

Final Chapter Fundraiser Held For Sophocles Statue

The Athens Square Committee gathered for their "Final Chapter" fundraiser on April 8, at the Astoria World Manor, 25-22 Astoria Blvd. in Astoria. The event was held to raise money in order to support the completion of the newest addition to Athens Square Park, a bronze statue of Sophocles.

"We are currently putting on the finishing touches," Chris Vilardi, the statue's creator, said. Vilardi, who has been sculpting Sophocles for the past 10 months, has made a figure that will stand approximately seven and a half feet tall atop a two-foot high granite pedestal made from Cold Spring Granite which will be engraved with a brief biography and quotes from Sophocles' plays. Weighing 3,000 pounds, the statue will be covered in bronze that will increase its weight to more than 6,000 pounds.

"The statue of Sophocles is truly amazing and so real," Athens Square Committee Chairperson George Delis said. "The one complaint I have is that the face looks a bit more Roman than Greek. What do you expect from a sculptor whose last name is Vilardi?"

Vilardi, president of Long Island City Artists, was also project manager on the statue of Aristotle that was installed in the park two years ago. A graduate from Parsons School of Design and a member of the Alliance of Queens Artists, Vilardi's other artistic talents include oil painting and photography.

The statue of Sophocles, expected to be completed in about three months, will be waxed, assembled and bronzed at the Modern Art

(L. to r.) Lucille Hartmann, Lieutenant Claudio Fernandez, 114th Police Precinct, Marie Torniali, 114th Precinct Commanding Officer Inspector Paul Vorbeck, Federation of Italian American Organizations of Queens member Joe DiPietro, Gene Matarangas, George Delis, Rita and Dennis Sapteilas, George Alexion, President and CEO of Global City Realty George Kitsios, Chris Vilardi and Dutch Kills Civic Association Executive Director George Stamatiades attended a fundraiser held at the Astoria World Manor by the Athens Square Committee on April 8, to help raise support for the completion of the statue of Sophocles which will be added to the park sometime in midsummer.

(L. to r.) Athens Square Committee members George Alexion, Dennis Sapteilas and George Kitsios.

Photos Jason D. Antos



Foundry in Long Island City. Historically, bronze has been the metal of choice as a medium for casting three-dimensional art. The tradition of pouring molten metal into molds, resulting an object, in bronze, extends back almost 5,000 years. Roxanne Marriano is the statue's moldmaker and More Specialized Transport of Hackensack, New Jersey will handle the installation.

The unveiling of the statue was originally scheduled to coincide with Greek Independence Day on April 15. According to Vilardi, the new projected date is now set for some time in June or July.