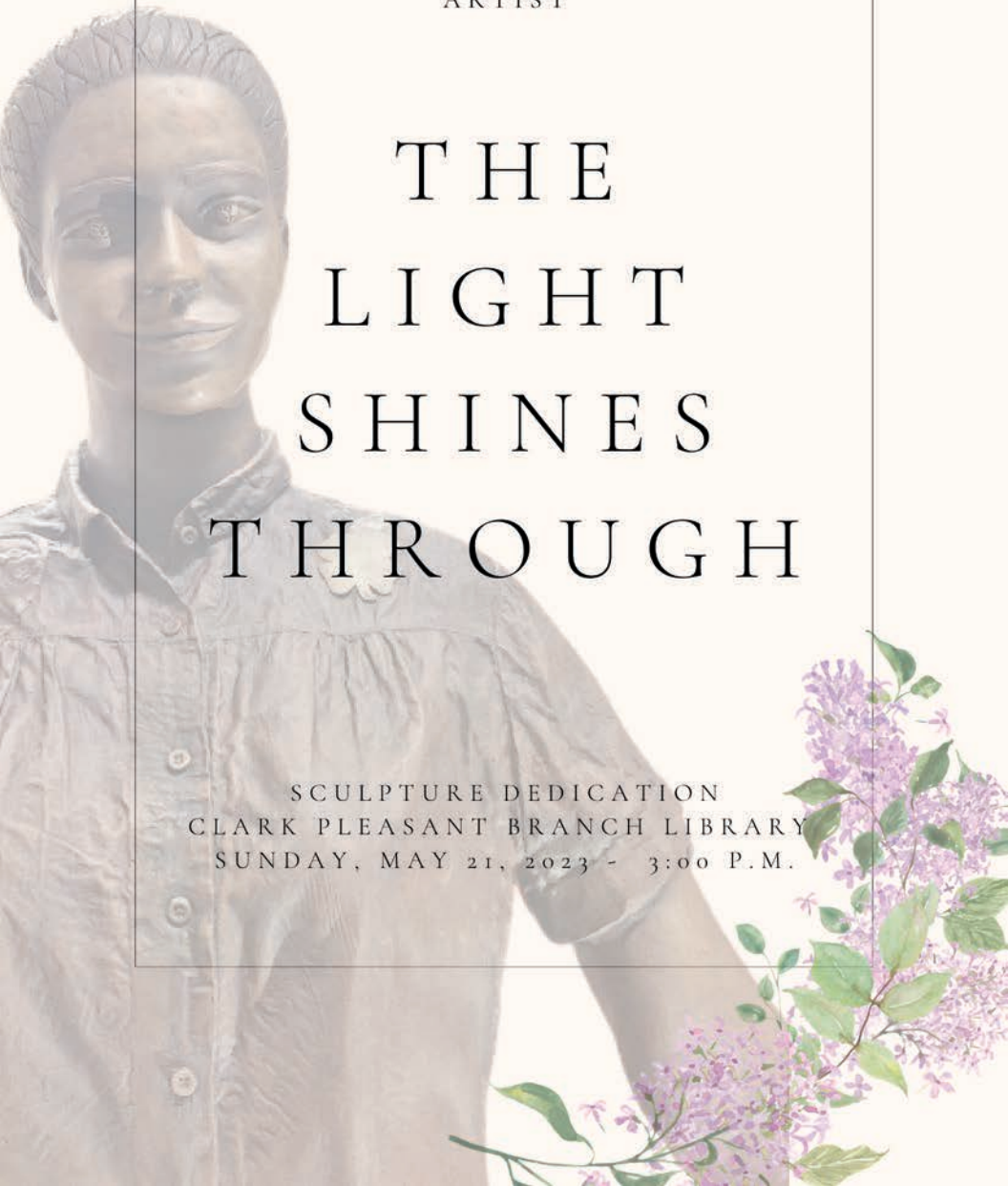





KIMBERLY MCNEELAN  
ARTIST



THE  
LIGHT  
SHINES  
THROUGH

SCULPTURE DEDICATION  
CLARK PLEASANT BRANCH LIBRARY  
SUNDAY, MAY 21, 2023 - 3:00 P.M.





## ABOUT THE SCULPTURE

BY KIMBERLY MCNEELAN

*The Light Shines Through* honors ALL women who have encouraged literacy in Johnson County and beyond. The figure does not represent just one woman with her casual and classic style. She embodies timeless characteristics with which everyday women can identify. The sculpture's details tell the stories of several specific extraordinary women from Johnson County. The female is emerging from a book recognizing women's stories of the past, present, and those yet to come.

We acknowledge and honor the Native American women who inhabited Johnson County prior to the settling of the area. We give thanks to all women who pass on knowledge. The details of this sculpted everyday woman represent a classic American female of the 20th or 21st centuries. It has been my goal that all the women of Johnson County see aspects of themselves in this sculpture and feel honored.

The unwavering importance of passing on information and women being recognized as equals are indicated by the lasting quality of the precious metal from which it is made, bronze.

The female symbol is carved in place of one of the woman's pupils, and this symbol has been used as a sign of women empowerment. In the other eye is an owl, which is a universal symbol of knowledge.

The shoes are based on the iconic brand, Keds, which have been around since 1916, and the shoes were some of the first sneakers. Keds promotes equality for all people.<sup>1</sup> The brand label is replaced with a heart, star, and moon which represent playfulness.

Most women have owned a pair of blue jeans. Throughout their history, blue jeans have transcended nearly all class, age, occupational, and subcultural barriers.<sup>2</sup> They are now, in essence, a universally accepted norm and perhaps America's greatest contribution to the fashion industry (Fiske).

The woman's blouse represents one from the 1950s, 1960s, or 1970s that belonged to my grandma, Beverly McNeelan. My grandma was a classic Johnson County woman that demonstrated patience, grace, and hard work every day. The shirt had a label that read, "modern sportswear." Women wear similar tops today, and this is an interesting reference to how far society has come in accepting women as equals who can decide what to wear.



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## AND ITS SYMBOLISM

The book in the woman's hand was by local author, Katie Basbagill. Katie was an exemplary person who inspired humans globally through her ability to truly love and help other people. You can learn about her humanitarian work in the book, *The Light Shone Through*. There are tiny dots on the book (where the woman's hand holds the cover) that represent the magic of the transfer of written information.

The hair of the woman acknowledges retired kindergarten teacher, Paige Banos. Mrs. Banos has literally spent her life teaching children to read and love books. She now serves on the Johnson County Public Library Foundation Board.

The woman wears a four-leaf clover because 4-H empowers and educates many females. I know of several specific women that have done meaningful work through this organization. Missy Suttles and Lois Fitzpatrick come to mind first.

The 'Love More' embroidery is indicative of the mindset embodied by many Johnson County women regardless of their spiritual beliefs. The heart design also acknowledges the good work that Erin Davis is doing through the non-profit Love More Sign.

Like many people in this county, I am eternally grateful for my family. I have been blessed with a wonderful mother that has magnificent friends that repeatedly demonstrate women as equals in all facets of life.

The posture of the figure represents that society is in perpetual motion. Change is the constant. The woman is stepping forward into the future. Her arm is outstretched to take someone's hand and share with them her knowledge and ability to read. Head held high with a slight smile- this woman knows what she is doing.

I grew up in Johnson County, and this sculpture reminds me of countless individuals who have taught and inspired me and others. In this everyday Johnson County woman, I see tenacity, emotion, power through knowledge, and serious balancing skills. I have aspired to honor all the women of Johnson County with this traditional medium and form of sculpture. I hope the sentiment of gratitude resonates with you all. The community's commitment to encouraging literacy ensures that the spirit of shared knowledge will continue and that *The Light Shines Through*.

### Works Cited:

1. <https://www.popsugar.com/fashion/photo-gallery/45363693/image/45363694/Early-Years>

2. <https://prizedwriting.ucdavis.edu/sites/prizedwriting.ucdavis.edu/files/sitewide/pastissues/1993%E2%80%991994%20AMES.pdf>

Fiske, John. *Understanding Popular Culture*. Boston: Unwin Hyman, 1989.





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## THE IMPORTANCE OF PUBLIC ART

The Johnson County Public Library's mission is to strengthen the community by connecting people, resources and experiences. Experiences engaging in creativity and innovation can be nurtured in a community in many ways – one of which is public art.

Early in the planning process for the new Clark Pleasant Branch Library, featuring public art was a goal for enhancing the new space.

In libraries, public art can be a bridge between the realms of literature and visual expression. It creates an atmosphere that engages, inspires and sparks the imagination of library visitors of all ages. It transforms the library from a building filled with books into a dynamic cultural hub - a place where creativity and education interweave.

Public art featuring women can be empowering for women and girls, as it provides them with positive role models and affirms their value and worth in society. *The Light Shines Through* sculpture celebrates all women in Johnson County who have encouraged literacy and we hope residents will connect with the sculpture or think of a woman who made a difference in their life when viewing her.



### A GRASSROOTS FUNDRAISING EFFORT

The JCPL Foundation's fundraising committee raised private donations to fund three art projects to celebrate our community: a tile mosaic made by hundreds of residents, a photography contest depicting life in Johnson County and a commissioned sculpture celebrating women.

This sculpture was made possible through the generosity of donors who supported the development of art "celebrating women in Johnson County." There were 75 gifts from individuals, including two major gifts that made the commissioning of the sculpture possible. I am reminded of the power of people – and how collectively we can make a difference in our community.

LISA LINTNER  
JCPL DIRECTOR  
JCPL FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBER



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## ABOUT THE ARTIST

### Kimberly McNeelan

Kimberly McNeelan, an Indianapolis based furniture maker and sculptor, celebrates nature and healthy living through art. Kimberly is a frequent contributor for *Woodworker's Journal*, a woodworking instructor at the Indianapolis Art Center, and a professor at Butler University. She received her MFA in 2016 from Herron School of Art and Design in Indianapolis, Indiana. Kimberly has been featured many times on HGTV, received several public art grants, has work in collections across the country, and believes that: "It's not just woodworking. It's a lifestyle."

Kimberly received her BFA in 2005 with a sculpture and industrial design focus from Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. Seeking to further her study after graduation, she joined the team at Marc Adams School of Woodworking where she was introduced to the world of furniture making by assisting the best craftspeople in the World. Kimberly then moved to Petaluma, California to

apprentice with master furniture maker and sculptor, Michael Cullen. After completing her apprenticeship, she opened her own studio in the self-built home and workshop of first generation studio furniture maker, Arthur Espenet Carpenter, in Bolinas, California. During that time, she began her teaching career through the well-known Baulines Craft Guild.





THANK YOU  
FOR  
SHARING  
THIS  
SPECIAL DAY  
WITH US!

