

Kathy Kozachenko Bronze Sculpture

Site + Project Information Packet

Project Background

Kathy Kozachenko was elected to the Ann Arbor City Council on April 2, 1974, representing the City's Second Ward as a member of the Human Rights Party. At the time of her election, Kozachenko was a 21-year-old student at the University of Michigan and ran as a member of the Human Rights Party (HRP). Her election marked the first time in the United States that an openly gay or lesbian candidate was elected to public office. Kathy Kozachenko stood as a beacon of courage, ahead of her time, epitomizing the essence of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Kozachenko was preceded on City Council by fellow Human Rights Party members Jerry DeGriek and Nancy Wechsler, who were elected in 1972 and later became the first gay and lesbian elected officials to come out while serving in office. Kozachenko is also a woman of Ukrainian descent.

In her 1974 victory speech, Kozachenko acknowledged her history-making election by saying, "This is the first time in the history of the U.S. that someone has run openly as a gay person and been elected to public office. Gay liberation was not a major issue in the campaign - both candidates in this ward said they supported gay rights, but 10 years ago, or even three years ago, lesbianism would have meant automatic defeat. This year we talked about rent control. We talked about the city's budget. We talked about police priorities, and we had a record of action to run on. Many people's attitudes about gayness are still far from healthy, but my campaign forced some people at least to re-examine their prejudices and stereotypes." She helped pave the way for hundreds of openly LGBTQ+ elected officials in the years to follow her, including the at least 1,185 LGBTQ+ elected officials currently serving in the United States, according to the Victory Institute. It is befitting during the 200th birthday of Ann Arbor, Michigan, which coincides with the 50th anniversary of her own election, that Councilmember Kozachenko's inspirational contributions to society and the LGBTQ civil rights movement be recognized and celebrated.

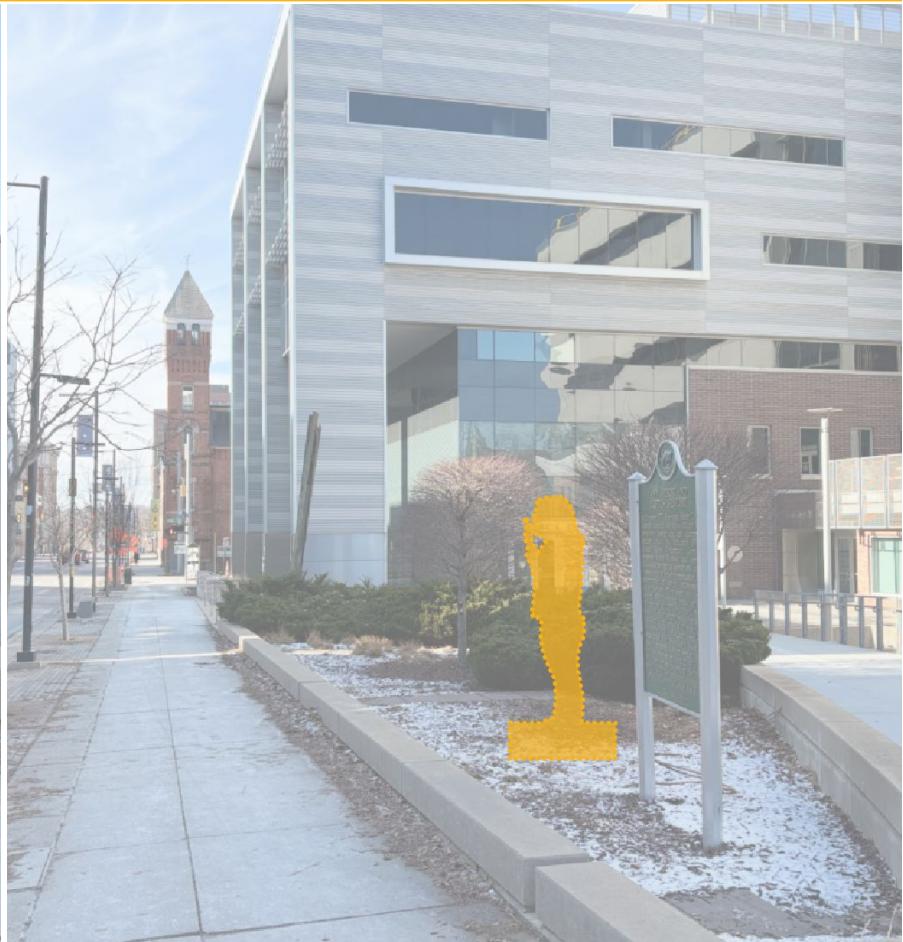
Pictures of Kathy



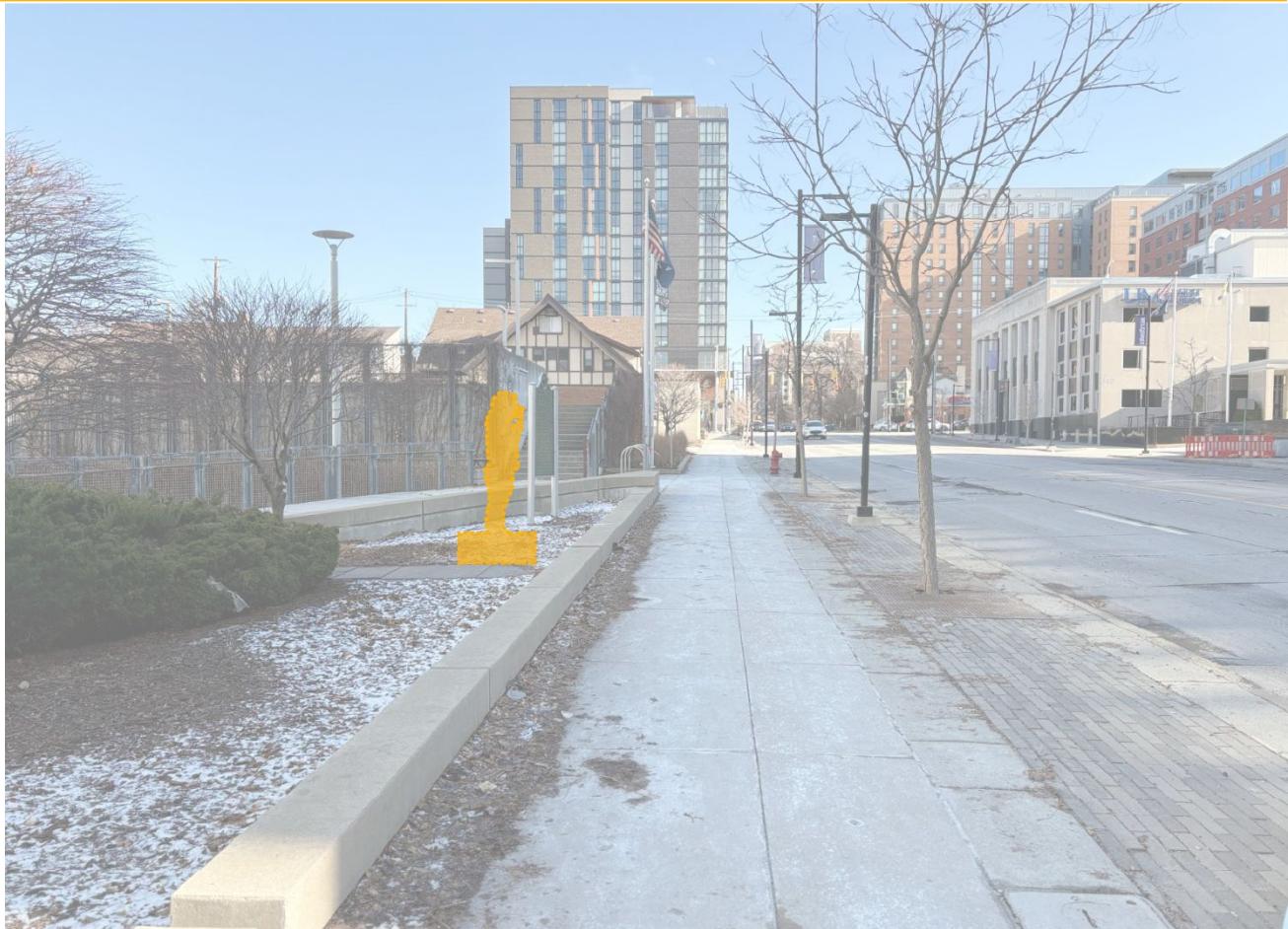
Kathy taking oath (middle).



Site + Placement: Larcom City Hall 301. E Huron St, Ann Arbor, MI



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Site

The site is located in the garden bed in front of Larcom City Hall and the statue will be placed next to an existing sign recognizing Kathy Kozachenko and other LGBTQ+ elected officials. The figure should be about life size and designed using images from the 1970s, including Kozachenko's attire. We have a photograph of Ms. Kozachenko in her preferred attire, and we have a contemporary surrogate modeling the same outfit in a photo. The pose will be based off of a picture of Kozachenko taking oath into office with her right hand raised. The figure should sit on a base that elevates the figure about a foot off the ground to be level with the existing garden bed's lower front wall.

