BLACK PATRIOTS IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR

"Of the services and sufferings of the colored soldiers of the Revolution, no attempt has, to our knowledge, been made to preserve a record [...] Their history is not written; it lies upon the soil watered with their blood: who shall gather it?"

William Howard Day (1825-1900)
Black abolitionist, publisher, and teacher, 1852

Over 150 Maryland African Americans are known to have enlisted and served as soldiers in the Revolutionary War. The majority of them were free Blacks, although some had been enslaved. Their existence and contribution have been largely unknown in Maryland's public history. In honor of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence, this monument honors these soldiers for their military service in the creation of this nation, along with the community of followers who supported them.

The Continental Army was an integrated, multi-racial force, and approximately 5,000 Black soldiers fought on the American side during the Revolutionary War. In some cases they were allowed only non-combatant roles, but most served in regular infantry units alongside white troops. In Maryland, free Blacks began enlisting by the summer of 1776, and by 1778, enslaved men were permitted to serve as substitutes for white soldiers. After 1780, when the need for additional recruits was particularly acute, enslaved men could enlist on their own accord.

One state, Rhode Island, raised an all Black regiment, and Maryland considered following suit, but the proposal failed in the General Assembly in 1781. Although Black soldiers tended to serve longer tours than their white compatriots, they were generally prevented from ascending military ranks beyond fifer, drummer, or private.

Like their white counterparts, Black soldiers were sometimes accompanied by their wives and families during their service. Non-combatant women and children cooked for soldiers, washed laundry, mended uniforms, sold supplies, and provided unofficial logistical support for the army.

The history of Black soldiers' service is preserved in many historical records, including some held in Maryland. Their names are included in muster rolls and pay receipts, while others left firsthand accounts of their service in applications for a veterans pension. Some were even recognized for their service and sacrifices with obituaries published in newspapers.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

MONUMENT ADVISORY COMMITTEE
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Major General Janeen L. Birckhead
Jerome C. Gray
Elizabeth Hughes
Diane Hutchins
Chanel Compton Johnson
Steven X. Lee
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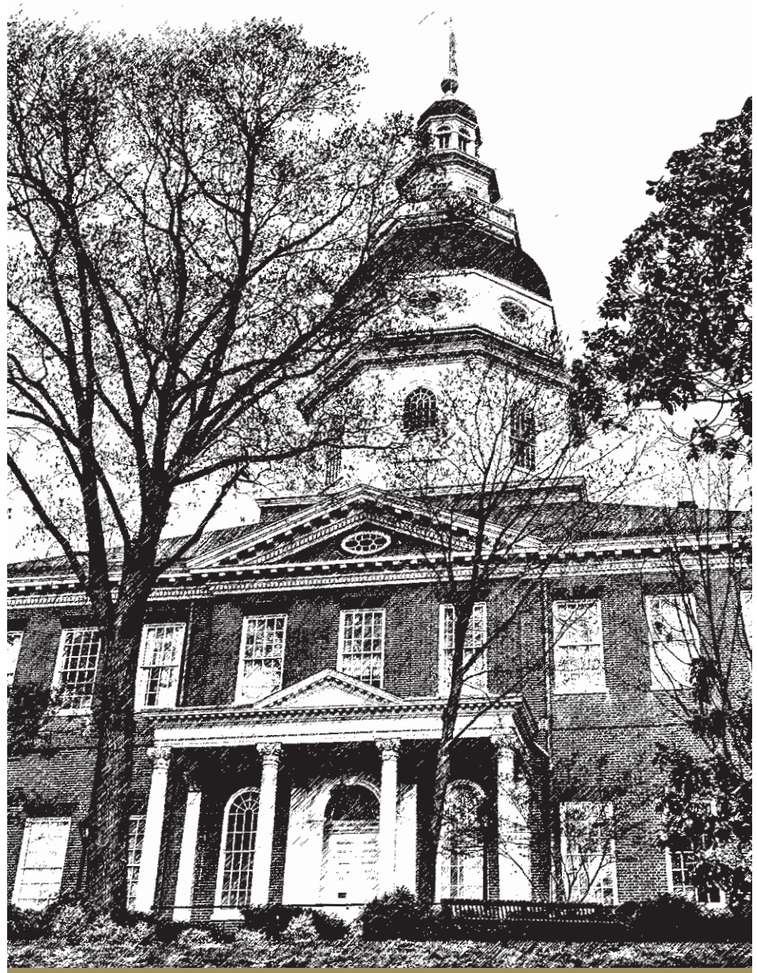
DESIGN AND CONSTRUCTION
Campion Hruby Landscape Architects
The Christman Company - Construction Manager
James Posey Associates
Lorton Stone
Ruppert Landscaping
Freestate Electrical
Fine Art Specialists, LLC
Artworks Foundry
Graphics By Design

For more information about the Black Patriot Monument and the history of Black patriots, visit msa.maryland.gov

Maryland Monument to Honor Black Patriots

The Pursuit of Transcendent Liberty

BRANLY CADET



UNVEILING

November 1, 2026
Maryland State House

A monument commissioned by the State House Trust in honor of the 250th Anniversary of the Declaration of Independence

PROGRAM

POSTING OF THE COLORS

Meade High School Army JROTC

The National Anthem
Lift Every Voice and Sing
The Honorable Malcolm P. Ruff, Delegate

WELCOME

The Honorable Aruna K. Miller, Lieutenant Governor of Maryland
Chair, State House Trust

INVOCATION

Reverend Dr. Kenneth P. Moore, Chaplain USAFR Retired

BLESSING AND LIBATION

Deborah Pierce-Fakunle and David Fakunle
DiscoverME/RecoverME

REMARKS BY THE STATE HOUSE TRUST

The Honorable Aruna K. Miller, Lieutenant Governor of Maryland
The Honorable Joseline Peña-Melnyk, Speaker of the House of Delegates
The Honorable William C. Ferguson IV, President of the Maryland Senate
The Honorable Wes Moore, Governor of Maryland

REMARKS BY THE ARTIST

Branly Cadet

THE UNVEILING OF THE MONUMENT

The State House Trust
The Honorable Adrienne A. Jones, Speaker of the House Emerita
Steven X. Lee, Monument Advisory Committee

"In every human Breast, God has implanted a Principle, which we call Love of Freedom; it is impatient of Oppression, and pants for Deliverance"

Phyllis Wheatley (1753-1784)
Letter to Rev. Samuel Occum, 1774

THE MARYLAND MONUMENT TO HONOR BLACK PATRIOTS

In May 2023, Steven Xavier Lee submitted a proposal to the State House Trust for the development of a monument to honor "the unsung African American patriots of the Revolutionary War." Mr. Lee advocated for a "three dimensional acknowledgement of Maryland Black soldiers who responded to Maryland's call to arms, gave up their blood and lives for all of us to have this land."

Led by then Speaker of the House Adrienne Jones, the State House Trust approved the development of "A Memorial to Honor Black Patriots who served in the American Revolutionary War" in July 2023. Funded over two fiscal years, this capital project provided $1,00,000 for the development, fabrication, and installation of the monument to be completed in 2026, in honor of the 250th anniversary of the signing of the Declaration of Independence.

A nine-member Monument Advisory Committee (MAC) was convened, composed of representatives of executive and legislative state government, the military, and cultural and heritage professionals from the public and private sectors. A "National Call to Artists," released in June 2024, yielded 51 responses, each reviewed and scored by the MAC. Ultimately, four semi-finalists presented their concepts for the monument at the State Archives in January 2025. The MAC unanimously recommended Branly Cadet to the State House Trust to receive the commission for this first large-scale monument to be added to the State House grounds in over a century.

Creation of the Black Patriot Monument has been jointly managed, on behalf of the State House Trust, by the Department of General Services, the Maryland Commission on Public Art (Maryland State Arts Council), and the Maryland Commission on Artistic Property (Maryland State Archives). It will be cared for in perpetuity on behalf of the people of Maryland by the Commission on Artistic Property.

The State House Trust was created in 1969 to oversee the area inside State Circle in Annapolis, including the State House. This oversight extends to the use of buildings and grounds and any exhibits on display there. The Trust supervises all improvements, alterations, additions, landscaping, and repairs within that area and including Lawyers Mall.

The Maryland Commission on Public Art guides the Maryland Public Art Initiative program, to bring site specific art installations to state buildings and facilities for the enrichment of the public. Created in 2005, the Commission works with the Maryland State Arts Council to support public art that enhances Maryland's communities and cultural landscapes.

The Maryland Commission on Artistic Property is the official custodian of all valuable paintings and other decorative arts owned by or loaned to the state. Established in 1969, the Commission provides for the acquisition, location, proper care, custody, restoration, display, interpretation, and preservation of the nearly 4,000 works that comprise the state-owned art collection.

BRANLY CADET

Branly Cadet is a classically trained American sculptor and artist. He renders the human form in the realist tradition, but considers himself a modernist who enjoys combining figurative sculpture with modernist strategies including text, abstraction, metaphor, and spatial dynamics. He seeks to create works of art that invite aesthetic, civic, and psychic contemplation.

Cadet began studying sculpture at Cornell University and continued his studies in figurative art at the New York Academy of Art, and in France at the Vaugel Sculpture Studio and L'Ecole Albert Defois. Soon after, he won the prestigious James Wilbur Johnston National Figure Sculpture Competition. Cadet's studio is located in Oakland, California.

Below top, Arise (National Memorial for Peace and Justice, Montgomery, AL); bottom, The Jackie Robinson Memorial (Los Angeles, CA).

