

Pillars of Power

Hollands, Taylor

Dec. 1 2023

Jackson, Tennessee – In Historic East Jackson, Shirlene Mercer Park stands as a testament to the city's rich history and the profound contributions of its African-American community. The park is now home to the Seven Pillars Monument, a captivating sculpture paying tribute to seven pivotal figures who shaped the cultural and urban landscape of Jackson-Madison County.

The beautiful park and its history is often overlooked, and altogether widely unheard of with the Jackson community. Local college students Riley Palazzo and Jake Hare were asked a series of question about the history of their beloved city – however, blanked when presented with questions of the park and monument:

“What’s that? Who’s That,” said Palazzo, a 19-year-old college student at Jackson State Community College.

“No, I don’t know what that is. I have no idea,” said Hare, a 22-year-old senior at Union University.

The Seven Pillars, a unique creation of sculptor Lee Benson and assistant Tony Black, commemorates the legacies of Bishop Isaac Lane, Austin Raymond Merry, Dr. Miles Lynk, B.B. Lynk, Samuel McElwee, Milmon Mitchell, and a diverse collection of Jackson’s most influential luminaries. These individuals, sourced from fields like education, medicine, law, and activism, played instrumental roles in cultivating the city's growth.

Underneath the pillars, the grounds feature rings of trees, symbolizing the younger generation looking up to these community giants. Benson's vision hopes to highlight the importance of providing role models for children of the predominant and important African-American community that makes up Jackson, enabling them to discover heroes within their community and within themselves.

Vimeo:

<https://vimeo.com/890947736>

SLUG: Pillars of Power

HOLLANDS

NAT1: <<fade in and maintain >>
[0:10]

NAT2: <<fade in and maintain at [0:19], fade out at [0:34]>>
[0:15]

INTRO: In Historic East Jackson, Shirlene Mercer Park stands as a testament to the city's rich history and the profound contributions of its African-American community. The park is now home to the Seven Pillars Monument, a captivating sculpture paying tribute to seven pivotal figures who shaped the cultural and urban landscape of Jackson-Madison County. The beautiful park and its history is often overlooked, and altogether widely unheard of with the Jackson community.
[:24]

<< fade in, maintain below>>

ACT1 - Palazzo Interview

<< Question One>>

Interviewer: Do you know what the Seven Pillars Memorial (Monument) is?

ACT1-Palazzo : What's that?

<< Question Two>>

Interviewer: Do you know who Shirlene Mercer is?

ACT1-Palazzo : Who's that?

[:08]

<< **fade in, maintain below** >>

ACT2-Hare Interview

<< Question One>>

Interviewer: Do you know what the Seven Pillars Memorial (Monument) is?

ACT2-Hare : No, I don't know what that is.

<< Question Two>>

Interviewer: Do you know who Shirlene Mercer is?

ACT2-Hare: I have no idea.

[:05]

NAT3: <<**fade under and maintain area traffic**>>

[0:26]

<<**maintain below**>>

VO1: The Seven Pillars, a unique creation of sculptor Lee Benson and assistant Tony Black, commemorates the legacies of Bishop Isaac Lane, Austin Raymond Merry, Dr. Miles Lynk, B.B. Lynk, Samuel McElwee, Milmon Mitchell, and a diverse collection of Jackson's most influential luminaries. These individuals, sourced from fields like education, medicine, law, and activism, played instrumental roles in cultivating the city's growth.

[:26]

NAT4: <<fade under and maintain birds calling at [1:25], fade out at [1:28]>>
[:03]

<<maintain below>>

VO2: Underneath the pillars, the grounds feature rings of trees, symbolizing the younger generation looking up to these community giants. Benson's vision hopes to highlight the importance of providing role models for children of the predominant and important African-American community that makes up Jackson, enabling them to discover heroes within their community and within themselves.
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Sources for Contacts

Riley Palazzo: +7312346475

Pastor Mary-Beth Freeman Eberle: <https://www.graceumcjackson.org/about/staff/>

Katie King: kingk@memphis.edu

Sources for Other Information

- Signs located at site
- *Seven Pillars Historical Marker*. (2021, June 21). The Historical Marker Database. Retrieved December 4, 2023, from <https://www.hmdb.org/m.asp?m=175641>
- Seven Pillars monument honors Jackson's black trailblazers. (2020, June 12). *The Jackson Sun*.
<https://www.jacksonsun.com/story/news/local/2020/06/12/seven-pillars-monument-honors-jackson-tn-black-trailblazers/5344354002/>