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Contact: Ellen Cottrill  
Communication Coordinator  
Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville  
904-699-7879  
[ellen@culturalcouncil.org](mailto:ellen@culturalcouncil.org)



**ICONIC JACKSONVILLE STATUE GETS A MAKEOVER**  
**Restoring Jacksonville's Public Art Assets**



**JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – May 26, 2021** “Wisdom”, the wise old owl that sits atop the Main Library in Downtown Jacksonville has been returned to its original glory. The City of Jacksonville’s Public Art Program, administered by the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville, managed the project to have the statue cleaned and restored.

“It’s been an absolute pleasure for the [EverGreene](#) conservation team to work with the Cultural Council to conserve and restore public art installations around the City of Jacksonville,” said Chad Shores, the project manager for EverGreen Architectural Arts, the company hired to do the restoration. “Despite the challenges presented during the pandemic, we have successfully partnered with the Cultural Council to perform critical work on Jacksonville’s fantastic outdoor public art collection. We are honored to have had the opportunity to conserve public art pieces in one of Florida’s leading cities.”

Wisdom was created by artist Larry Kirkland and installed on the corner of the new, main Jacksonville Public Library in 2005. Kirkland uses the owl, a traditional symbol of wisdom, to identify the building as a place of information, knowledge, and learning. In ancient Greek mythology, Athena, Goddess of Wisdom, was the daughter of Zeus. She was able to change form, often into an owl. This work was inspired by a barn owl sculpture created by Renaissance artist Michelangelo for the Medici Chapel in Florence, Italy. The golden key behind the owl incorporates the Greek letters for A and Z, referencing the beginning and the end, while the key itself unlocks the knowledge inside books.

“As the agency responsible for the maintenance of the City of Jacksonville’s art assets, it’s rewarding to be able to have a part in the expanding collection of public art all over Jacksonville, as well as have a role in \_\_\_\_\_”, said [Jen Jones Murray](#), Director of Public Art for the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville.

The Art in Public Places Trust provides payment for cleaning, conservation, and restoration. The Public Art Program of the City of Jacksonville, aka Art in Public Places, manages art restoration of city owned assets (artworks).

Founded in 1971, the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville is a non-profit organization responsible for igniting the creative economy of our region by providing three pillars for community success. It manages and facilitates the City of Jacksonville’s Cultural Service Grant Program, regranteeing \$3 million annually from the City to our

community's critically needed arts and culture organizations. It facilitates the City of Jacksonville's Public Art program, known as Art in Public Places, a department project-managing the development and delivery of permanent works of public art throughout Duval County with an average total value of \$1.5 million per year. The Cultural Council also supports individual artists by offering career advancement workshops, grant writing courses, and professional networking events, as well as financial opportunities including participation in the Art in Public Places program, access to artist grants, and connection to collectors through pop-up art galleries such as the ARTSee & Shop at The Markets of Town Center. The mission of the Cultural Council of Greater Jacksonville is to enrich life in Northeast Florida by investing in arts and culture.

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