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***Woman, the Spirit of the Universe*  
opens at Holocaust Museum Houston January 13, 2023**

***--Featuring 23 bronze collars and debut of collars honoring former Houston Mayor Annise Parker and the city's first librarian Julia B. Ideson --***

**HOUSTON (December 15, 2022)** – *Woman, the Spirit of the Universe*, designed and created by artist Carolyn Marks Johnson, opens Friday, January 13, 2023, in Holocaust Museum Houston's Lester and Sue Smith Human Rights Gallery. The exhibition features stunning bronze collars inspired by 23 American heroines who fought bravely and tirelessly for equality. The collars are stitched by hand using hand-worked cotton and then cast in bronze. For most of us, a collar is simply an adornment for a shirt or dress. In Carolyn Marks Johnson's art, a collar symbolizes the struggle to establish women's rights. [CLICK HERE FOR PHOTOS.](#)

Johnson just completed two new collars that will debut in the HMH exhibition to honor former Houston Mayor Annise Parker and the city's first librarian Julia B. Ideson. Parker, a longtime public servant and one of the first openly gay mayors of a major U.S. city, served as Houston Mayor from 2010 to 2016. She is a former HMH board member and 2010 recipient of the Museum's Guardian of the Human Spirit Award. Since 2017, Parker has served as president of the Gay and Lesbian Victory Fund and Leadership Institute. Julia B. Ideson was in the first class to major in the new discipline of Library Science at The University of Texas. Hired in 1903, she managed Houston's library services until her death in 1945. Ideson is known for starting five neighborhood libraries and creating the first bookmobile. She was also active in the women's suffrage movement, the League of Women Voters, and was the first Houston woman listed in *Who's Who in America*.

"We all stand on the shoulders of those who have come before us," said Dr. Kelly J. Zuniga, CEO of Holocaust Museum Houston. "The collars featured in *Woman, the Spirit of the Universe* exhibition adorned the shoulders of women who changed history. Their contributions are powerful stories of women uplifting women that must be shared."

The women featured in the exhibition span generations, from Margaret Brent, who practiced de facto law in the late 1600s to two giants of Texas politics, Governor Ann Richards and Representative Barbara Jordan. Other leading women in the exhibition include Dolores Huerta, who championed labor rights; Chief Wilma Mankiller, first female chief of the Cherokee Nation; Sojourner Truth, who carried the message of abolition to every part of America she could reach; and abolitionist and social activist Harriet Tubman, known for freeing enslaved people through the Underground Railroad.

The most recognizable collar of the exhibition represents the late Associate Justice of the Supreme Court Ruth Bader Ginsburg, affectionately known as Notorious RBG. Ginsburg wore different collars to express a variety of messages while sitting on the court, inspiring young girls and women of all ages to speak up for things they believe in.

In 1985, Carolyn Marks Johnson graduated from South Texas College of Law in Houston, Texas. After a prominent career as a lawyer, Johnson served as a senior district judge in Harris County. During her spare time, Johnson was a docent for the Heritage Society and the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston (MFAH). Johnson then decided to enroll at The Glassell School of Art and graduated with a painting degree in 2014. Today, when not sitting by assignment as a retired senior district judge, arbitrator, mediator, umpire, she studies sculpture and is actively involved in women's rights.

The late Philip Renteria (1947-1999), a friend and sculpture teacher at The Glassell School of Art, suggested the title of the exhibit and the idea in conversation with Johnson about one of his own works. He believed that the spirit of the universe is feminine, and a woman's spirit holds the universe together.

Holocaust Museum Houston graciously thanks Partner Sponsor Enbridge and Friend Sponsor West Gulf Maritime Association.

*Woman, the Spirit of the Universe* is on view January 13 through April 2, 2023. For tickets and more information, please visit [hmh.org](http://hmh.org).

Holocaust Museum Houston, Lester and Sue Smith Campus, is fully bilingual in English and Spanish. Located at 5401 Caroline Street, HMH is closed Mondays except Martin Luther King Jr. Day, Memorial Day and Labor Day from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; open Tuesdays through Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from noon to 5 p.m. The Museum's Legacy Café is open during Museum hours. Admission is \$22 for adults; \$16 for seniors (ages 65+), AARP members and active-duty military; always free for children and students through age 18; and free to all visitors Thursdays from 2 p.m. to 5 p.m. Parking is available at the Museum's adjacent lot for \$8 for a four-hour period. Tickets are available exclusively online. For more information, visit [hmh.org/visit](http://hmh.org/visit).

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