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NEWLY COMMISSIONED SCULPTURE UNVEILED AT COPPIN STATE UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF BUSINESS



Community of Stars, by Nnamdi Okonkwo, at Coppin State University College of Business

BALTIMORE, MD - The State of Maryland has welcomed the newest addition to its public art collection at Coppin State University's College of Business, located at the corner of Warwick and West North Avenue in Baltimore City. The sculpture, titled *Community of Stars*, was created through the Maryland State Arts Council (MSAC)'s Artwork Commissions program and unveiled in a dedication ceremony earlier this month.

"We know that this artwork will serve as a beacon in our community - a source of inspiration and welcome not only for Coppin students and employees but for West Baltimore residents as well," said Coppin State University President Anthony L. Jenkins.

Artist Nnamdi Okonkwo created the large-scale bronze *Community of Stars* to symbolize the students as stars shining light on the Coppin community, as well as their journey beyond graduation.

“Public art not only complements new capital improvement projects; it reflects who we are and communicates our hopes for our communities,” said MSAC Executive Director Steven Skerritt-Davis. “Investing in public artworks is an investment in the future vibrancy of our communities.”

Okonkwo was selected for this commission through the state’s Percent-for-Art program, whereby a percentage of state building construction budgets are set aside for public art. The program is overseen by the Maryland Public Art Commission and managed by MSAC’s Public Art Across Maryland team.

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About Maryland State Arts Council

Founded in 1967, MSAC is an agency of the State of Maryland Department of Commerce that plays an essential role, ensuring every person has access to the transformative power of the arts. MSAC advances the arts in our state by providing leadership that champions creative expression, diverse programming, equitable access, lifelong learning, and the arts as a celebrated contributor to the quality of life for all the people of Maryland. To do this, the agency awards grants to not-for-profit, tax-exempt organizations for ongoing arts programming and projects, awards grants to individual artists, and provides technical and advisory assistance to individuals and groups. MSAC receives its funds in an annual appropriation from the State of Maryland and from grants from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency. The Council may also receive contributions from private, non-governmental sources. For more information, go to msac.org.

About Public Art Across Maryland: Artwork Commissions

MSAC’s Artwork Commissions program allows independent artists and artist-led teams to apply to be included on a Public Artist Roster for a two-year cycle, or to apply directly to an open Call to Artists, when one is issued. Artists are selected by an artist selection committee. MSAC manages the process from artist selection, through design, fabrication, and installation. Finished work becomes part of the state’s public art collection.

About Coppin State University

Coppin State University, a Historically Black Institution founded in 1900 in Baltimore, Maryland, serves a multicultural and multigenerational student population. Coppin State University provides educational and experiential learning opportunities that foster leadership, social responsibility, civic and community engagement, cultural diversity, inclusivity, and economic development. Learn more at coppin.edu.