

Art Commission Review – Submittal Form

(Applicant complete below section)

Project Name: Joe Frazier Statue Relocation

Project Address: 1100 Pattison Ave / 2600 Benjamin Franklin Pkwy **On Public Property?** ☒ Yes ☐ No

Total Budget: 150,000 **Utilizing City Funds?** ☒ Yes (specify amount): _____ ☐ No

Project Type (check all that apply):

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building – New Construction or Addition | <input type="checkbox"/> Encroachment in/over ROW |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Building – Renovation or Repair | <input type="checkbox"/> Signage (Reconsideration) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Plaza/Park/Playground | <input type="checkbox"/> Streetery (Reconsideration) |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Public Art | <input type="checkbox"/> Other: _____ |

Project Team:

Agency/Org.: Creative Philadelphia Design Lead (firm): _____

Other: _____

Primary Contact for Project Communications:

Name: Marguerite Anglin

Affiliation: Public Art Director

Email: [REDACTED]

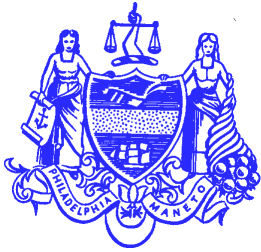
(Art Commission staff complete below section)

Art Commission Meeting Date of Project Review: 2/11/26

Level of Review:

- ☒ Concept Review ☐ Final Review If Final, specify date of preceding Concept Review: _____
- ☐ Administrative Review (for projects with minimal visual impact on public realm)

Staff Notes (Optional):



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Creative Philadelphia
116 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-8446

January 28, 2026

Katherine Liss
Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 18th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

RE: February 11th Art Commission Meeting – Joe Frazier Statue Relocation

Dear Katherine,

Creative Philadelphia is requesting placement on the February 11, 2026 Art Commission agenda to present the City's proposal to relocate the City-owned Joe Frazier statue from XFINITY Live in South Philadelphia to the base of the Philadelphia Art Museum, where the Rocky statue currently stands. This request is made in close partnership with members of Joe Frazier's family, Smokin' Joe Frazier Championship Foundation, Inc., Joe Hand Promotions and artist Stephen Layne. This request also has the full support of Mayor Cherelle Parker, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, Philadelphia Visitor Center, Philadelphia Art Museum, and The Parkway Council.

The Joe Frazier statue was created by artist, Stephen Layne in 2014 and installed in 2015, depicting Joe Frazier at the height of his career, at the moment he delivered a knock-out left hook to Muhammad Ali during the "Fight of the Century" in 1971. The artwork pays tribute to "Smokin' Joe" Frazier, a true Philadelphian whose life and legacy reflect his grit, perseverance, and impact on the city and the world. As an Olympic gold medalist, world heavyweight champion, and longtime Philadelphia community leader who invested deeply in local youth and athletes, Frazier's impact reaches far beyond the boxing ring.

However, despite being one of Philadelphia's most loved and famous athletes, many are unaware of Joe Frazier's documented and real-life connection to the Art Museum, where he trained regularly by running through Fairmount Park and up the Museum steps, serving as inspiration for the *Rocky* character. The recently approved relocation of the Rocky statue offers a meaningful opportunity to contextualize and shed light on one of Philadelphia's most iconic locations with the real-life history and inspiration that helped to define this cultural destination.

Relocating the Joe Frazier statue to this prominent civic and cultural space would increase public visibility for the statue, deepen educational opportunities, and create a respectful dialogue between two complementary representations of Philadelphia's spirit: Rocky Balboa as a symbol of hard work and aspiration, and Joe Frazier as the embodiment of those values lived out in real life. This effort will thoughtfully expand the story we tell about Philadelphia, a city where the fictional idea of the "underdog" and real-life achievement through perseverance can stand side by side.

We believe this proposal to relocate the Joe Frazier statue aligns with Creative Philadelphia's commitment to inclusive storytelling and cultural education through the City's public art collection. It highlights the real-life heroes and lived experiences embedded in Philadelphia's history and culture, while underscoring the powerful role public art plays in shaping our civic narrative.

We look forward to sharing more about this proposal at the February 11, 2026 Art Commission meeting.

Sincerely,



Valerie V. Gay, CFP®
Chief Cultural Officer
Executive Director



Marguerite Anglin, RA
Public Art Director



Joe Frazier Statue Relocation Proposal

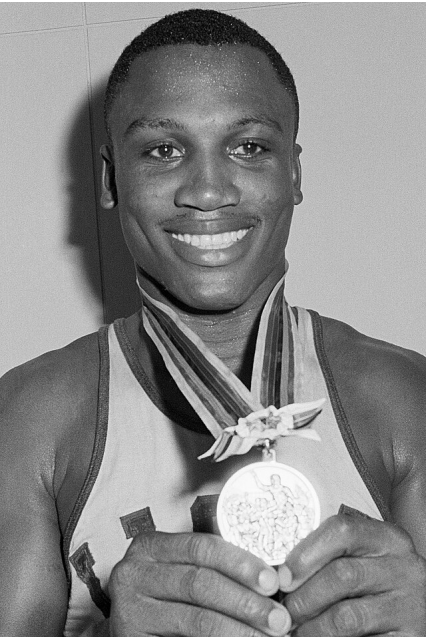
Philadelphia Art Commission
February 11, 2026

“Smokin’ Joe” Frazier - History

- **1944 - 1959:** Born in South Carolina. Moved to Philadelphia at age 15 and began boxing at the Police Athletic League.
- **1964- 1970:** Olympic gold medalist by 1964; Undisputed, undefeated world heavyweight champion by 1970.
- **1965:** Earned the nickname “Smokin’ Joe” for his relentless style and a devastating left hook.
- **1971:** First boxer ever to defeat Muhammad Ali in the world famous “Fight of the Century”.
- **1968-2008:** Founded Joe Frazier’s Gym on North Broad Street, where he mentored Philadelphia’s youth and local boxers for 40 years.

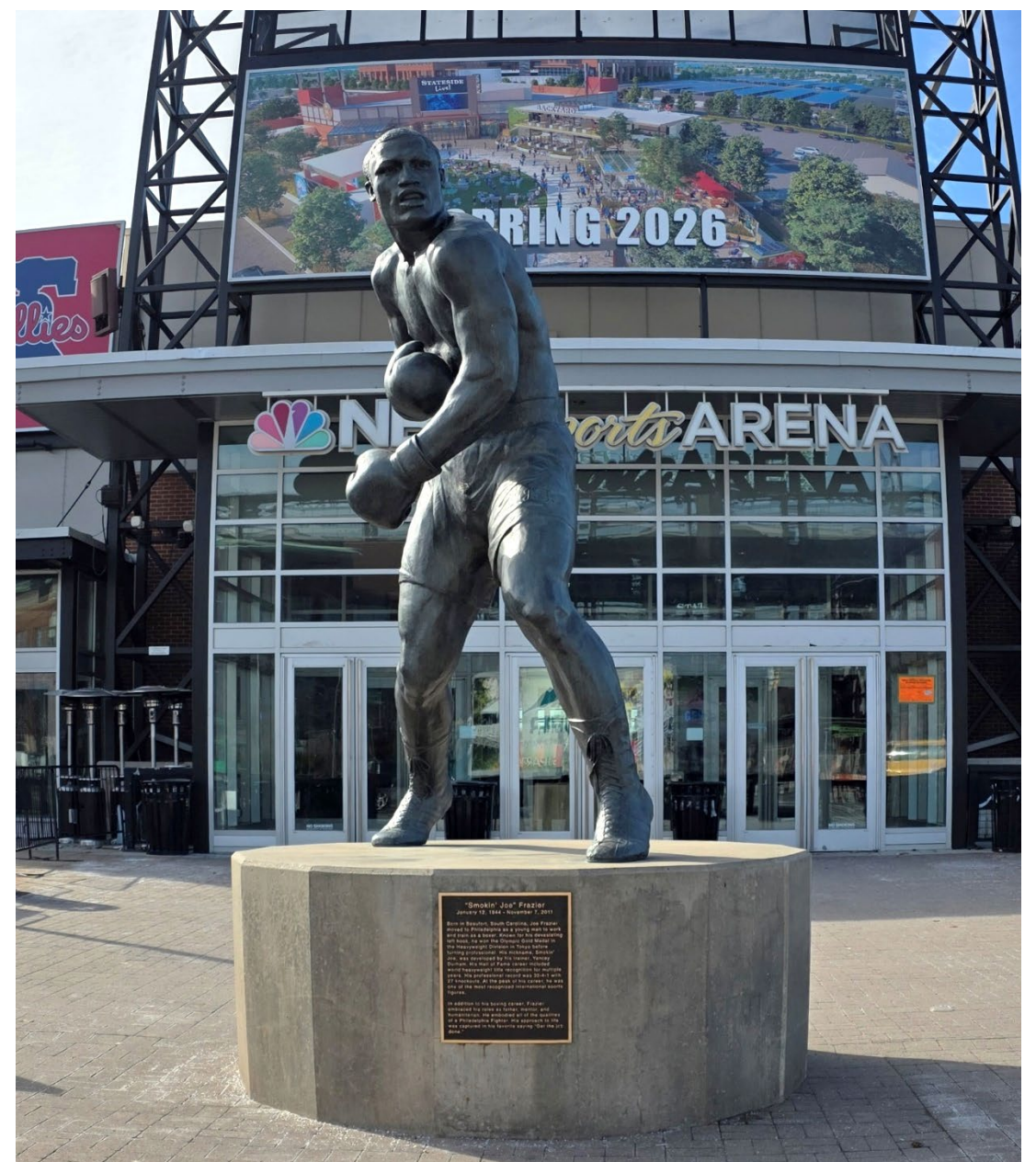


“Smokin’ Joe” Frazier – A Real Philadelphia Story

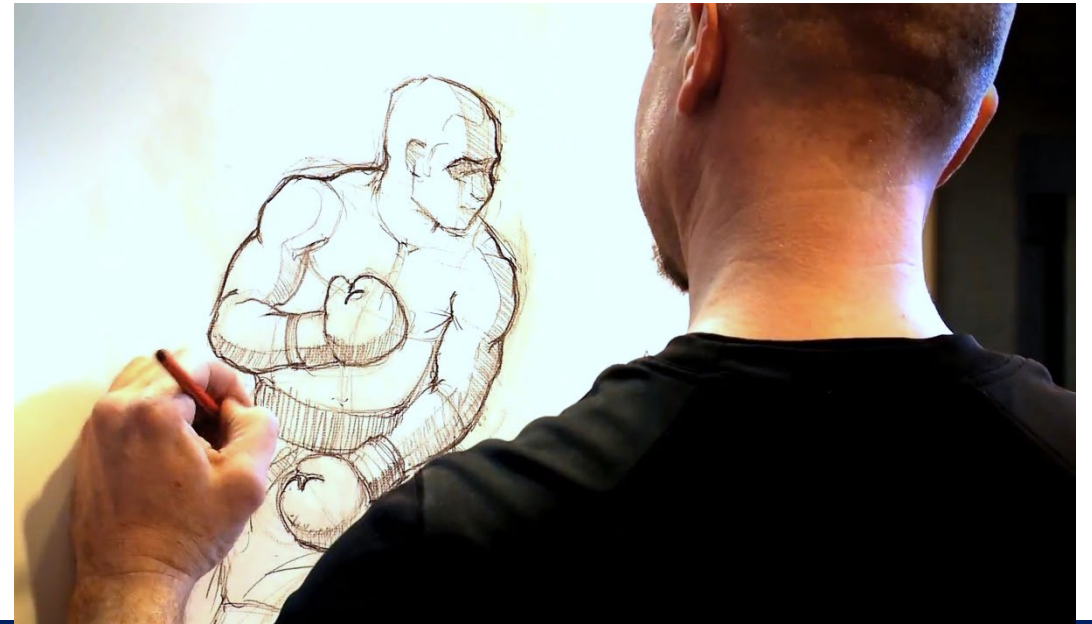


Joe Frazier Statue Overview

- Commissioned and funded through a private community-led effort, led by Joe Hand Promotions, Cordish Group, Joe Frazier's family and many other stakeholders.
- Created by sculptor Stephen Layne in 2014.
- Installed in 2015 at Stateside Live! (formerly XFINITY Live!) in South Philadelphia.
- Donated to the City of Philadelphia's public art collection.
- 12-foot monument: 9-ft bronze figure on a 3-ft high concrete base
- Depicts World Heavyweight Champion Smokin' Joe Frazier in 1971, at the height of his career, moments after defeating Muhammad Ali in the "Fight of the Century."



Joe Frazier Statue – Artist Vision





Joe Frazier and Rocky

- World Heavyweight Champion Smokin' Joe Frazier inspired the Rocky movie character:
 - Joe Frazier worked at a slaughterhouse and trained by hitting frozen raw meat.
 - Joe Frazier ran the Art Museum steps before the Rocky character.
 - Joe Frazier faced opponents in real life boxing, similar in physical appearance and character to those Rocky faced.
- Smokin' Joe Frazier's relentless work ethic was unmatched, from humble beginnings to Olympic gold medalist and undisputed world heavyweight champion.

Why the Art Museum?

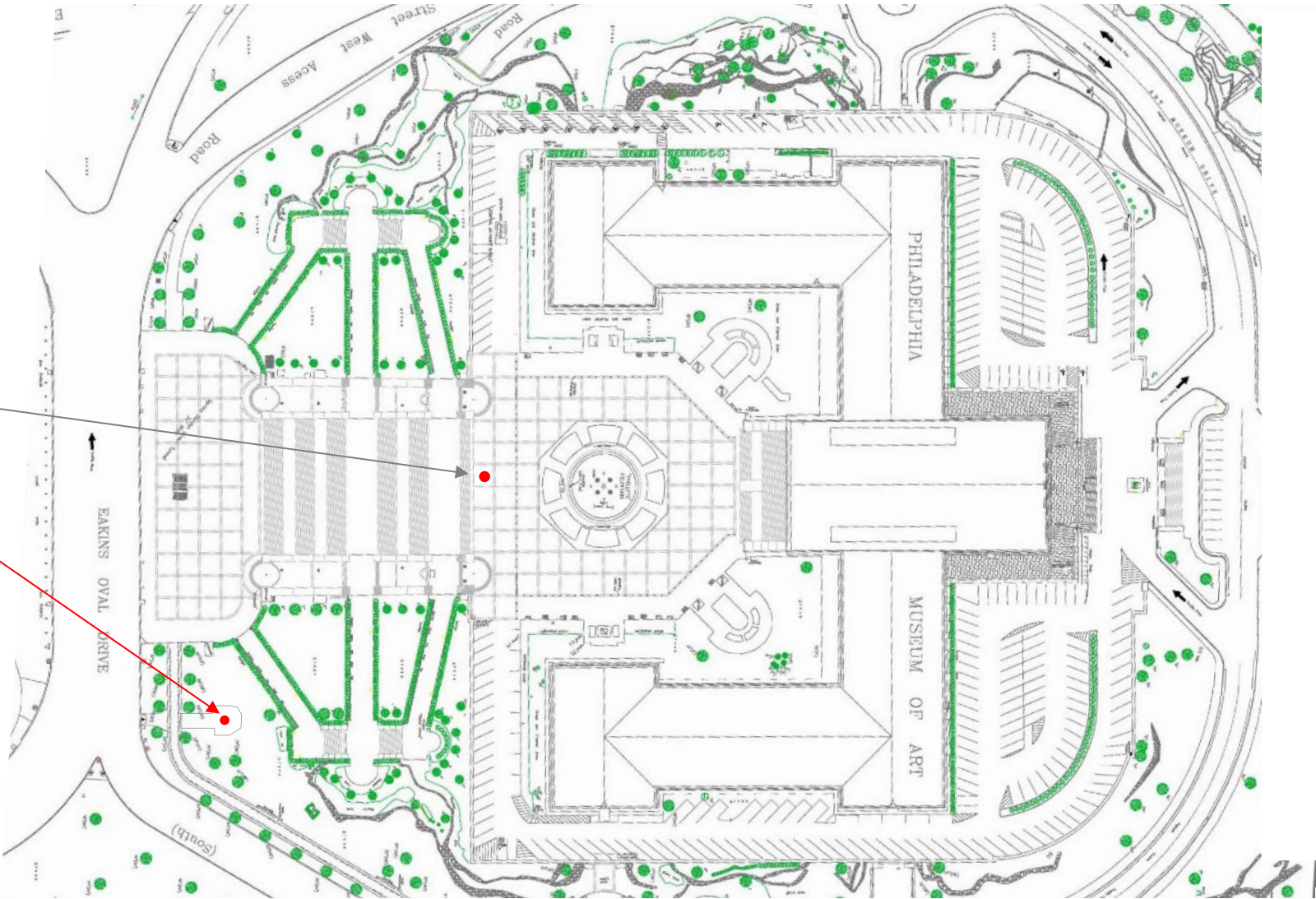
- **Reanimating the City's public art:** Bringing these important stories to life that are relevant for today.
- **Philadelphia's Fighting Spirit:** The Art Museum steps have come to represent ambition, perseverance, and hard work values World Heavyweight Champion Smokin' Joe Frazier lived every day.
- **A true connection to place:** World Heavyweight Champion Smokin' Joe Frazier trained on these steps and inspired their culture. His story is part of this site's history.
- **Greater visibility:** The Art Museum reaches millions of visitors, expanding awareness of Joe Frazier's legacy.
- **Education and authentic storytelling:** This location allows Philadelphia to share a fuller story rooted in real achievement and civic pride.
- **Two statues in dialogue:** The Rocky character represents ideals we aspire to; World Heavyweight Champion Smokin' Joe Frazier embodied and achieved them in real life.



Proposed Location Plan

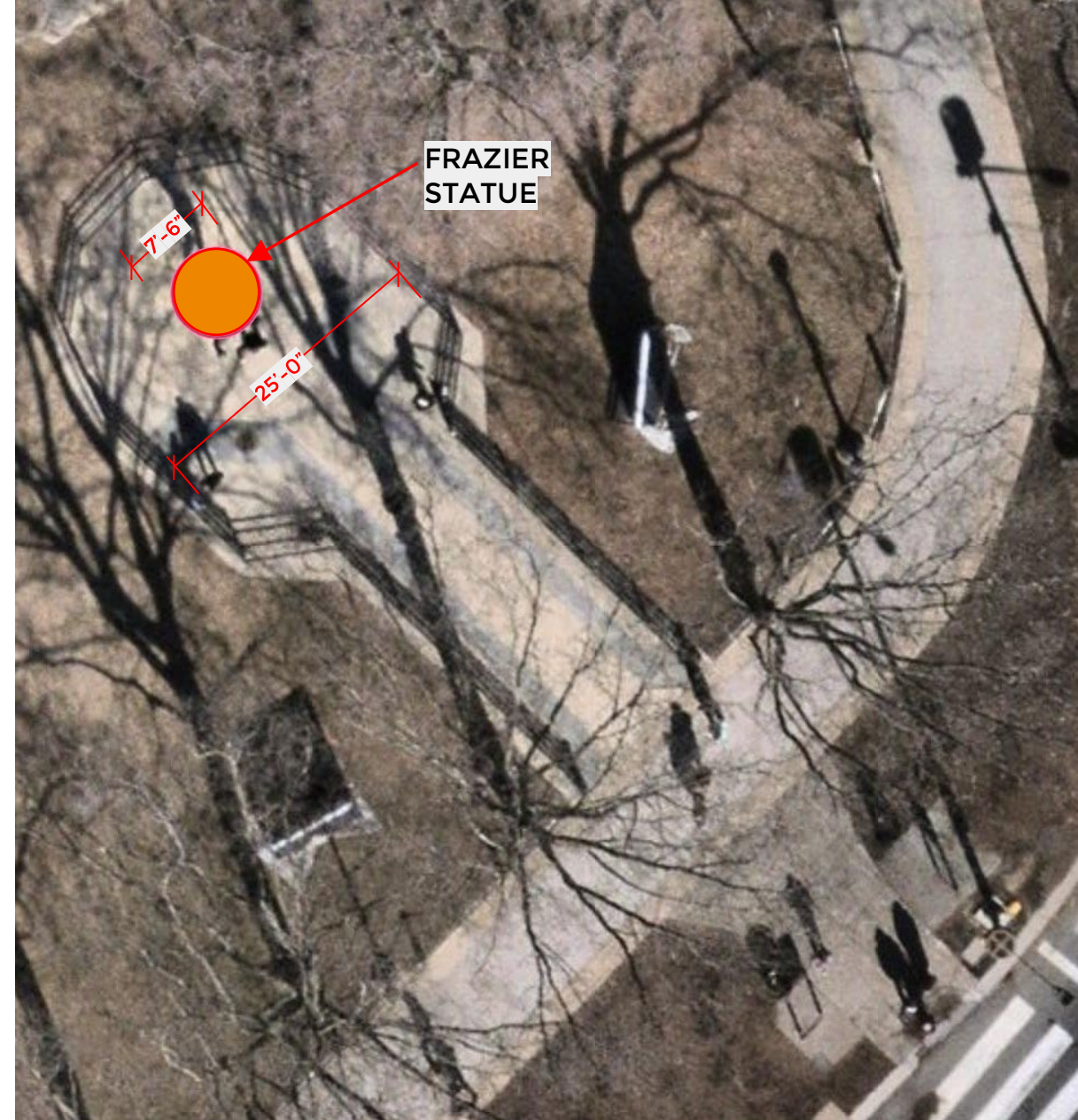
ROCKY
STATUE

FRAZIER
STATUE



Proposed Frazier Site - Aerial

- The Frazier statue will be installed at the (soon to be) former Rocky site near Art Museum steps
- A new base and foundation will be provided. No other major changes to the site are anticipated.
- Existing Lighting is already provided via a directional spotlight at near street light.
- 7'-6" wide, round Frazier base works well in approx. 25' wide curved paver area





RENDERING- VIEW FROM WALKWAY



PROPOSED GRANITE VENEER FOR BASE

Joe Frazier Statue - Night View



Programming and Engagement

Reanimating Public Art Through:

- Educational Components
- Storytelling
- Programming
- Facilitating Dialogue
- Community and Civic Partnerships



Timeline

- Spring 2026: Rocky A is removed and temporarily installed inside Art Museum exhibition.
- **Spring 2026: Joe Frazier statue is relocated to Art Museum**
- Fall 2026: Rocky A is relocated permanently to top of steps (after Museum exhibition)
- Fall 2026: Rocky B returns to donor.



Photo by Alec Rogers, courtesy of the Association for Public Art



Photo by John-Joseph Lyde

Thank You!





CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Office of the Mayor
215 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
(215) 686-2181
FAX (215) 686-2180

CHERELLE L. PARKER
Mayor

February 12, 2026

Ms. Katherine Liss
Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 18th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Subject: Mayoral Support for the Relocation of the Joe Frazier Statue

Dear Ms Liss:

As Mayor of the City of Philadelphia, I am proud to express my strong support for the proposed relocation of the Joe Frazier statue to the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Joe Frazier is one of Philadelphia's most accomplished and beloved sons. As an Olympic gold medalist, world heavyweight champion, and lifelong advocate for young people in our city, his legacy reflects the values Philadelphia holds dear: perseverance, hard work, and the belief that greatness can emerge from humble beginnings. The statue honors Frazier at a defining moment in sports history while recognizing his broader impact far beyond the boxing ring.

The Art Museum steps are a global symbol of aspiration and determination. What is less widely known is Joe Frazier's real and documented connection to this site, where he trained regularly running up the steps, that later inspired the Rocky character. The relocation of the Rocky statue provides a timely opportunity to more fully tell the story of this iconic location.

Placing the Joe Frazier statue at the Art Museum affirms Philadelphia's commitment to honoring real-life achievement alongside cultural mythology. Together, these figures reflect the city's spirit, where determination, resilience, and opportunity meet. This more visible location for the Frazier statue will deepen public understanding, strengthen civic pride, and ensure that Philadelphia continues to celebrate those who shaped its history through lived experience.

Joe Frazier Statue LOS

2/3/2026

Page 2

For these reasons, I give my unwavering support on behalf of the City of Philadelphia for relocating the Joe Frazier statue to the Art Museum. Thank you, Commissioners, for your consideration and for all you do in stewardship of our city's public realm.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Cherelle L. Parker". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Cherelle L. Parker
Mayor, City of Philadelphia

SMOKIN' JOE FRAZIER CHAMPIONSHIP FOUNDATION, INC.

6622 Castor Ave. | Philadelphia, PA 19149 Office: 215-326-9657 | Direct: 267-701-4503
sEmail: info@JoeFrazierChampionshipFoundation.org | **Website:**
JoeFrazierChampionshipFoundation.org

February 1, 2026

**Katherine Liss,
Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway
[1515 Arch St., 13th Floor](#)
[Philadelphia, PA 19102](#)**

Dear Acting Director Liss:

On behalf of the Smokin' Joe Frazier Championship Foundation, this is to request a historic relocation of the Joe Frazier Statue from its current location at StatesideLive! (formerly known as XfinityLive!) to the Philadelphia Art Museum Steps.

The move represents a long-overdue opportunity to align Philadelphia's Public Art with its historic sports truth. While the Philadelphia Art Museum steps have become a global destination due to the fictional "Rocky" narrative, Joe Frazier was the living, breathing embodiment of Philadelphia's inspirational spirit. Smokin' Joe Frazier was an Olympic Gold Medalist and Undisputed World Heavyweight Boxing Champion who trained, lived, and gave back to Philadelphia his entire life.

Relocating Joe Frazier's statue facilitates transformative art.

Placing the statue of a real-life champion at Philadelphia's iconic landmark ensures that visitors and residents alike are greeted with the authentic history of Philadelphia boxing. It bridges the gap between cinematic myth and the inspirational truth since Joe Frazier actually ran throughout Philadelphia ending daily early a.m. conditioning runs, sprinting up the Philadelphia Art Museum steps before continuing training hitting sides of beef working at a Philadelphia meat slaughterhouse toward Olympic Gold and the World Heavyweight Championship.

Joe Frazier's "real life story" was so inspirational that Sylvester Stallone made 5 "Rocky" movies mostly based on the real life humble champion Smokin' Joe Frazier from Philadelphia.

Joe Frazier represents Philadelphia's legendary determination, phenomenal boxing culture and resilient work ethic born in Beaufort, South Carolina, rising as an essential worker at a Philadelphia meat slaughterhouse to establishing unforgettable pinnacle world sports knockout performances .

Smokin' Joe Frazier's statue at the Philadelphia Art Museum Steps symbolizes and celebrates the real life human heart and potential within us all worldwide; especially our routinely overlooked extraordinary everyday essential workers during the 250th birthday of the United States founded in Philadelphia .

Relocating the Joe Frazier statue to the Philadelphia Art Museum Steps would be a profound Philadelphia pantheon celebrating a legend who bled for this city and whose spirit still inspires both the underestimated "underdog" and real champion example within us all, when they visit the Philadelphia Art Museum Steps.

This is to request the Philadelphia Art Commission vote to relocate the statue and a formal meeting to discuss the logistics of moving the statue in togetherness to accelerate continued love for Philadelphia and its art and culture.

Thank you for your time and commitment to the artistic and historic integrity of Philadelphia.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Pete Lyde". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Pete" and last name "Lyde" clearly distinguishable.

**Pete Lyde
CEO**

Smokin' Joe Frazier Championship Foundation, Inc.

SMOKIN' JOE FRAZIER CHAMPIONSHIP FOUNDATION, INC.
6622 Castor Ave. | Philadelphia, PA 19149 Office: 215-326-9657 | Email:
info@JoeFrazierChampionshipFoundation | Website:
JoeFrazierChampionshipFoundation.org

Katherine Liss, Acting Director | Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway, 1515 Arch St, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Dear Ms. Liss,

I am writing to you today with a deep sense of pride and urgency to express my strongest recommendation for the relocation of the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue to the grounds of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Joe Frazier was more than a heavyweight champion; he was the heartbeat of Philadelphia. He embodied the "authentic truth" of our city a truth rooted in tireless work, unyielding resilience, and the quiet dignity of a man who rose from the gym on Broad Street to become a global icon. While his legacy is cemented in the annals of boxing history, his physical presence in our city's cultural landscape deserves a home that reflects his true stature. Relocating this statue to the Art Museum is not merely a change of address; it is an act of historical justice. For decades, the world has flocked to the Art Museum steps to celebrate a fictional narrative of Philadelphia boxing. By placing the likeness of "Smokin' Joe" in this prominent location, we offer residents and global visitors alike the opportunity to honor a real-life hero who bled for this city and represented our spirit on the world stage with unparalleled class.

Joe Frazier's story is the story of Philadelphia. He was a man of the people who reached the pinnacle of global achievement without ever losing his connection to the streets that raised him. To place him at the Art Museum is to tell the full, authentic story of a champion who proved that with enough heart, a kid from the local gym can change the world.

I respectfully urge the Art Commission to approve this relocation. Let us ensure that when future generations look toward our city's skyline, they see the bronze silhouette of the man who truly earned his place in the sun. Thank you for your time and for your dedication to preserving the authentic history of our great city.

Sincerely,
Lori Smith,
Chief Operating Officer, Smokin' Joe Frazier Championship Foundation



JOE HAND

PROMOTIONS

January 30, 2026

Katherine Liss
Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Ms. Liss:

I am writing in strong and heartfelt support of the proposal to relocate the Smokin' Joe Frazier Statue to the Philadelphia Art Museum Steps, a setting that powerfully and authentically reflects Joe Frazier's life, legacy, and enduring bond with the City of Philadelphia.


I write not only on my own behalf, but also in honor of my late father, Joe Hand Sr., with whom I spent more than 45 years as a partner in the boxing business. My father's journey in boxing was deeply intertwined with the early career of Joe Frazier through Cloverlay, the Philadelphia-based promotional company that helped guide Joe's rise to the heavyweight championship. Joe Frazier was not just a fighter we admired, he was family to our boxing community and to the city we all loved.

My own introduction to boxing came through Joe Frazier. On December 10, 1968, I attended my very first professional fight seated ringside with my parents and Joe's son Marvis Frazier, as Joe defended the heavyweight championship against Oscar Bonavena at the Spectrum. That night did more than spark my lifelong career in boxing; it cemented Joe Frazier as the embodiment of what Philadelphia stands for: toughness, humility, discipline, and heart.

The Philadelphia Art Museum Steps are inseparable from Joe Frazier's real story. Long before they became a cinematic symbol, they were a training ground - climbed daily by a working-class champion who ran through Fairmount Park and finished his workouts sprinting those very steps. Joe Frazier earned his greatness there, not through fiction, but through relentless work and quiet determination.

Relocating the Smokin' Joe Frazier Statue to the Art Museum Steps places the real champion where he belongs, at the intersection of Philadelphia history, global recognition, and authentic achievement. It honors an Olympic gold medalist, a world heavyweight champion, a philanthropist, and a man who invested his life and resources back into this city, including decades of personally funding a gym that became a safe haven for Philadelphia youth.

Joe Frazier lived in Philadelphia, trained in Philadelphia, gave back to Philadelphia, and is eternally part of Philadelphia's identity. The Art Museum Steps are not only an iconic landmark; they are the most truthful and fitting home for his statue.



213 West Street Road • Feasterville, PA 19053
Office: 215-364-9000 • Fax: 1-866-376-8117
joehandpromotions.com

Katherine Liss
January 30, 2026
Page 2

Thank you for your thoughtful consideration of this important proposal. I am grateful for the opportunity to lend my voice and my family's legacy in support of honoring one of Philadelphia's greatest sons in the place that best represents who he was and what he stood for.

Respectfully and sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Joseph P. Hand Jr". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of each word being capitalized and prominent.

Joseph P. Hand, Jr.
President

JH/drm



February 4, 2026

Katherine Liss
Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway, 1515 Arch St, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102.

Dear Katherine,

When I set out to create the monument to the great heavyweight champion 'Smokin' Joe' Frazier, I knew I needed to bring the full depth and history to the explosive instant of that knockout.

So, an overly simplistic heroic pose would not do. In the true and nuanced narrative of heroism, surely we must include the burden overcome.

Mr Frazier showed by example that all of us thrive by way of each other. Throughout his life he taught and shared his experience. In particular, he taught that action is the real thing.

In his fortitude he expressed the hero in every so-called 'common' citizen who takes up their part in doing what needs to be done.

This sculpture is meant to recognize the man who symbolized that burden that we all share, and the goodness that comes from working with and for each other.

Stephen Layne
(Artist, Joe Frazier statue)



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA CITY COUNCIL

NINA AHMAD, PH.D.
ROOM 577, CITY HALL
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107
(215) 686-3450
www.phlcouncil.com/NinaAhmad
COUNCILMEMBER AT-LARGE

COMMITTEES
Chair
Committee on Public Health and Human Services
Vice Chair
Committee on Global Opportunities and the
Creative/Innovative Economy

February 2, 2026

Katherine Liss
Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Acting Director Liss,

I write in support of the proposed relocation of the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue from its current location at StatesideLive (formerly Xfinity Live!) to the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Joe Frazier's legacy is deeply tied to Philadelphia. He was the city's first Olympic gold medalist in boxing and later became World Heavyweight Champion, earning international recognition through hard work and discipline. His training routines—early mornings, runs through Fairmount Park, and trips up the Art Museum steps—are part of the city's real sports history, not just popular culture.

Mr. Frazier's contributions also extended well beyond his professional career. For many years he personally financed and operated his boxing gym, which served as a safe and consistent place for young people to train and develop character. The gym's significance was formally recognized in 2014 when it was listed on the National Register of Historic Places. He lived in Philadelphia, gave back here, and remained rooted in the city throughout his life.

This request is straightforward: the Art Museum steps are one of the most visited and recognized public spaces in Philadelphia, and they are a more appropriate setting to honor Mr. Frazier's Philadelphia-based legacy and training history. The relocation would also make the statue meaningfully accessible to residents, students, and visitors who currently do not encounter it.

I have heard from constituents—more than once—who didn't realize Philadelphia had a Joe Frazier statue at all until someone brought it up at a community event. That is not a reflection on his legacy; it's a reflection on visibility. This move would correct that in a respectful way.

With the anniversary of the Fight of the Century coming up, this feels like the right moment to do this right. I urge the Commission to approve the relocation.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued stewardship of Philadelphia's public art.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nina Ahmad". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dr. Nina Ahmad
Councilmember At-Large
Philadelphia City Council



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

CITY COUNCIL

Mike Driscoll
Councilmember
6th District
Room 313 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107
215-686-3444 or 3445

January 29, 2026

Katherine Liss
Philadelphia Art Commission
1515 Arch Street
13th Floor
Philadelphia, Pa. 19102

Re: Joe Frazier Statue Relocation to Art Museum

Dear Ms. Liss:

I am writing to respectfully request that the Art Commission give serious consideration to supporting/approving the relocation of the iconic Joe Frazier statue from South Philadelphia to an appropriate location on the exterior of the Art Museum grounds.

Joe Frazier, as you may know, was a treasured Philadelphia native who competed and won a gold medal at the 1964 summer Olympics in boxing. In addition, Joe competed professionally from 1965 to 1981. As indicated on Wikipedia: "Nicknamed Smokin' Joe, he was known for his strength, durability, formidable left hand, and relentless pressure fighting style. In 1971, Frazier became the first boxer to defeat Muhammad Ali. He was undisputed heavyweight champion from 1970 to 1973."

I feel that honoring Joe Frazier by relocating his statue to the Art Museum steps area is a compelling "full circle" moment as he would often train on those steps for his boxing matches. This honor would allow current and future generations of Philadelphians and tourists to appreciate a great man, great athlete and great humanitarian.

If you require any further information or details, I would be happy to provide you with that as soon as possible.

Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Driscoll

Jim Harrity
COUNCILMEMBER, AT-LARGE
CITY HALL, ROOM 408
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107
PHONE: 215-686-8295 or 8296
Fax: 215-686-2019
X: CM_JimHarrity
Facebook: Councilmember JimHarrity
Instagram: Councilman_JimHarrity
www.phlcouncil.com/JimHarrity/

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Vice-Chair

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Streets and Service
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CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

CITY COUNCIL

Katherine Liss
Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Acting Director Liss:

I am writing in strong support of the proposed relocation of the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue from its current location to the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art. As a Councilman At-Large and lifelong Philadelphian, I believe this relocation would appropriately honor one of our city's greatest athletes, cultural figures, and community leaders.

Joe Frazier is inseparable from Philadelphia's identity. An Olympic Gold Medalist, World Heavyweight Champion, and humanitarian, Smokin' Joe represented the grit, discipline, and perseverance that define our city. His daily training running through Fairmount Park and up the Art Museum steps are legendary, forming the real-life foundation for one of the most recognizable images in American sports and film history.

Relocating the statue to the Philadelphia Museum of Art steps would recognize the historical truth behind that legacy. While the Rocky films brought international attention to Philadelphia, Joe Frazier lived that story in real life. He trained here, fought here, invested here, and devoted decades of his life to mentoring young people in our city through his boxing gym, which later earned designation as a U.S. National Historic site for its role in crime prevention and youth development.

Placing the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue at the Art Museum steps would not only correct a historical imbalance but also serve as an inspirational symbol for residents and visitors alike. It

would elevate a true Philadelphia champion whose impact reached far beyond the boxing ring and whose contributions to sports, labor history, and community service continue to resonate today.

For these reasons, I respectfully urge the Philadelphia Art Commission to approve the relocation of the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue to the Philadelphia Museum of Art steps. This placement would ensure that Joe Frazier's legacy is honored in a location that authentically reflects his life, his work ethic, and his enduring connection to the City of Philadelphia.

Thank you for your consideration of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Jim Harrity
Councilman At-Large
Philadelphia City Council

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Jim Harrity". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Jim" and last name "Harrity" clearly legible.

KATHERINE GILMORE RICHARDSON
COUNCILMEMBER, AT-LARGE
MAJORITY LEADER

CITY HALL, ROOM 581
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19107
PHONE: 215-686-0454 or 0455
Twitter: CouncilwomanKGR
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Instagram: CouncilmemberKGR
www.phlcouncil.com/KatherineGilmoreRichardson/



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

CITY COUNCIL

COMMITTEES

Chair
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Law and Government

Member

Appropriations
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Licenses & Inspections
People with Disabilities & Special Needs
Rules

Friday, January 30, 2026

Katherine Liss, Acting Director, Philadelphia Art Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Director Liss,

I write to you today to offer my support for moving the statue of Smokin' Joe Frazier from its current location in South Philadelphia to the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Smokin' Joe Frazier is the real-life Philadelphia Boxing Knockout Artist, Olympic Gold Medalist, World Heavyweight Champion and a Philadelphia philanthropist who worked at a meat slaughterhouse and daily sprinted up the Philadelphia Art Museum steps to end early morning runs through Fairmount Park.

Smokin' Joe Frazier's lifetime world contributions span over fifty years, including classic sports and humanitarian work. He advanced Philadelphia's labor movement by helping establish and winning the Fight of the Century in 1971 where athletes were paid in the millions of dollars in any sport for the first time in history. For almost 40 years, he also personally financed his boxing gym which was a safe haven for at-risk youth to keep them off the streets and away from gang violence. In 2014, his gym was declared U.S. National Historic Joe Frazier's Gym for helping youth be physically fit, crime free and of good character.

Smokin' Joe Frazier exemplified the best of Philadelphia and his statue deserves to be highlighted at our city's premier art institution. Thank you for your consideration of this important request.

In Service,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "Katherine Gilmore Richardson".

Katherine Gilmore Richardson
Councilmember at-Large
Majority Leader

3RD DISTRICT
STATE SENATOR
SHARIF STREET

SENATE BOX 203003
THE STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3003
717-787-6735
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1621 W. JEFFERSON STREET
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Senate of Pennsylvania

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X: @SenSharifStreet
INSTAGRAM: @SenSharifStreet
WEBSITE: SenatorSharifStreet.com

January 29, 2026

Katherine Liss, Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Ms. Liss,

I write in strong support of the proposed relocation of the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue to the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Placing the statue at this iconic and internationally recognized site would serve as a powerful and authentic symbol of Philadelphia's legacy of perseverance, excellence, and brotherly love. It would also ensure that residents and visitors alike are able to fully appreciate the life and contributions of one of our city's most accomplished and generous sons.

"Smokin'" Joe Frazier was not only an Olympic Gold Medalist and World Heavyweight Champion, but also a proud Philadelphian whose life story reflects grit, humility, and unwavering dedication to his community. Before achieving international fame, he worked in a meatpacking plant and trained throughout our city — including running through Fairmount Park and sprinting up the very steps of the Art Museum as part of his daily conditioning. His journey from working-class roots to global champion is a story that embodies the spirit of Philadelphia.

Frazier's influence extended far beyond the boxing ring. His work ethic, training methods, and fighting style helped shape the public's imagination of what a Philadelphia fighter represents. Elements of his real-life training — including workouts in meatpacking facilities and intense outdoor roadwork — later became part of popular culture through film. Yet unlike fiction, Joe Frazier's accomplishments were earned through lived experience, sacrifice, and discipline.

His historic victory in the 1971 "Fight of the Century" and his legendary trilogy with Muhammad Ali elevated the sport of boxing and helped usher in a new era of athlete compensation and global sports recognition. Decades earlier, he had already brought honor to the United States and to Philadelphia by winning Olympic Gold in Tokyo in 1964.

Just as important as his athletic achievements were his humanitarian contributions. For nearly 40 years, Joe Frazier personally financed and operated a boxing gym in Philadelphia that served as a safe haven for young people, keeping countless youth engaged in positive activity and away from violence. His commitment to mentorship, discipline, and character development left a lasting imprint on generations of athletes and community members.

Despite these extraordinary contributions, many residents and visitors remain unaware of the existing statue honoring him in South Philadelphia. Relocating the statue to the Art Museum steps would correct this gap in visibility and ensure that one of Philadelphia's true champions is recognized in a setting that reflects his global impact and deep local roots.

Joe Frazier lived in Philadelphia, invested in Philadelphia, and chose to remain here throughout his life. It is only fitting that his legacy be elevated in a location that tells an honest and inspiring story about who we are as a city and whom we choose to honor.

Thank you for your consideration of this important cultural and historical matter. I respectfully urge the Philadelphia Art Commission to support this relocation so that future generations can draw inspiration from the life of a real Philadelphia champion.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Sharif Street', with a stylized, flowing script.

Sharif Street
Senator
3rd District PA

CC:

Creative Philadelphia

Marguerite Anglin, RA, Public Art Director

Smokin' Joe Frazier Championship Foundation

Pete Lyde, CEO

8TH DISTRICT
ANTHONY H. WILLIAMS
□ SENATE BOX 203008
THE STATE CAPITOL
HARRISBURG, PA 17120-3008
717-787-5970 • FAX: 717-772-0574
□ 2901 ISLAND AVENUE • SUITE 100
PHILADELPHIA, PA 19153
215-492-2980 • FAX: 215-492-2990
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LEGISLATIVE DATA PROCESSING
COMMITTEE

Senate of Pennsylvania

February 2, 2026

To the Members of the Philadelphia Art Commission,

As State Senator for the 8th Senatorial District, I write to express my strong support for the request submitted by the *Smokin Joe Frazier Championship Foundation* to relocate the Joe Frazier statue from its current location in South Philadelphia to the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Joe Frazier is one of Philadelphia's most iconic figures! A world champion, a cultural ambassador, and a symbol of perseverance whose story continues to inspire generations across our city and around the world. His legacy is deeply woven into the fabric of Philadelphia's identity. It is only fitting that his likeness be placed in a location that reflects the magnitude of his impact.

This move represents an opportunity to preserve and amplify a legacy that belongs to our entire city. It will ensure that residents, visitors and boxing fans from across the world can fully appreciate Joe Frazier's rightful place in our history.

I respectfully urge the Art Commission to approve this request and support this meaningful step toward honoring one of Philadelphia's true champions.

Thank you for your consideration.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Anthony H. Williams", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Senator Anthony H. Williams
PA Senate District 8



February 2, 2026

Katherine Liss
Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 18th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Philadelphia Visitor Center Support for the Joe Frazier Statue

Dear Katherine,

The Philadelphia Visitor Center is pleased to offer its full support for the City's proposal to relocate the Joe Frazier statue to the Philadelphia Art Museum.

Each year, millions of visitors are drawn to the Art Museum steps as one of the city's most recognizable landmarks. While many associate the site with the Rocky films, far fewer are aware of Joe Frazier's authentic connection to this place and his role as the real-life inspiration behind the story. Relocating the Joe Frazier statue creates an important opportunity to enrich the visitor experience with historical depth and local truth.

The statue honors Frazier at the apex of his extraordinary career and tells the story of a Philadelphian whose achievements as an Olympic gold medalist, world heavyweight champion, and community leader had a lasting impact both locally and globally. His story will resonate strongly with visitors seeking authentic narratives that reflect the character and values of Philadelphia.

Positioning the Joe Frazier statue at this prominent cultural destination will enhance interpretation and storytelling for residents and visitors alike. In dialogue with the Rocky statue, it will offer a more complete and compelling narrative of perseverance, one rooted in real life and lived experience.

The Philadelphia Visitor Center wholeheartedly supports the relocation of the Joe Frazier statue as a meaningful enhancement to one of our city's most visited and celebrated sites.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "K. Ott Lovell".

Kathryn Ott Lovell
President and CEO
Philadelphia Visitor Center



February 3, 2026

Katherine Liss
Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway, 1515 Arch Street, 18th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Parkway Council Support for Relocating the Joe Frazier Statue

Dear Katherine,

On behalf of the Parkway Council, I write in support of the relocation of the Joe Frazier statue to the base of the Philadelphia Art Museum steps at Eakins Oval.

The Art Museum steps are an internationally recognized symbol of aspiration. Joe Frazier's real-life training through Fairmount Park and up these very steps adds a powerful layer of authenticity to the site, grounding its mythology in lived experience. The relocation of the Rocky statue creates a rare opportunity to thoughtfully expand the Parkway's narrative by pairing cultural iconography with the real person who embodied those ideals.

Integrating the Joe Frazier statue into this prominent civic space will strengthen placemaking efforts, enhance public engagement, and contribute to a richer, more inclusive interpretation of Philadelphia's cultural landscape. The dialogue between Rocky and Frazier will reinforce the Parkway's role as a place where art, history, and identity intersect.

While the Parkway Council supports this proposal, it would also like to take this opportunity to encourage public and private stakeholders along the Parkway to collaborate on a comprehensive public art strategy. As the Council advances the *Parkway to Park* plan to transform the Parkway into a unified great urban park, now is the appropriate moment to move away from ad hoc initiatives and toward a coordinated and transparent approach with clearly articulated goals. We would welcome the opportunity to convene with Creative Philadelphia, the Art Commission, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, and other partners to discuss such a process.

The Parkway Council supports the relocation of the Joe Frazier statue to the Art Museum Steps and looks forward to additional partnership on a public art plan with all those who steward the Benjamin Franklin Parkway.

Best regards,

Nicholas S. Anderson
Executive Director

CORY ROBINSON, *President*
MALIK STATEN, *Secretary-Treasurer*



SAMUEL STATEN, JR., *Business Manager*
GRACIA LOUIS, *Recording Secretary*

SAMUEL STATEN, SR., *Business Manager Emeritus*

TELEPHONE: (215) 765-6272 FAX (215) 765-0947

Laborers' International Union of North America

LOCAL UNION 332 OF PHILADELPHIA, PA AND VICINITY

1310 WALLACE STREET

Affiliated with the AFL-CIO

PHILADELPHIA, PA 19123

www.local332phila.org

February 3, 2026

Ms. Katherine Liss
Philadelphia Art Commission
1515 Arch Street
Philadelphia, PA 19102

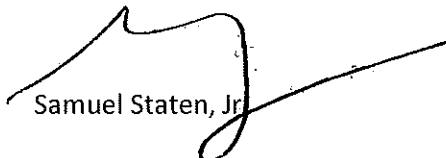
Dear Ms. Liss:

I am writing this letter to list my support and to join the effort to have the statue of Smokin' Joe Frazier relocated to the Philadelphia Art Museum. Joe Frazier not only gave himself to the sport of boxing, he gave himself to the City of Philadelphia, serving as a role model and ambassador to young people throughout the nation.

My name is Samuel Staten, Jr. Business Manager of Laborers' Local 332. For many years this local union had a connection with Joe Frazier beyond his world-famous boxing career. In 1994, Laborers' Local 332 honored Joe Frazier with its highest award, The "Friends of Labor Sammy Award". The Frazier family is very much a part of this local. His daughter, Judge Jackie Frazier Lyde and her husband Peter Lyde worked for our union.

Moving the statue to the Philadelphia Art Museum would not be a tribute to Joe Frazier and the Frazier family, it would be tribute to the city itself, it would be an inspiration to many young people.

Sincerely,


Samuel Staten, Jr.



CITY OF PHILADELPHIA

Office of the City Representative
171 City Hall
Philadelphia, PA 19107

MICHAEL NEWMUIS
2026 Director
Phila.gov/2026

February 3, 2026

Katherine Liss, Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Re: Proposal to Relocate the Joseph William "Smokin' Joe" Frazier Statue
to the Philadelphia Museum of Art Steps during America's 250th Anniversary

Dear Director Liss:

As America marks its 250th anniversary, Philadelphia has an extraordinary opportunity to tell a more complete story about achievement, perseverance, and the American Dream. As Director of Philadelphia's Semiquincentennial celebration, I respectfully urge the Commission to approve the relocation of the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue to the base of the Philadelphia Museum of Art steps—a placement that honors Joseph William "Smokin' Joe" Frazier, Olympic gold medalist, undisputed World Heavyweight Champion, Hall of Fame boxer, and philanthropist who built his life and legacy in Philadelphia, at the civic threshold he made famous.

Joe Frazier embodied the American Dream and spirit of Philadelphia. After moving from South Carolina at age 15 with nothing but hunger and determination, he trained at the Police Athletic League gym on North Broad Street, worked at the Cross Brothers meat plant, and built his life in this city. He won Olympic gold in 1964, became undisputed World Heavyweight Champion in 1970, and on March 8, 1971, defeated Muhammad Ali in the "Fight of the Century" at Madison Square Garden. Frazier lived in North Philadelphia until his death in 2011, opened a gym where he trained young fighters for free, and remained rooted in the city that shaped him. For too long, we have celebrated the dream while leaving the dreamer in the shadows.

The recent decision to relocate Rocky to the summit creates an opportunity to complete this narrative and honor a profound historical connection. Joe Frazier trained on these steps as part of the regimen that led to Olympic gold and the world championship.

Sylvester Stallone drew from Frazier's training methods when creating Rocky, including the iconic steps scene. Rocky's statue reflects Philadelphia's generosity of spirit and our love of inspiring stories. Relocating Joe Frazier to the Museum steps doesn't diminish that love—it completes it by honoring the man whose real-life training inspired the fiction that moved the world. Placing Frazier at the threshold—where residents and visitors first encounter the Museum steps—honors the real champion whose work made those steps famous. Visitors will meet the athlete whose perseverance inspired generations, then ascend to the fictional character who taught millions to believe in their own potential.

This placement advances the Commission's charter to ensure public art reflects civic significance, artistic merit, and community resonance at our most visible public spaces. Visitors climbing the Museum steps will encounter the American Dream made real—a story of discipline, sacrifice, and perseverance that speaks to anyone who has fought for their dreams.

Over the past year, I have come to know the Frazier family and witnessed their unwavering commitment to Smokin' Joe's memory. Pete Lyde, Joe's son-in-law, along with the family, visits the statue faithfully, organizing tributes and sharing Joe's story with visitors. The family has expressed strong support for this relocation, and I join them in recognizing that the Museum steps offer the visibility Joe's achievements deserve.

I thank the Commission for its stewardship in shaping Philadelphia's public memory at this defining moment.

When the world climbs those steps during America's 250th anniversary, millions will encounter a story Philadelphia chose to tell at last: the dreamer before the dream, the champion before the inspiration, the truth before the legend—all honored together on the steps made sacred by both perseverance and imagination. This is not administrative procedure; this is civic courage. Great cities honor their champions. Greater cities honor their truth.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "M. A. Newmuis". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael A. Newmuis
2026 Director
City of Philadelphia

January 25, 2026

Pete Lyde
President and CEO
Smokin' Joe Frazier Championship Foundation, Inc.

Dear Mr. Lyde,

Mark Twain wrote, "The truth is better than fiction," as a way of saying real life is extraordinary, and Smokin' Joe Frazier's exceptional, immortal life is alive and well through his family, friends, community, other boxers, athletes, and internationally in the hearts and minds of people who treasure his legacy.

I am Angela McIver, chief executive officer of the Fair Housing Rights Center in Southeastern Pennsylvania (FHRC), and I support relocating the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue to the Art Museum steps because we need more real role models, inspiration, hope, and attractions in Philadelphia.

The 250th celebration of the nation is an awesome event that will bring the world together in Philadelphia throughout 2026. Role models like Smokin' Joe Frazier should be in places that already attract millions of visitors each year. If the fictional character Rocky can lure people from all walks of life, so should the real person, Smokin' Joe Frazier.

We must preserve our history or risk erasure, which is disingenuous and a form of humiliation. Smokin' Joe Frazier's disciplined practices opened pathways to opportunities for himself and countless others who needed a hero in the past and now.

Let us rally around the humanitarian, legendary Smokin' Joe Frazier by placing his statue, which is art, where it belongs: with other works of art at the Philadelphia Museum of Art steps, so that visitors begin their ascent seeing the real person who inspired the Rocky character and what the character represents to people worldwide.

Very truly,
Angela McIver
Angela McIver
Chief Executive Officer



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January 28th, 2026

To: Katherine Liss
Philadelphia Art Commission

Re: Joe Frazier Statue

Dear Katherine,

I am writing this letter in support of the Joe Frazier statue being moved from the Xfinity live area to the Art Museum. As you know the Art Museum area gets an estimated million visitors per year, which will give the Frazier statue many more eyes on it than at the Xfinity area. The Xfinity area only has significant crowds when there are events in the South Philadelphia area.

As Joe Frazier's former friend and physician, I truly endorse the moving of his Statue.

Sincerely,

Nicholas L. Depace, MD, FACC

From: [Eric Smith](#)
To: [Marguerite Anglin](#)
Cc: pete.lyde@joefrazierchampionshipfoundation.org; [Lori Smith](#)
Subject: My Support of Joe Frazier Statue Relocation
Date: Saturday, January 31, 2026 11:44:51 AM

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Katherine Liss
Acting Director, Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Ms. Liss,

I am writing to express my strong and enthusiastic support for the relocation of the Joe Frazier statue to the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

Joe Frazier is not only one of the greatest heavyweight champions in boxing history, but also a symbol of perseverance, grit, and pride for the City of Philadelphia. His legacy is deeply woven into the cultural and athletic fabric of this city. Placing his statue at the Philadelphia Museum of Art steps — an internationally recognized landmark associated with boxing history — would be a powerful and fitting tribute to his enduring impact.

Relocating the statue to this iconic location would ensure that Joe Frazier's contributions are honored with the visibility and dignity they deserve. It would also provide residents and visitors alike with a meaningful opportunity to engage with Philadelphia's rich sports history while celebrating a champion who represented the city with strength, humility, and resilience.

I respectfully urge the Philadelphia Art Commission to support this relocation and help preserve Joe Frazier's legacy in a setting that reflects his stature and significance.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Best regards,

Eric Smith
eric.smith2@verizon.net

JAMES J. BINNS

Attorney at Law

January 30, 2026

SENT VIA EMAIL TO: marguerite.anglin@phila.gov

Katherine Liss
Philadelphia Arts Commission

RE: Smokin' Joe Frazier Statue

Dear Ms. Liss:

I am writing in support of the relocation of the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue from Xfinity Live! to the Philadelphia Art Museum steps. I was personally responsible for placing the Rocky statue where it is now. Since that will be moved back to the top of steps, I respectfully request that the statue of Heavyweight Champion Joe Frazier be moved from its present location to the location being vacated. Thank you for your consideration of this request.

Sincerely,

/s/ James J. Binns

By:

James J. Binns, Esquire

cc: Pete Lyde
pete.lyde@joeфраzierchampionshipfoundation.org

California
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West Virginia

1125 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19107
Telephone: 215-275-3000
Telecopier 215-922-4001
E-Mail james@jamesbinns.net

From: [Peter Lyde](#)
To: [Marguerite Anglin](#)
Subject: Fw: Joe Frazier statue relocation
Date: Saturday, January 31, 2026 2:45:51 PM

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From: Savage Insurance Agency SAVAGE INSURA <savageinsurance@comcast.net>
Sent: Saturday, January 31, 2026 9:46:17 AM
To: Peter Lyde <pete.lyde@joeфраzierchampionshipfoundation.org>
Subject: Joe Frazier statue relocation

Dear Ms. Katherine Liss,

I hope this letter finds you in good spirits. I am writing to propose the relocation of the smoke and Joe Frazier statue to the steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum. As a long-standing admirer of Frazier's career, I believe this adjustment is not only fitting, but also overdue.

Joe Frazier has been a emblematic figure in the boxing world and extraordinary representative of Philadelphia's rich sports heritage. His contributions to the sport of boxing and the city deserve to be recognized in a manner that reflects the immerse pride we as Philadelphians feel for his achievements. The art museum as a cultural landmark, would provide an ideal backdrop for the statue, allowing both locals and visitors to pay homage to a true champion who bought the world championship boxing to our city. The proposed location serves not only to honor Frazier's legacy but also to educate future generations about the significance in the world of sports. I urge you to consider this request, sincerely, and look forward to your thoughts on this matter.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

Juanita Savage-Cohen

*Juanita Savage Agent
7178 Ogontz Avenue
Philadelphia, Pa. 19138
Phone # 215-224-4890*

*Fax # 215-224-4891
savageinsurance@comcast.net
jsavageinsurance.com*

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Thank you for your business.

Katherine Liss
Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway- 1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania
February 2, 2026

Philadelphia Art Commission:

I am writing to express my fervent support for relocating the statue of the legendary Joe Frazier from its current site at 11th Street and Pattison Avenue near Stateside Live! to a prominent location near the bottom of the steps of the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

The current placement near the sports complex recognizes Joe Frazier's athletic accomplishments. But "Smokin'" Joe Frazier is so much more than just a sports figure. He is a cultural icon who transcends Philadelphia and a symbol of the city's "underdog" spirit.

Placing his monument near the Art Museum steps—the site of the world-famous "Rocky" statue—would rectify a long-standing imbalance. While Rocky Balboa is a beloved fictional icon, Joe Frazier was the real-life champion who lived here, trained here and gave back to this city his entire life.

As a member of the Philadelphia Sports Hall of Fame's Charter Class in 2004 Joe Frazier epitomizes the city's sports heritage. Relocating the statue to this new location will allow substantially more visitors each year to see the true face of Philadelphia boxing history.

I urge the Commission to approve this move as soon as possible.

Sincerely,



Ken Avallon

President

Philadelphia Sports Hall of Fame

Michelle Brownlee, Ward Leader 29th Ward

1233 North 29th Street

Philadelphia, PA 19121

January 31, 2026

Ms. Katherine Lisa, Acting Director

Philadelphia Art Commission

One Parkway,

1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor

Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Ms. Lisa:

As the ward leader, of the 29th Ward and a resident who resides in very close proximity to the Art Museum, I wholeheartedly support relocating the Smokin' Joe Frazier Statue to the Art Museum Steps.

Smokin Joe was a resident of our great city. He lived the values we hold close to our hearts. Never give up. Keep on fighting.



January 30, 2026

Katherine Liss, Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Ms. Liss,

USA Boxing is the National Governing Body for Olympic-style Amateur Boxing as recognized and certified by the United States Olympic and Paralympic Committee. Our mission statement (provided below) is quite timeless as it exemplifies what today's boxers strive for AND embodies the drive and spirit of all previous Olympic Boxing Champions.

"To promote and grow Olympic-style amateur boxing in the United States and to inspire the tireless pursuit of Olympic gold and enable athletes and coaches to achieve sustained competitive excellence."

Additionally, USA Boxing endeavors to teach all participants the character, confidence, and focus they need to become resilient and diverse champions, both in and out of the ring. USA Boxing is one team, one nation, going for gold!"

Smokin' Joe Frazier is one of our honored Olympic Champions, winning a gold medal in the 1964 Tokyo Olympic Games. While initially an alternate, he stepped up after the original qualifier was injured to win an Olympic gold medal for the United States. Joe Frazier's accomplishments, in and out of the ring as an amateur and professional, still resonate nationwide, not only with boxing folks but all Americans who work very hard to achieve excellence.



USA Boxing, Inc.

1 Olympic Plaza · Colorado Springs, Colorado 80909
(719) 866-2300 · FAX: (719) 866-2132 · Website: www.usaboxing.org

The fact that Rocky is, in reality, **Smokin' Joe Frazier** should not come as a surprise to anyone, but to make this fact more widely known throughout Philadelphia (hometown to both) would be an act of reverence and honor for both men and cement their place as champions of the city.

We wholeheartedly support the Smokin' Joe Frazier Championship Foundation's request for the relocation of the beautifully sculpted statue of Joe Frazier to the steps of the Philadelphia Art Museum. Please endeavor to make this happen!

In your corner,



Mike McAtee

Executive Director/CEO of USA Boxing

p: 719.866.2323 c: 785.423.0693

a: 1 Olympic Plaza, Colorado Springs, CO 80909

w: www.usaboxing.org e: mmcatee@usaboxing.org



USA Boxing, Inc.

1 Olympic Plaza · Colorado Springs, Colorado 80909
(719) 866-2306 · FAX: (719) 866-2132 · Website: www.usaboxing.org

Katherine Liss
Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

January 28, 2026

Ms. Liss:

This letter is to express our support for the Smokin' Joe Frazier Championship Foundation and their mission to relocate the Joe Frazier Statue to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The Foundation includes members of the Frazier family – Philadelphia's royal family of boxing. The legacy of Joe Frazier and his family is an essential part of the City of Philadelphia and the spectacular statue of Smokin' Joe, currently on display in South Philadelphia, deserves the most significant stage possible. The Foundation believes that stage is the Philadelphia Museum of Art and we support their efforts wholeheartedly.

Sincerely,
Monty Farley
President, Veteran Boxers Association of Philadelphia (Ring One)

From: [Buddy Osborn](#)
To: [Marguerite Anglin](#)
Cc: pete.lyde@joefrazierchampionshipfoundation.org
Subject: Support to have Joe Frazier statue
Date: Tuesday, January 27, 2026 10:33:35 PM

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Katherine Liss
Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA

Dear Ms. Liss,

My name is **Pastor Buddy Osborn**, and I am the founder of a ministry serving the Kensington section of Philadelphia. I am writing to you with deep respect and heartfelt conviction regarding the legacy of one of Philadelphia's greatest sons—**“Smokin’” Joe Frazier**.

Over fifty years ago, when I began my boxing career as a young teenager, one of the very first gyms I ever trained in was **Joe Frazier's Gym**. That experience remains vivid in my memory, not only because it was the home of a world champion, but because it reflected the heart of the man himself. Say what one may about Joe Frazier—he was truly one of a kind, marked by compassion, humility, and a deep loyalty to the city of Philadelphia.

I later had the honor of making the **USA Boxing Team** and traveling to different parts of the world representing our country. Everywhere I went, Joe Frazier's name was spoken with the utmost respect and admiration. To many, he embodied the very spirit of Philadelphia boxing—grit, perseverance, and an unrelenting work ethic. Joe carried a mindset that declared: *If you want to beat me, you'd better be willing to work harder than anyone else.*

From his amateur days, when he won Olympic gold, to his rise as the **Heavyweight Champion of the World**, everything Joe Frazier accomplished was the result of relentless dedication and discipline. Scripture reminds us, *“Do you not know that in a race all the runners run, but only one receives the prize? So run that you may obtain it”* (1 Corinthians 9:24). Joe Frazier ran his race with excellence.

Because of his immense impact on the sport and on this city, I believe it would be incredibly meaningful to **relocate the statue of Joe Frazier to the Philadelphia Museum of Art area**, where millions of people from around the world would have the opportunity to see and learn about one of the greatest boxers Philadelphia has ever produced. Such a placement would stand as a testimony to our city's rich boxing heritage and inspire future generations.

The Bible tells us, *“A good name is to be chosen rather than great riches”* (Proverbs 22:1). Joe Frazier's name represents perseverance, honor, and the very soul of Philadelphia. Placing his statue in such a prominent and respected location would honor not only his achievements but the values he lived by.

I truly believe that Joe Frazier's family, as well as countless Philadelphians, would be deeply honored to see his likeness placed where all can benefit from and appreciate his legacy. *"Let another praise you, and not your own mouth"* (Proverbs 27:2)—this would be our city's way of praising a man who gave so much to it.

Thank you for your time and thoughtful consideration. If you need any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me.

God bless you and the important work you do for our city.

Respectfully,

Pastor Buddy Osborn

Founder and Pastor

Rock Ministry of Philadelphia

2755 Kensington Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19134

215-768-7757

\

February 1, 2026

To: Katherine Liss
Philadelphia Art Commission

Re: Relocation of the Joe Frazier Statue

I write this letter as a native Philadelphian, Senior Vice President of International Boxing Federation (IBF), President of the American Association for the Improvement of Boxing (AAIB), and lifelong boxing enthusiast.

I strongly support the proposed relocation of the Joe Frazier statue to the Philadelphia Museum of Art. Joe Frazier is not only a boxing legend, but a global symbol of perseverance, discipline, and plain ol' Philadelphia grit. As an Olympic gold medalist, former heavyweight champion of the world, and a home-grown Philadelphian, his legacy is deeply rooted in the cultural and athletic history of our city.

The Philadelphia Museum of Art is an iconic destination synonymous with athletic excellence and international recognition and would provide the Champion's legacy a setting that reflects his extraordinary accomplishments and impact. It, (the relocation), would also serve as an important act of historical equity, ensuring that Joe Frazier's contributions to the sport, culture, and community are honored with the visibility and reverence they deserve.

Thank you for your commitment to honoring Philadelphia's rich history.

Respectfully,

Melvina Lathan
boxinglady@gmail.com

Vernoca™

A Dynamic Woman

706 South 60th Street
Philadelphia, PA 19143
January 31, 2026

Ms. Katherine Liss
Acting Director
Philadelphia Art Commission
One Parkway,
1515 Arch Street, 13th Floor
Philadelphia, PA 19102

Dear Ms. Liss

It is with great pleasure that I write this letter of support for the Smokin' Joe Fraier Championship Foundation.

My name is *Vernoca™* L. Michael, Co-owner of *The Legendary Blue Horizon™* site of ROCKY V and the First African American Licensed Boxing Promoter.

I had the pleasure of knowing the late Great Joe Fraizer. I agreed to approve a Muhammad Ali mural on my building only if Joe Frazier was also featured. Although we included four boxers, he was the only one I asked to approve the artwork.

Prior to his passing, I was involved with a group of people interested in developing a statue for Joe. It was not until his passing that Rev. Jessie Jackson at Joe's funeral challenged Philadelphia to have a statue dedicated to the "Real World Champion" in Philadelphia.

I welcomed the development of the Joe Frazier statue in Philadelphia and attended the dedication but always felt it should be either at "The Blue" or the Philadelphia Art Museum. Although "The Blue" is no longer open, I firmly believe that the Joe Frazier Statue should be relocated from Xfinity Live (Stateside Live) to the Philadelphia Art Museum. In 2026, the county's 250th anniversary will be celebrated in Philadelphia, the founding city and most guests will visit the Franklin Parkway and the Philadelphia Art Museum. Honoring such a remarkable World Champion at this renowned location in his hometown is truly appropriate.

Sincerely,

Vernoca™

Vernoca L. Michael

Dave Wilkes

3847 Fairmount Avenue

Philadelphia, PA 19104-1819

Katherine Liss

Philadelphia Art Commission

Reference: Smokin' Joe Frazier statue

This letter is to show my support for moving the Smokin' Joe Frazier statue to the Art Museum. I am sure you most surely know the story behind the legend of Smokin' Joe Frazier. He was historically the most famous boxer Philly had. So much so that the Rocky movies were fashioned after his life as a tough Philly boxer. What the movie didn't show is how much he cared for the city as a philanthropist and a person that cared wholeheartedly about the youth in Philly. With all the attention and support he displayed.

I would like to commend Mr. Pete Lyde, CEO of the Smokin' Joe Frazier Championship Foundation Inc. for his initiative in moving the statue to the Art Museum where Sylvester Stalone made the steps recognized using the legacy of Smokin' Joe Frazier.

Thank you for your attention to this matter.

Dave Wilkes