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Marshall “Major” Taylor To Be Honored With First Mural In City Of Indianapolis Bicentennial Legends Series

Public is invited to submit nominations for Hoosiers to be celebrated on future murals

INDIANAPOLIS – Internationally recognized cyclist and racial justice advocate Marshall “Major” Taylor (1878-1932) will be honored with the first public mural in the City of Indianapolis “Bicentennial Legends” mural series.

The murals will recognize Hoosiers who have made significant contributions to Indianapolis’ history and culture and amplify the four guiding principles set by the City’s [Bicentennial Commission](#): history, civic pride, innovation, and legacy.

“It’s only fitting that, as we celebrate our city’s 200th birthday, we take time to honor the figures who have shaped Indianapolis. Major Taylor is a true local legend, who made his mark on the global stage, despite discrimination and challenges,” said Mayor Joe Hogsett. “This new mural and the ‘Legends’ series will contribute to our city’s rich landscape of art in public spaces by celebrating our diverse history and the stories of the people that have contributed to our past, current, and future success. I want to thank the Arts Council of Indianapolis and the Bicentennial Commission for helping to turn this idea into a reality and look forward to the series continuing for many years to come.”

The Arts Council of Indianapolis is seeking an artist to create the Major Taylor mural, which will be installed in 2021 on the exterior of the Barnes & Thornburg building at 11 S. Meridian St. Lead funding support for the Major Taylor mural is provided by the Bicentennial Commission, Barnes & Thornburg, Glick Philanthropies, the CIBA Foundation, and public donations to the Major Taylor Coalition.

In 1899, Major Taylor, who was born and raised in Indianapolis, became the first African American world-champion professional cyclist. He was also the U.S. sprint champion in 1899 and 1900, set numerous world records, and became a role model for other athletes facing racial discrimination.

“Dedicating a mural to recognize Major Taylor in his hometown celebrates our community’s commitment to embrace and honor his historic achievements,” said Anthony Bridgeman, vice president and relationship manager for PNC Community Development Banking and member of the Major Taylor Coalition. “Our hope is that our efforts to recognize his international legacy will generate ongoing interest and reverence for him not only as an Indianapolis legend, but as an inspiration to future generations.”

“We are deeply honored to play a role in highlighting the significant contributions of Major Taylor,” said Heather Willey, a partner at Barnes & Thornburg and a member of its management committee. “This project aligns with Barnes & Thornburg’s commitment to diversity and inclusion and our core values, and is an opportunity for us all to show respect for his achievements in the face of unrelenting racism. It is also an occasion to recognize his integrity, generosity of spirit, and invaluable contribution to America’s struggle for equality.”

The Major Taylor mural replaces *The Runners*, created in 1975 by artist Jim McQuiston and located on the east wall of Barnes & Thornburg’s historic building, which was in need of extensive repairs. Barnes & Thornburg worked with the artist, the Arts Council of Indianapolis, and community partners to evaluate all options before a decision was made to decommission the mural. *The Runners* will be honored with a permanent plaque in the location and a permanent entry in the Arts Council’s public arts directory.

“Evolving our city’s public art is not something we take lightly,” said Julie Goodman, President and CEO of the Arts Council of Indianapolis. “We want to thank artist/architect Jim McQuiston for his mural, which served our city for 45 years with its message of optimism and moving forward together. *The Runners* was created during a time of Downtown revitalization, where the arts were seen as integral to the city’s growth. As we celebrate our Bicentennial during these difficult times, we once again look to artists and the arts to help bring the community together as we move forward. We are honored to add to our public art landscape with these new works that celebrate the city’s legends and create new opportunities to employ artists and engage our community.”

Additional murals in the Bicentennial Legends series are anticipated to be installed through 2023, each funded through a public-private partnership. The Arts Council invites the public, artists, and property owners to participate in the project at indyarts.org/legends. Please see the [fact sheet](#) for details.

- **The public:** Nominate a Bicentennial Legend for a future mural.
- **Artists:** Apply to create the Major Taylor mural or a future Bicentennial mural. (The deadline to provide an application for Spring/Summer 2021 murals is Nov. 8, 2020.)
- **Private property owners:** Volunteer to host a mural on your building.

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[The Arts Council of Indianapolis](#) fosters meaningful engagement in the arts by nurturing a culture where artists and arts organizations can thrive. Read the Arts Council’s Equity Statement [here](#).

[The Major Taylor Coalition](#) is an informal group of Central Indiana residents who are passionate about seeing Marshall “Major” Taylor honored in his Indianapolis hometown.