

*Connecticut State Capitol and
Legislative Office Building
Supplement*

New Prudence Crandall Statue



There is a new statue in the State Capitol - State Heroine Prudence Crandall with a Student.

Located in the South Lobby, near the replica of the Liberty Bell, the life-size bronze statue depicts Prudence Crandall with one of her African American Students. While the statue is of bronze, it has the look of clay with a soft brownish tone.

The statute was created by New York Sculptor Gabriel Koren (left) shown here with Representative Betty Boukus.



The Story Behind the Statue - Student Action

It all began about ten years ago when a group of students from the fourth grade class of 2000 at Ellen P. Hubbard School in Bristol, wrote to Representative Betty Boukus of Plainville complaining that there was a statue of the State Hero, Nathan Hale, in the Capitol, but none of the State Heroine, Prudence Crandall. Representative Boukus met with the students and encouraged them to get involved and do everything they could to make this project a reality. The students wrote letters, collected money and lobbied members of the General Assembly. The student's campaign was called "Pennies for Prudence," and they collected more than \$3,000 to support the project. Their determination and hard work certainly contributed to the eventual winning of a \$100,000 state grant to commission an artist to create the statue.

It was students from the New Canaan Country School who worked hard to have Prudence Crandall named the State Heroine. While they may not yet be able to vote, kids can make a difference!

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Artist Gabriel Koren

Sculptor Gabriel Koren was born in Hungary and received her Master of Fine Arts degree from the Hungarian Academy of Fine Arts. As a young child, she played around the many statues of famous writes and historical figures in the parks of the capitol city of Budapest. Her parents were both artistic and encouraged her interest in African civilizations and African American Art. She studied at the Ecole des Beaux in Paris, France and then moved to New York City where she established a studio in Brooklyn. She was commissioned to create a sculpture of Malcolm X that is now located in the Audubon Ballroom in Manhattan. A statue of the abolitionist Frederick Douglass will soon be part of a monument to be erected in Central Park. Ms. Koren spent six years sculpting the Prudence Crandall statue.

About Prudence Crandall



Connecticut's State Heroine was born in Hopkinton, Rhode Island on September 3, 1803. She was the daughter of Quaker parents and was educated at the Society of Friends Boarding School in Providence. Prudence Crandall spent much of her childhood in the village of Canterbury, Connecticut and returned there after completing her education and teaching briefly in Lisbon and Plainfield.

In 1831, with the support and assistance of the leaders of the town, Prudence Crandall opened the Canterbury Female Seminary. The school was in a large house just off the village green. Today the house is a museum and a National Historic Landmark.



The school prospered until Prudence Crandall accepted the application of Sarah Harris, the daughter of a free African American farmer in the area, to be admitted to the school. Many Quakers were active in the Abolitionists Movement and opposed slavery as un-Christian. The admission of an African American to the school angered many of the town residents, and attempts were made to close the school. The parents of the white students removed their daughters from the school, but by then the reputation of the school had spread and African American parents began sending their daughters to the school.

Prudence and her students were subjected to insults and abuse. On May 24, 1833, the Connecticut General Assembly passed a law known as the "Black Law," making it a crime for anyone to establish a school for the instruction of "colored people who are not inhabitants of this State," or to teach in any such school without the consent of local authorities. Prudence Crandall was arrested and briefly imprisoned in the Brooklyn, Connecticut Jail. She was brought to trial three times, but the case was finally dismissed by the Supreme Court of Errors in July, 1834.

Shortly after the dismissal, the school was attacked by a mob and, fearing for the safety of her students, Prudence Crandall closed the school. She married the Reverend Calvin Philco that same year and moved eventually to Illinois. She died in Elk Falls Kansas in 1890 at the age of 87 and is buried there. The "Black Law" was repealed 1838. In 1886, an annual annuity of \$400 was established by the Connecticut Legislature and Prudence Crandall received that money until she died.

In 1995, the Connecticut General Assembly designated Prudence Crandall as the state's official heroine.

