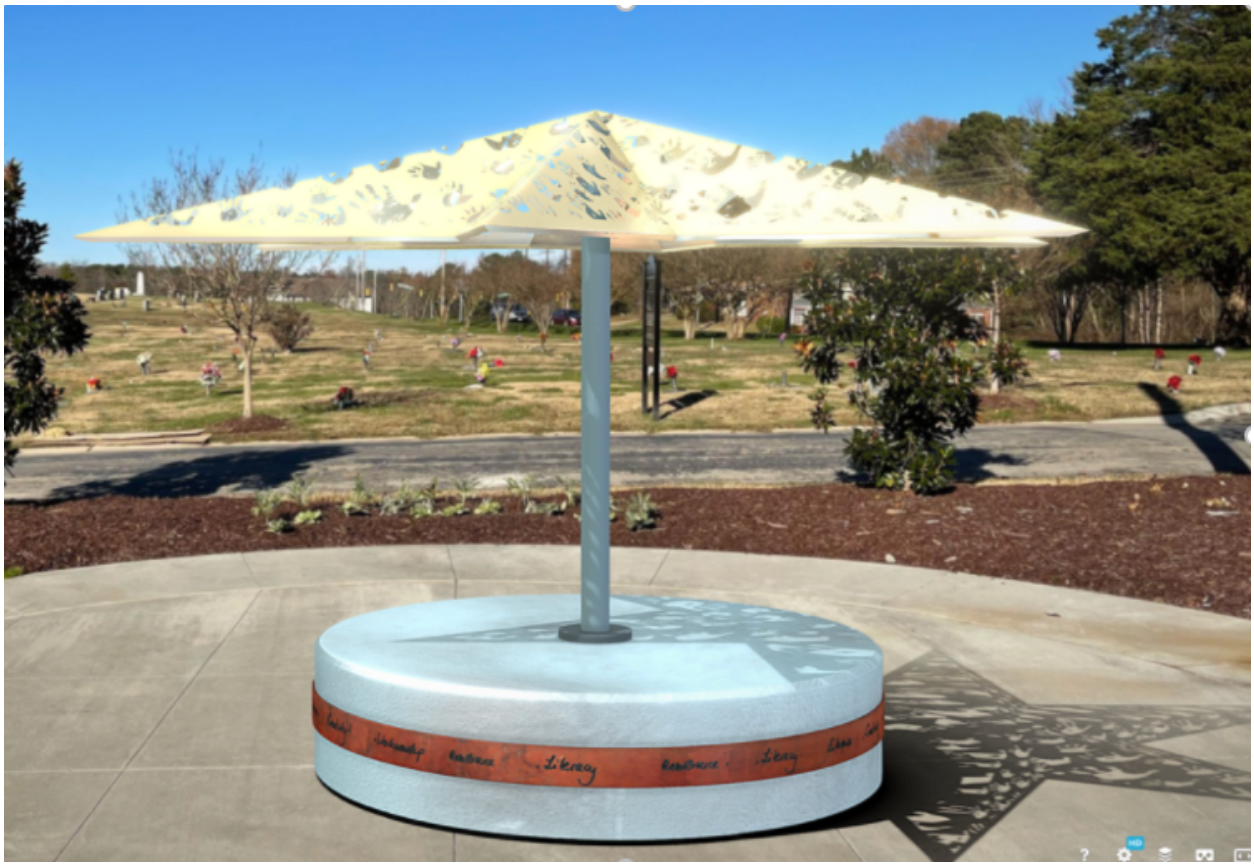
Beechwood Cemetery



JACKIE MACLEOD & WHITNEY HUNT

Artist's Description for North Star

The North Star Bench is additionally inspired by Emma Henderson. As a freed woman after Emancipation, she worked at Stagville as a sharecropper for her former master. One day he called for her and accused her of insolence. She told him: "My skin is as white as yours, my hair is as straight as yours and now I am quite as free as you." With these words she turned and walked away to start a new life in Durham with her family. Emma was able to leave Stagville in daylight as a free woman, but many before her ran at night with only the North Star serving as guide.

Beechwood Cemetery

JACKIE MACLEOD & WHITNEY HUNT

Artist's Description for Pillars of Community

The Pillars of Community Bench is additionally inspired by Booker T. Washington's article, The Independent, 1911. He had traveled extensively throughout the South and, wherever he laid praise to the African American Community and their achievements, he was told "wait till you get to Durham". In his article he cites the ambition and thrift of the African American residents of Durham. Loosely based on a Ghanaian symbol for wisdom and creativity, the Pillars of Community Bench is an organic gathering space for a community, that is shaded by a centrally located tree. There is space for people to sit on the large, inner ring and, at the same time, on the protruding, attached single seaters. This enables a variety of group sizes to share this space.

Beechwood Cemetery

JACKIE MACLEOD & WHITNEY HUNT

Artist's Description for "Rise"
The Rise Bench is additionally inspired by Maya Angelou's poem "Still I rise" which reflects the struggle to overcome prejudice and injustice with self-esteem and confidence. "Bringing the gifts that my ancestors gave, I am the dream and the hope of the slave. I rise. I rise. I rise." It is a fitting homage to resilience. The backside of the "i" will also have a rectangular copper plate encased that is gently patinated. The artists invite stakeholders and community members to make suggestions for an appropriate inscription for this side. We are looking for a poem, saying or quote that can be clearly traced to a member of the African American community of Durham for this space.