

## For New York's Parks, First Statues of Famous American Women

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Joan of Arc has brandished her sword above Riverside Drive for more than 75 years, while Mother Goose has flown through the wind in Central Park, and Liberty has enlightened the world -- or, at least, a good part of the harbor.

Women, as portrayed in New York's public monuments, are legends or fantasies or allegories. They are not prominent Americans.

But that is about to change, with the imminent arrival of Gertrude Stein in Bryant Park and the advancing plans for an Eleanor Roosevelt memorial in Riverside Park.

The Stein statue, by Jo Davidson, is to be installed soon on the terrace behind the New York Public Library. It will be unveiled in several months, when the terrace is reopened as part of the Bryant Park restoration. A Rebuilt Corner

The Roosevelt memorial would be an eight-foot bronze statue by Penelope Jencks, showing the renowned humanitarian and former First Lady leaning pensively against a small boulder. This would stand in a rebuilt two-acre corner of Riverside Park, at 72d Street. The landscape architects are Bruce Kelly and David Varnell.

The city's Parks and Recreation Department signed an agreement last month with Herbert Zohn, a former art dealer who is co-chairman of the Eleanor Roosevelt Monument Fund. The fund is to raise \$400,000 toward the \$785,000 project, with the city tentatively pledging \$385,000. Most of the money will go into landscaping, Mr. Zohn said, "because we thought it was in her pragmatic spirit that a sculpture of her would improve a park, not just be a monument."

While there is a bust of Golda Meir at Broadway and 39th Street and there are statues of leading women of the stage and screen in niches at the I. Miller Building, at Broadway and 46th Street, the Stein and Roosevelt statues may be the first such public monuments to American women in New York City.

Why has it taken so long?

"We haven't looked for heroines because we have existed in a very male-dominated world," said H. Barbara Weinberg, curator of American paintings and sculpture at the Metropolitan Museum of Art. 'A Different Picture'

Margot Gayle, who wrote a "Guide to Manhattan's Outdoor Sculpture" with Michele Cohen (Prentice Hall Press, 1988), said: "We commented to one another how few of the monuments were to women. We decided that was because most of them were put up in the end of the 19th century and the early 20th century. Now, I think we'd see a different picture."

But while the country's social conscience has changed, so has its appetite for monuments.

"Nonfigural, nonobjective art came to the fore just at the time when one might have been placing pieces to correct for the omissions of the past," said Jonathan Kuhn, curator of monuments for the Parks Department.

The 33-inch-high bronze of Stein was modeled from life in 1923 although it was not cast until last year. It depicts the author seated, looking almost Buddha-like.

It was a gift to the city from Dr. Maury Leibovitz, an art dealer who died last month. He had heard Parks Commissioner Betsy Gotbaum complain about the fact that real women had yet to find an honorable place in the city's public statuary. 'A Little Insulted'

"I was a little insulted by the fact that Mother Goose was the only representative of my sex in probably the most important park," she said. Well, not the only one. Alice in Wonderland is four blocks south. It could turn out that Eleanor Roosevelt, who died in 1962, will get a major monument before her husband, who, after all, was President. "There's not yet a fitting memorial to F.D.R., which may be an even greater gap," said their grandson, Franklin D. Roosevelt 3d, "although I think Eleanor Roosevelt deserves her own monument in her own right. And sooner than 30 years."