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**LIBRARY TO UNVEIL AUGUSTA SAVAGE SCULPTURE**

*Public Invited to Attend Special Ceremony for Significant Work of Art*

**JACKSONVILLE, Fla., June 23, 2017** — The Jacksonville Public Library recently learned that a sculpture it has owned for some years is the work of well-known African-American artist Augusta Savage. Earlier this year with the help of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, the library had the opportunity to have the small-scale, painted terra cotta female bust appraised and authenticated. As a result, the sculpture of unknown title, which is signed by the artist, is confirmed to have been created by Augusta Savage.

The library is very pleased to place this work of art on permanent display in the Special Collections Department of the Main Library, which comprises the Florida, African-American, Genealogy and Ansbacher Maps Collections. A ceremony will be held to unveil the sculpture, and to honor the work and lifetime achievements of Savage, who was born in Green Cove Springs, Florida, and lived in Jacksonville before moving to New York to pursue her art career. The public is invited to the event. Refreshments will be served.

**WHEN:** Wednesday, June 28  
1 p.m.

**WHERE:** Main Library (Special Collections Department – Fourth Floor)  
303 Laura St. N. – 32202

The library's sculpture is one of three known Augusta Savage sculptures on public display in Jacksonville. The other two can be viewed at the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens, including a plaster sculpture titled *Gamin* (ca. 1930), which is similar in scale and style to the library's bust sculpture.

The library wishes to thank the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville and the Cummer Museum of Art and Gardens and their staffs for their role in helping the library determine the authenticity of the sculpture. The Cummer Museum staff also advised the library on the configuration and lighting of the display.

Library Director Barbara Gubbin said, "To have the work of Augusta Savage, who spent her early years in Northeast Florida and became a leading artist during the Harlem Renaissance, on display and enhancing our Special Collections is extraordinary. We are honored to offer this distinctive work of art by this significant artist as one more reason to visit the splendid Main Library."

**About Augusta Savage (1892 – 1962)**

Born Augusta Christine Fells in Florida, Savage was an African-American sculptor, arts educator and activist. In the midst of the Harlem Renaissance (ca. 1918–1937), she attended Cooper Union in New York City and gained recognition for her portrait busts of W.E.B. DuBois and Marcus Garvey. Denied scholarships to study in Paris because of her race, she eventually received fellowships to study

abroad, won citations at Salons, and had a figure selected for a medallion reproduction at the French Colonial Exposition. She continued to receive more portrait commissions, including that of fellow Floridian James Weldon Johnson.

In 1934 she became the first black artist elected to the National Association of Women Painters and Sculptors. The culmination of her artistic output was her commission for the 1939 New York World's Fair. Four women received commissions; Savage was the only African-American. She created a stunning 16-foot sculpture, *The Harp*, also known as *Lift Every Voice and Sing*, inspired by the song of James Weldon Johnson and Rosamond Johnson. Savage did not have money to store or move the sculpture; it was destroyed at the end of the fair.

Savage opened the Savage Studio of Arts and Crafts in New York City in 1932. She was founding director of the Harlem Community Center through the WPA project, where she mentored young African-American artists such as Norman Lewis, William Artis, Gwendolyn Knight, Jacob Lawrence, and many others. Savage is known for her sensitive and skillful modeling of the human figure. Her small-scale works were portraits of family and friends and portrait busts of African-American leaders. She often worked with plaster and terra cotta because she could not afford bronze. Today, many of her pieces are lost.

The Jacksonville Public Library is committed to making its programs accessible to all persons. If you need special accommodations, please call 630-BOOK (2665) (TTY 630-1999) at least 72 hours prior to the event.

#### **About the Jacksonville Public Library**

The mission of the Jacksonville Public Library is to enrich lives, build community and foster success by bringing people, information and ideas together. Last year, more than 3.4 million visits were made to Jacksonville Public Libraries, items were checked out more than 5.7 million times, and over 13,000 programs and services were offered to Duval County residents at the Main Library and 20 branch locations. For more information about the Jacksonville Public Library, call 630-BOOK (2665) or visit [jaxpubliclibrary.org](http://jaxpubliclibrary.org).

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