



More Statues Commissioned for Virginia Women's Monument *Sculpting begins on Laura Copenhaver, Mary Draper Ingles & Elizabeth Keckly*

Richmond, VA (March 12, 2019) – Just in time to celebrate Women's History Month in March, the Virginia Capitol Foundation announces that the statues of Laura Copenhaver, Mary Draper Ingles and Elizabeth Keckly have been fully funded and commissioned to be sculpted into bronze statues for [Voices from the Garden: The Virginia Women's Monument](#).

The Virginia Women's Monument is the nation's first monument created to showcase the remarkable women who made significant, but often unrecognized, contributions in a variety of fields and endeavors over the 400-year history of Virginia. When completed, the monument's 12 bronze statues, along with a Wall of Honor inscribed with the names of 230 women, will help tell the whole story about the diversity of achievement, ethnicity and thought that has shaped the Commonwealth.

“As a society, we have a responsibility to ensure that women's stories are embedded into the narrative of Virginia history,” said Mary Margaret Whipple, vice chair of the Women's Monument Commission. “The Virginia Women's Monument will provide a unique opportunity to explore and experience the powerful role that these female trailblazers played in the past, serving as an inspiration for current and future generations to find their own voice.”

The first four statues of Cockacoeske, Anne Burras Laydon, Virginia Randolph and Adèle Clark were commissioned last year and now more are underway:

Laura Copenhaver: An entrepreneur from Smyth County in Southwest Virginia, Copenhaver was an early leader within the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. Working from her home, Rosemont, she coordinated the production of coverlets, rugs and other household items that were made with wool from area farms and crafted by local women. Rosemont's popular textiles attracted customers from throughout the U.S., as well as Asia, Europe and South America. The Virginia Farm Bureau Federation recently made a contribution of \$100,000 to support Copenhaver's statue, and Altria Group contributed \$50,000.

Mary Draper Ingles: One of Virginia's most famous frontierswomen, Mary Draper Ingles lived in Draper's Meadow (now Blacksburg). In 1755, she was captured by Shawnee Indians and taken to Ohio where she was forced to sew shirts for the men of the tribe. She eventually escaped and traveled five or six hundred miles back to her home, much of it by

walking across the rugged, mountainous landscape. Her brave, inspiring story is still shared and reenacted to this day.

Elizabeth Keckly: Born enslaved in Dinwiddie County, Va., Elizabeth Keckly was a talented seamstress who bought her freedom in 1855 with the help of her patrons. After moving to Washington, D.C., she developed a clientele of prominent women and came to the attention of Mary Todd Lincoln, eventually becoming the First Lady's personal dressmaker and confidante. She wrote a book of her experiences in the White House. In the 1890s, she taught sewing and domestic arts at Wilberforce University in Ohio. Keckly died at the National Home for Destitute Colored Women and Children in Washington, D.C., an entity that she helped establish.

Each statue required a financial investment of \$200,000 in order to proceed to the sculpting phase by the talented team of artisans, both men and women, at StudioEIS in Brooklyn, N.Y. The remaining five statues are partially funded and will be commissioned as contributions become available.

A formal dedication of the Virginia Women's Monument is scheduled for October 14, 2019 and most of the bronze statues will be installed by that time. The granite plaza and the Wall of Honor were unveiled in October 2018. A large amount of space is available for the names of more outstanding women to be added to the Wall of Honor in the future.

"We are so excited that more than half of the statues in the Virginia Women's Monument have been commissioned and it won't be long before these remarkable women take their rightful place on Capitol Square," said Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerk of the Senate and a member of the Women's Monument Commission. "No other state in the country has recognized women's contributions in such an engaging and compelling manner. We appreciate the generous support of individuals, corporations and foundations that are making this monument possible."

For more information or to make a contribution to the Virginia Women's Monument, visit www.virginiacapitol.gov. Contributions can be designated for a particular statue by making a note in the Additional Comments box.

#

Media contact for photos and interviews:

Sara Hunt, SaraHuntPR@gmail.com, 804-994-1120

About the Virginia Capitol Foundation

The Virginia Capitol Foundation is the independent, non-profit, non-partisan, tax-exempt organization supporting the ongoing restoration, preservation, and interpretation of the Virginia Capitol, Capitol Square and Executive Mansion. The VCF serves as the fiscal agent and is also responsible for managing the fundraising for the Virginia Women's Monument on behalf of the Virginia Women's Monument Commission. For more information about the Virginia Capitol Foundation or the Virginia Women's Monument, visit www.virginiacapitol.gov.