

# Statue to depict 'strong, tall' Truth

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**NORTHAMPTON** — A bronze, life-size statue of Sojourner Truth will take its place in a Florence park within six to 12 months, now that sculptor Thomas Jay Warren has been named to create the tribute to the legendary abolitionist and feminist who lived in Florence.

The Sojourner Truth Memorial Statue Committee Thursday announced its decision to award the commission to Warren, who recently moved from North Carolina to Denver.

Warren's last name was reported incorrectly in a story in the Gazette Thursday.

Nancy Felton, chairwoman of the committee, said Warren was chosen because his rendering captured a well-known likeness of Truth.

Warren's maquette showed Truth as

*The next step is seeking final approval for placing the statue in a small park.*

an orator, arms outstretched and "standing firm and strong and tall and powerful," said Felton. Truth was over 6 feet tall.

"We wanted schoolchildren to be able to look at it and know it was Sojourner," Felton said.

Truth was part of the Northampton Association of Education and Industry, a utopian community on Park Street in Florence in the 1840s. A former slave, she was an outspoken advocate for justice and equal rights for women. She stayed in the area until about 1856.

The notion of a statue grew out of a committee formed after the Rodney

King riots in Los Angeles in 1992. The Committee to Dismantle Racism recommended building a statue to honor Truth and recognize her role in the history of Florence.

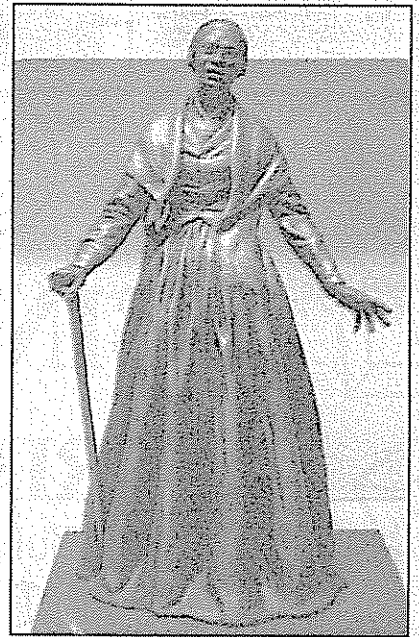
Felton said committee members hope the statue will be a springboard for educating both children and adults about Truth and ideas she supported.

Warren was one of several finalists who submitted maquettes, or models, which were on display for public comment. Warren's model was popular and generated favorable reviews, Felton said.

Warren could not be reached for comment Thursday.

The next step is seeking final approval for placing the statue in a small park at the corner of Pine and Park streets in Florence. The Board of

■ See TRUTH/Back of section



The winning statue of Sojourner Truth.

## Truth statue creator named

■ Continued from Page 1

Public Works has tentatively approved the project.

Warren will work with Nancy Denig, a Northampton landscape architect, on preparing the site for the statue, which will be some 7 feet tall.

Warren, who was born in Mississippi, has created several portraits, monuments and memorials, including a Medgar

Evers Memorial in Jackson, Miss., and a life-size bronze statue of Martin Luther King Jr. in Newark, N.J.

The committee received a \$100,000 state grant and raised another \$100,000 for the project. Warren will be paid a total of \$100,000. The committee will assume the cost of preparing the site, and plans to provide the city with money for maintenance of the park and statue.

Union News 4/6/01

B4

**NORTHAMPTON**

### Sculptor named for Sojourner Truth job

The committee established to erect a statue of the abolitionist and former slave Sojourner Truth near her 19th century home in Florence has selected a sculptor to execute the work. The decision capped eight years of fund-raising, toil and controversy, and paved the way for the statue to be put in place on Pine Street sometime next year.

Thomas Jay Warren of Colorado, whose work includes the Medgar Evers Memorial in Mississippi and a life-sized bronze of Martin Luther King Jr. in New Jersey, was chosen Sunday from among three finalists.