

Katharine Lee Bates Sculpture

The Falmouth Public Library very much wanted to keep Katharine Lee Bates' local legacy alive and so for the town of Falmouth's Tercentenary celebration, a memorial to this homegrown poet was included



Statue of Katharine Lee Bates in front of the Falmouth Public Library. Lloyd Lillie posed his statue with Katharine's left hand resting on rocks that represent the summit of Pike's Peak. Katharine's glasses hang just below her waistband from a ribbon around her neck. Photo by Janet Chalmers.

in the plans. With the help of Mr. Robert Hilton Simmons, an art collector and scholar who enthusiastically managed the undertaking, a life-sized statue of Falmouth native Katharine Lee Bates was commissioned by the Library Trustees in 1984.

They chose sculptor Lloyd Lillie, a professor of sculpture at Boston University, living in Newton. Some of Lillie's other life-sized pieces include "Chess Players," completed in 1983 and located in John Marshall Park, Washington, DC; and "James Michael Curley," 1978, for the City of Boston.

His 18-inch maquette (or model) of the work was completed in 1985 and put on display in the Falmouth Public Library. The trustees raised private funds in order to erect a statue on the library lawn. Lillie chose to depict the poet in her early thirties when she felt the inspiration to write the initial lines of "America the Beautiful." The bronze sculpture was delivered on November 5, 1987, and placed atop its granite base perched on the southwest section of the library lawn.

The official dedication was held August 12, 1988, the 129th birthday of Miss Bates. To honor this event, then Governor Michael Dukakis proclaimed it "America-the-Beautiful Day."

Drawn from "A History of the Falmouth Public Library" by Christine Makris Lynch, Library Assistant.