

MEDIA RELEASE



For Release: April 5, 2021 For More Information: Joy Testa Cinquino, testaj@buffalolib.org, 716-858-7182

BUFFALO NATIVE DONATES PORTRAIT OF HARRIET TUBMAN TO THE FRANK E. MERRIWEATHER, JR. BRANCH LIBRARY IN BUFFALO



Artist Antionette Simmons Hodges, who grew up in Buffalo's Hamlin Park neighborhood and attended Bennett High School, has donated her mixed media collage *Minty AKA Harriet AKA Moses*, a portrait of a young Harriet Tubman, to the Buffalo & Erie County Public Library. The work is displayed at the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library located on Buffalo's East Side at 1324 Jefferson Ave.

"My youngest sister, who still lives in Buffalo, told me about the valuable resources available to teachers, students and scholars at the Merriweather Library," said Simmons Hodges. "I had no such resources about my heritage when I was a student, so I determined to share this work with the students in my hometown. This painting is donated in memory of my parents, Mr. & Mrs. Wiley Hill Simmons, Sr."

Simmons Hodges, now based in Silver Spring, Maryland, is a retired Washington, DC elementary school art teacher and a graduate of West Virginia State College (now West Virginia State University), with a Master of Art Education Degree from Trinity College, Washington, DC. Her artwork has been shown in exhibitions at West Virginia State College, University of Maryland, Brentwood Arts Exchange and the Strathmore Gallery, among others, as well as on cards, magazine covers and on the cover of the 2014 book *Harlem Blues*, written in French by Christine Dualé about African American poet Langston Hughes.

"We so appreciate this beautiful gift," said Library Director Mary Jean Jakubowski. "We are honored to display Ms. Simmons Hodges' stunning work as an inspiration to Merriweather Library users of any age."

The striking circular library building was designed by the late architect Robert Traynham Coles in the style of an African village and it is named after Frank E. Merriweather, Jr., editor and publisher of *The Criterion* – the oldest continuously published African American newspaper in upstate New York. The Merriweather Library also features the *William A. Miles Center for African and African-American Studies*.

For more information about the Frank E. Merriweather, Jr. Branch Library, click here: <https://www.buffalolib.org/locations-hours/frank-e-merriweather-jr-branch>. For updated Library System hours visit buffalolib.libcal.com or call 716-858-8900. Follow on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), [Pinterest](#) and [Flickr](#) and the Library's podcast, *All Booked Up* on [SoundCloud](#). ###