

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## Official unveiling of “*Harriet Tubman - The Journey to Freedom*” traveling exhibition

**AUBURN, NY** - The City of Auburn and Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. announce the official unveiling ceremony of the “*Harriet Tubman - The Journey to Freedom*” statue.

On **Saturday, July 23, 2022, at 11 a.m.**, the public and press are invited to gather at the Harriet Tubman Home (**180 South Street, Auburn, NY**) to celebrate the traveling exhibition arriving in Auburn and hear from the artist himself, Wesley Wofford, on the inspiration behind the statue.

Wofford is an Emmy and Academy Award winning figurative sculptor, known for creating “emotionally charged” pieces and “provoking passionate responses.” His nine-foot traveling statue has gained international attention and recently made an appearance in the Fall 2020 issue of *Sculpture Review Magazine*.



“We are joined today in this notable occasion that marries the work of our humble and courageous Harriet Tubman to the infamous ‘Journey to Freedom’ statue and more importantly, to the commemoration and celebration of the 200th anniversary of Tubman’s birth,” said Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. President and CEO Karen Hill. “We reach this moment recognizing how critical and intertwined Tubman knew her freedom and democracy were two hundred years ago. The statue on view at the [Harriet Tubman Home] represents a broad community collaborative committed to saluting Tubman, her work, and her contributions. It is good to bring Harriet home where she was Auburn strong.”

Chair of the Harriet Tubman Home, Inc., Dr. Dennis V. Proctor explained, “Our beloved Harriet has come home. As [the] presiding Bishop of the state of New York for the African Methodist Episcopal Zion Church, the chosen church of Harriet, we are pleased to share with Auburnians and residents of Central New York the seminal and unique experience of seeing our beloved Harriet, at HOME, at long last on her ‘Journey to Freedom.’” He added, “This is a historic occasion to share the FREE Harriet on her property where she lived as a free woman for 54 years. Harriet showed us through her service what her freedom meant to her. We must ask ourselves, what do we value in our quest for freedom?”



After the ceremony, there will be several speakers available to meet with press for interviews:

- Karen Hill - Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. President and CEO
- Wesley Wofford, FNSS - Harriet Tubman - The Journey to Freedom Artist and Sculptor
- Michael D. Quill - City of Auburn Mayor
- Ahna Wilson - Harriet Tubman National Historical Park Superintendent
- Dr. Dennis V. Proctor - Harriet Tubman Home, Inc. Chair and AME Zion Church Bishop

Media or press outlets planning to attend the ceremony, please RSVP with Courtney Rae Kasper at [courtney@auburndowntown.org](mailto:courtney@auburndowntown.org) or Lanaya Montague at [lanaya@lalewpr.com](mailto:lanaya@lalewpr.com) by July 22 at 5 p.m.

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**Background information on statue funding:**

*The “Harriet Tubman—The Journey to Freedom” exhibition was made possible by a grant from the Cayuga Community Fund Leadership Council funds at the Central New York Community Foundation.*

*Support for this program is largely provided by the City of Auburn’s American Rescue Plan Act allocation. The American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 or ARPA, is a \$1.9 trillion federal economic stimulus bill signed into law by President Joe Biden on March 11, 2021, to speed up recovery from the economic effects of the COVID-19 pandemic. Due to the leadership of Senate Majority Leader Chuck Schumer and Senator Kirsten Gillibrand, ARPA included economic aid to localities such as the City of Auburn. Mayor Quill and members of City Council allocated funds to support the City of Auburn Historic and Cultural Sites Commission’s Harriet Tubman Bicentennial project with a goal of boosting the recovery from the pandemic for the tourism, travel, and hospitality industry.*

*The City of Auburn’s Historic & Cultural Sites Commission organizations include the NYS Equal Rights Heritage Center, Auburn Public Theater, Cayuga Museum of History & Art, Case Research Lab, Harriet Tubman Home, Harriet Tubman National Historical Park, Schweinfurth Art Center, Seward House Museum, Seymour Public Library, Fort Hill Cemetery, and Willard Memorial Chapel. The Commission agencies include Auburn Enlarged City School District, Cayuga County Chamber of Commerce, Cayuga County Historian’s Office, Cayuga County Office of Tourism, and Downtown Auburn Business Improvement District.*