County and Clayton Streets, it stands on the footprint of Bradbury's childhood elementary school. A commemorative plaque currently appears on the Library's main floor.

"Ray Bradbury loved the Waukegan Public Library," Lee says. "It's not the building that's important so much as what's inside – the cache of knowledge that opened whole worlds to a young boy." For Bradbury, who grew up to be a writer who imagined far-off things, bringing them back to Earth in the guise of an old-fashioned town on the lake, it seems only fitting to mark his legacy with a statue at the Library.

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About the Waukegan Public Library: The Waukegan Public Library is dedicated to empowering and enriching the lives of Waukegan residents through learning, from early childhood to adulthood. Its 2015 renovation completely transformed the main floor into a learning-focused library space ready to meet the needs of its patrons by creating spaces for art exhibits, collaboration, and quiet study and increasing the number of classrooms and tech-ready workstations. The award-winning Early Learning Center encourages children to read and interact with an immersive dual-language exhibit.

The main library is located in downtown Waukegan at 128 N. County Street. The Hinkston Park Branch is located at 800 N. Baldwin, in the Waukegan Park District Field House. More information about library services can be found at www.waukeganpl.org.

Sources:

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