

Memorial to Mildred Harnack: 7-11-2018 Proposal

Artist: John S Durbrow, AIA

Specifications: Granite Stele, approximately 8'6" tall by 1'10" wide by 1' deep

The piece is 22"X7"X8'-6" high. It weighs 1580#.

Information on Mildred Harnack (from Wikipedia article en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mildred_Harnack):

Born Mildred Elizabeth Fish, September 16, 1902, in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. In 1926, she was studying and working as a lecturer on German literature at the Milwaukee State Normal School (now the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee). She met the jurist Arvid Harnack, at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. One of her teachers at the University of Wisconsin was William Ellery Leonard. During her time at Madison, she also worked on the *Wisconsin Literary Magazine*.

Together with her husband Arvid, the writer Adam Kuckhoff and his wife Greta, Fish-Harnack brought together a discussion circle which debated political perspectives on the time after the National Socialists' expected downfall or overthrow. From these meetings arose what the Gestapo would call the Red Orchestra (*Rote Kapelle*) resistance group. In 1940–41, the group was in contact with Soviet agents, trying to thwart the forthcoming German attack upon the Soviet Union. Fish-Harnack even sent the Soviets information about the forthcoming Operation Barbarossa. Meanwhile, she was making contact with people who were against the Nazi régime, recruiting some for the resistance, and serving as go-between for her husband, other members of the Orchestra, and Soviet agents.

In July 1942, the Decryption Department of the *Oberkommando des Heeres* managed to decode the group's radio messages, and the Gestapo pounced. On 7 September, Arvid Harnack and Mildred Fish-Harnack were arrested while on a weekend outing. Arvid Harnack was sentenced to death on 19 December after a four-day trial before the *Reichskriegsgericht* ("Reich Military Tribunal"), and was put to death three days later at Plötzensee Prison in Berlin. Mildred Fish-Harnack was initially given six years in prison, but Hitler refused to endorse the sentence and ordered a new trial, which ended with a sentence of death on 16 January 1943. She was beheaded on 16 February 1943.

She was the only American woman executed on the orders of Adolf Hitler.

Proposal:

The Memorial would be placed at Marshall Park, where nearby there is a memorial to victims of the Holocaust. Due to the somber nature of a memorial, a quiet contemplative location is sought that can be both a tribute and an educational opportunity for the public to learn about this former Madison resident. Since the Harnicks met, fell in love here in Madison (they were engaged at Picnic Point) placing the piece at Marshall Park where viewers can see Frautschi Point/Picnic Point in the distance while contemplating the values the Harnick's stood for could make for a very poignant placement.

Location Map:

Marshall Park: Nearby existing path adjacent to inlet shoreline. Harnack Memorial Location is shown as a gold star and the existing Holocaust Memorial is shown as a gold square.



Photo interpretation of Stele at proposed location:



Existing Holocaust Memorial in Marshall Park



“My dearly beloved, (My dearly beloved sweetheart),

If I had the strength during the past months to inwardly remain calm and composed, and if I looked calmly and quietly at things to come, I owe this especially to all that which makes me feel connected to the good and beautiful things in this world and to the emotion inspired by the poet Whitman towards the whole world. As far as people are concerned, it is the ones closest to me, you above all, that embody these two elements for me.

In spite of all the difficulties, I gladly look back on my life up to now. Light outweighed the darkness. And our marriage was primarily responsible for this. Just last night I thought for a long time about the many beautiful moments of our marriage, and the longer I thought about them, the more of them I remembered.

It was as if I were looking into a star-filled sky, in which the number of stars is constantly growing, the more intensely you look into it. Do you remember Picnic Point, where we got engaged? Early in the morning I sang for joy at the Club. And even before that, our first serious conversation at lunch in a restaurant on State Street? This conversation became and remained my guiding star. How often did we put our head on each other's shoulders during the last sixteen years, at night when life had made us tired, either yours on my shoulder or mine on yours, and then everything was good again. I did that in

my thoughts during the past weeks and I will also do it during the coming weeks. Besides that, I have thought of you and all my loved ones regularly at 8 in the morning and at 9 at night. They think of both of us at the same time. Do this also; then one knows that the feelings of love flow into each other in this world. Our stressful work didn't make life easy for us, and the danger of being crushed wasn't easy, but in spite of that we remained alive. That was evident in our experience at the Großglockner (highest mountain in Austria) when we suddenly saw the big elk appear in front of us. Before that you were like a goddess ascending out of the ocean. You are in my heart. "You shall always be in my heart!" My biggest wish is that you are happy when you think of me. When I think of you, I am happy.

Many, many kisses! I embrace you tightly.

Your A."