



Memphis Business Journal, April 5, 2018 “MLK50: Memphis dedicates civil rights monument,” by Michelle Corbet  
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## MLK50: Memphis dedicates civil rights monument

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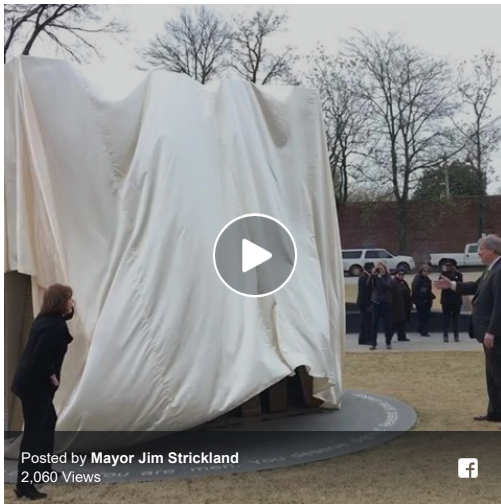
As Confederate statues remain in places across the South, the City of Memphis has dedicated a new civil rights monument to the 1968 Sanitation Workers Strike.

"When America again grapples with our history of racism by removing hierarchical monuments across the South, we in Memphis have built a very different kind of memorial," said Cliff Garten, an internationally recognized sculptor and founder of Cliff Garten Studio. "I Am a Man Plaza is not a hierarchical place. It is horizontal. It is inclusive and it is participatory."



MICHELLE CORBET | MBJ

Thursday, April 5, the City of Memphis dedicated I Am a Man Plaza, a large-scale public sculpture park and memorial plaza commissioned to pay tribute to the sanitation workers strike and the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., near Downtown's Clayborn Temple.



"As we started preparing for this occasion more than two years ago, it became clear to us that a priority for Memphis would be something permanent, something lasting that would celebrate and honor the courage of



[the 1968 sanitation workers,]" said Memphis Mayor Jim Strickland.

The Memphis City Council allocated \$2.4 million in city funding for the 50th anniversary commemoration of King's assassination in Memphis, with several projects and events in partnership with the National Civil Rights Museum, including I Am a Man Plaza.

In December, the Plough Foundation completed funding for I Am a Man with a more than \$900,000 grant.

"We all have different views of how social and civil rights issues should be addressed, but I know everyone here today — whether you are an artist, an architect, a technician, a landscaper or anyone who had any part in creating this beautiful plaza — is moving forward with good intentions and a passionate desire for a more equitable society," said Diane Rudner, granddaughter of Abe Plough and chairman of the Plough Foundation Board of Trustees.

The dedication of the park comes "full circle," Strickland said, since it was Abe Plough who gave the money that resulted in the end of the strike in 1968 and, now, the Plough Foundation has enabled the new plaza.

"I hope this becomes a place Memphians can reflect — reflect on fellow Memphians who quite literally changed the world because that's who we are in Memphis. Nowhere is that more evident than with these men and the ones who passed," Strickland said.

**Project details:**

Lead: City COO Doug McGowan and Deputy COO Patrice Thomas

Architect: John Jackson III of JPA Inc.

Artist: Cliff Garten of Cliff Garten Studio and spoken word artist Steve Fox

Contractor: Martin Carodine of Precise Contracting

Project managers: Anderson Guy and Dave Rosenbaum of Allworld Project Management

**Michelle Corbet**  
Reporter  
*Memphis Business Journal*

