



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 15, 2023

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## **INDY ARTS COUNCIL, MARION COUNTY CAPITAL IMPROVEMENT BOARD, AND PACERS SPORTS & ENTERTAINMENT ANNOUNCE LEGENDS MURAL AT BICENTENNIAL UNITY PLAZA**

### **KEY POINTS:**

- The Indy Arts Council, the Marion County Capital Improvement Board, and Pacers Sports & Entertainment partnered to develop the fourth and final installment of the City of Indianapolis Bicentennial Legends Series, an arts program honoring Hoosiers who helped shape Indianapolis history.
- The mural, featuring 43 legends surrounded by plants and animals that have symbolic connections to Indianapolis and to the individuals honored, will be located on the east wall of the Steak n' Shake Building overlooking Bicentennial Unity Plaza.
- Artist [Anna Murphy](#) will complete the mural this summer and a public dedication ceremony is planned for this fall.

**INDIANAPOLIS** – The Indy Arts Council, the Marion County Capital Improvement Board, and Pacers Sports & Entertainment announced today a partnership to develop the final art project in the City of Indianapolis Bicentennial Legends Series, a program

that celebrates Hoosiers whose contributions have made Indianapolis vibrant. The mural features portraits of 43 Indianapolis legends and will adorn the east wall of the Steak n Shake Building overlooking Bicentennial Unity Plaza.

“The Arts Council is honored that the Bicentennial Commission has trusted us to manage the Legends mural series, and we are grateful to work with forward-thinking leaders like the CIB and Pacers Sports & Entertainment that want to evolve the city's public art landscape while celebrating Hoosiers who have had a lasting impact,” said Julie Goodman, Indy Arts Council president and CEO. “Through these artworks, we are building knowledge of and appreciation for our city’s history and culture in an equitable, inclusive way.”

A 40-person committee spent six months reviewing and selecting the legends for the mural, considering nearly 200 leaders who helped shape Indianapolis between 1820 and 2020. No individuals still living were considered, but rather the list included only those who have passed away. Other criteria included a strong connection to the city, accomplishments that benefited the common good, memorable personal stories, and an inspirational legacy in Indianapolis and beyond.

“We were fortunate to have a wonderful cross-section of leaders who have given generously of their time to share their insights, and it has ensured the group of Indianapolis trailblazers honored in the mural is reflective of the rich diversity of our city’s history,” said Rick Fuson, PS&E Chief Executive Officer. “I am so grateful to them for their participation in this critical process.”

After reviewing applications from more than 150 artists from around the U.S., the committee reviewed final concepts from three artists and selected Chicago-based artist [Anna Murphy](#) to design and paint the mural this summer. Murphy will be assisted by Indianapolis-based painter Mechi Shakur through the Bicentennial Legends apprentice program.

In addition to the 43 portraits, her design includes the carnation, the tulip tree, the zinnia, and the peony, each of which has at some point served as Indiana’s official State flower. Other plants native to the state are depicted, as are the state or national flowers of those legends who were born outside of Indiana. Finally, the Indiana State bird, the Northern Cardinal, and a number of other birds, insects, and animals are also depicted, and Murphy’s use of blue and gold is an homage to the Indiana state flag.

“Anna Murphy’s vision for this piece perfectly aligns with the spirits of unity, history, and equity central to what Bicentennial Unity Plaza stands for,” said Vop Osili, President of the Marion City-County Council and a member of the selection committee.

The mural is an important feature of the significant public art elements displayed on Bicentennial Unity Plaza, and the intersection between arts and culture and athletics has been a focus of the overall Fieldhouse of the Future renovations on both the interior and exterior of Gainbridge Fieldhouse. Last year, PS&E and the Marion County Capital

Improvement Board announced that a generous grant from the Lilly Endowment Inc. would enhance the public art offerings on the Plaza.

“The vision for Bicentennial Unity Plaza has from its inception been to create a space to celebrate our city’s history, recognize our change-makers, and inspire new generations eager to lead our city into the future,” said Andy Mallon, Executive Director of the CIB. “The diverse group of legends depicted in the mural left their own unique imprints on Indianapolis and we consider it a privilege to honor them in this way.”

To learn more about the mural and the legends depicted in it, [click here](#).

### **About Anna Murphy**

Chicago-based Murphy, who was born in England, balances her time between creating fine art paintings for galleries and murals and art installations for outdoor landscapes. Before moving to Chicago in 2012 Anna graduated with a B.F.A in painting from the University of Louisville and was awarded the Winthrop Allen Memorial Scholarship for most outstanding graduating senior in 2D studios. Murphy was also awarded the Kentucky Foundation for Women Artist Enrichment Grant.

“As I was thinking about these amazing legends and their legacies, I was excited to create a design that celebrates the uniqueness of their gifts and stories, while also inspiring future generations to blossom into their own modern-day legends,” Murphy said.

The Arts Council and Indiana Humanities will also commission an Indianapolis poet to reflect on these legends' life and legacy. Artists can [apply here](#).

### **About the Bicentennial Legends Murals**

The Indianapolis Bicentennial Commission primarily funds the Bicentennial Legends series. Additional funding for the Bicentennial Unity Plaza mural was provided by the Capital Improvement Board of Managers of Marion County.

The Bicentennial Legends murals depict people associated with who embody the City of Indianapolis' Bicentennial Commission’s guiding principles: history, civic pride, innovation, and legacy. A mural of international cycling champion [Marshall “Major” Taylor](#) was unveiled in 2021 on the Barnes & Thornburg building, a mural of entrepreneur [Madam C.J. Walker](#) in 2022 at Pathways to Peace Park, and a mural of Black Arts Movement poet [Etheridge Knight](#) will be installed this summer at the legendary Chatterbox jazz club.

The Legends murals are owned and maintained by the Indy Arts Council.

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