



Contact:

Becki Fiegel
Communications Director
Madison Community Foundation
(c) 312-320-3132 (o) 608-232-1763
bfiegel@madisongives.org

**Vel Phillips Statue Moves Closer to Reality with a
\$100,000 From Madison Community Foundation and the Oscar Rennebohm Foundation**

MADISON, Wis., February 18, 2021 – Madison Community Foundation (MCF) today announced a \$100,000 combined grant with the Oscar Rennebohm Foundation to fund the creation of a statue of former Wisconsin Secretary of State Velvlea “Vel” Phillips. The statue will be placed on the state capitol grounds, across from Hamilton Street.

“Vel Phillips spent her life fighting for civil rights. She broke new ground as an attorney, judge, politician and our Secretary of State – often as the first woman and/or person of color to hold these positions,” says Bob Sorge, president and CEO of MCF. “We are humbled to have the opportunity to honor such an incredible person - and happy that in doing so we also make our State Capitol more reflective of the people it serves.”

“On behalf of the Madison community, we are happy to support the placement of a statue in honor of Vel Phillips,” said Noble Wray, member of the Rennebohm Foundation’s board. “She served Milwaukee and the state of Wisconsin in so many trailblazing roles. We hope that the statue will serve as a beacon of light for social justice, human dignity and fundamental fairness for all people.”

Following the Black Lives Matter protests of 2020, and prompted by prominent African American leaders across the state, Governor Evers appointed an advisory committee to study the possibility of creating and installing a sculpture honoring Phillips at the capitol, co-chaired by Michael Johnson, president and CEO of the Boys & Girls Club of Dane County and Dave Endres, corporate legal counsel for American Family Insurance.

“The committee has worked to garner strong bipartisan support for the statue,” says Johnson. “We are excited to be announcing today, on Vel Phillips’ birthday, that the project is moving forward. We are proud to be part of recognizing and commemorating the important role Vel Phillips played in our state’s history.”

The Department of Administration will lead the project, and will vote in March on final approval for the project. A national request for proposals will go out this spring to artists, and that statue is expected to be created this year. It will be installed in early 2022.

###

About Madison Community Foundation: Madison Community Foundation's mission is to enhance the common good through philanthropy. Community Impact grants are made possible by donors who support the Community Impact Fund, MCF's competitive grantmaking program. For more information, visit www.madisongives.org.

About the Oscar Rennebohm Foundation: Established by business leader Oscar Rennebohm as a way to thank the community that made his success possible, the Rennebohm Foundation has been instrumental in funding both small and large projects focused on education, health and community since 1949. For more information, visit www.rennebohmfoundation.org.