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Statue Dedicated in Honor of Former First Lady Barbara Bush

Bronze statue to serve as focal point of Barbara Bush Literacy Plaza at Houston Public Library Downtown

Houston, TX – On September 28, the City of Houston, led by Mayor Sylvester Turner, in conjunction with the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation (Foundation), Houston Public Library Foundation (HPL Foundation), and Houston Public Library, revealed a statue of Former First Lady Barbara Bush and held a dedication at the Barbara Bush Literacy Plaza at the Houston Public Library Downtown. The bronze statue, commissioned in partnership among the organizations, will serve as the focal point of the Barbara Bush Memorial Garden located within the Plaza named in honor of the late First Lady.

The dedication was attended by Mayor Sylvester Turner; Family members of the late President George H.W. & First Lady Barbara Bush – Neil Bush (son) and wife Maria Bush, Pierce (grandson) and wife Sarahbeth Bush, Jim Pierce (nephew), and Clemmie Pierce Martin (great niece); Dr. Julie Baker Finck, President & CEO, Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation; Licia Green Ellis, Houston Public Library Foundation Board Chair; and Dr. Rhea Lawson, Houston Public Library Director. The invocation was offered by Reverend Dr. Russell J. Levenson, Jr., Rector of St. Martin’s Episcopal Church.

The custom bronze statue, created by artists at Randolph Rose, took two years to design and create, and is the first stand-alone statue of the late First Lady Barbara Bush in Texas. (A statue of the late President George H. W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush stands in the Bush Convention Center in Midland, Texas.) The statue is a life-size image of Mrs. Bush seated on a six-foot “open book” bench. She is wearing her signature pearls and is posed in the act of reading as she did so often to groups of children across the country who would gather to hear stories. Beloved family dog Millie – the family dog while the Bush’s were in the White House – sits at her feet. Mrs. Bush frequently took her dogs – whether Millie or Mini and Bebe on school visits.

“Mom championed a literacy movement across America and believed that learning how to read, write, and comprehend was a fundamental human right,” said Neil Bush, son of President George H. W. Bush and First Lady Barbara Bush and Co-Chair of the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation. “The statue is an incredible tribute to her legacy and captures Mom’s essence, as she truly loved reading to children in schools across our nation and beyond with her beloved dogs in tow.”

“This statue stands as a tribute to Barbara Bush’s incredible 30-year commitment to helping countless people across our country gain the life-changing literacy skills they need to thrive in the workforce, family and society,” said Mayor Sylvester Turner. “May this statue serve as a constant reminder of her dedication and inspire us all to give in service to others and make reading a priority in our homes and communities.”

The Barbara Bush Literacy Plaza is located between the historic Julia Ideson Building and the Central Library of the Houston Public Library in downtown Houston and joins five bronze book benches sponsored by the Foundation’s Ladies for Literacy Guild in 2022.

For more information about the Barbara Bush Houston Literacy Foundation, visit bushoustonliteracy.org. For more information on the exciting events and programs coming to the HPL Central Library and Barbara Bush Literacy Plaza, visit Houstonlibrary.org or call 832-393-1313.