

Local man's Rosa Parks sculpture affects those who view it

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Barrington residents Erik and Charlotte Blome have just returned from a memorable trip to Montgomery, Ala., to witness the unveiling of Erik's latest work. His bronze sculpture depicts Rosa Parks seated on a bus, and is featured in the permanent collection of the new Troy State University Montgomery Rosa Parks Library and Museum.

The museum dedication ceremony took place Dec. 1, marking the 45th anniversary of Parks' arrest and subsequent Montgomery Bus Boycott. The guest list included many celebrities and dignitaries, all in attendance to pay tribute to Ms. Parks and her legacy.

Blome devoted more than a year of work to this magnificent sculpture. Photographs of his statue of Martin Luther King first attracted the attention of the museum planners, and Blome was thrilled to participate in the momentous project.

Blome sculpted Parks sitting on a vintage bus seat, gazing out the window. Every detail of the piece was skillfully planned to portray the complex nuances of his subject and the situation.

"This piece is modeled more loosely than usual, to give it a more human quality, with more texture. The light and proper pose and very expressive hands capture the emotion. The body language in her hands tells of the tension going on inside," the artist explained.

Visitors to the museum encounter Blome's sculpture at the start of their tour. "This is an interactive piece. Kids can sit next to Rosa and have their picture taken. It is really something meant for people to get involved with, more than just something they gaze at. They can engage with the piece on a human level, to feel that Rosa Parks is like them, a citizen who did this. It is meant to stir their imagination," Blome stated.

Emotions were also stirred, as many in attendance, including acclaimed actress Cicely Tyson, were visibly moved by the piece.

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