

# MLK memorial effort gets second \$1M gift, this one from Yawkey Foundation

Apr 27, 2021, 6:43am EDT

The Boston nonprofit organization raising awareness of the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and Coretta Scott King in Boston has received a \$1 million grant from the Yawkey Foundation, just one day after receiving a similar million-dollar gift.

The Yawkey Foundation gift to King Boston caps off the nonprofit's multimillion-dollar campaign to fund the commission and construction of the sculpture memorial that features 22-foot-high interlocking arms and is titled "The Embrace," on Boston Common.

The gift comes on the April 27 anniversary of Coretta Scott King's birth and completes the \$9 million effort by King Boston to pay for the memorial's construction and the surrounding "Freedom Plaza," King Boston officials said in a statement early Tuesday. It follows a similar million-dollar gift, from Bank of America, [announced](#) on Monday.

King Boston's plans include additional fund-raising for events around the memorial as well as staffing and the founding of the King Center for Economic Justice, which will focus on racial justice and solutions to end socioeconomic disparities. King Boston is a privately funded nonprofit founded in 2017 that is working closely with the city of Boston and The Boston Foundation on "The Embrace" and the social-justice center.

"We are tremendously grateful for this capstone gift from the Yawkey Foundation on this very special day when we celebrate Mrs. King's countless contributions working hand-in-hand with her husband to fight poverty, racial prejudice, while pursuing justice and equal opportunity," said Imari Paris Jeffries, executive director of King Boston, in a statement.

Martin Luther King Jr. came to Boston as a doctoral student at Boston University in 1952 and met Coretta Scott, a fellow at the New England Conservatory of Music. They were married while in Boston and it was in 1965 that Dr. King addressed the Massachusetts Legislature at the State House overlooking Boston Common. He led a famous civil rights march from what is now Nubian Square to the Boston Common, where he addressed thousands from the Parkman Bandstand.

"The Embrace" is scheduled to be unveiled in October 2022.

"The poignancy of how this remarkable couple worked together in pursuit of a 'beloved community,' with social justice and equality for all in a better Boston and a better world, demonstrates an enduring lesson on the power of understanding, personal growth and healing," said the Rev. Dr. Ray Hammond, trustee of the Yawkey Foundation and chairman of the grants committee, in a statement.

Dr. Myechia Minter-Jordan, trustee of the Yawkey Foundation and a member of the foundation's grants committee, added: "The Embrace monument is a living testament to the important, and sometimes difficult, stories that need to be told and conversations that need to be had about the Kings and their lives' work, as well as the critical contributions of the other esteemed Boston civil rights leaders and activists highlighted in the Freedom Plaza, each of whom was uniquely essential to advancing the movement."

The Yawkey Foundation is the philanthropic foundation of longtime Boston Red Sox owners Tom and Jean Yawkey. Established in 1982 by Jean Yawkey, the foundation got a \$400 million boost in 2002, following the sale of the team, and has donated more than \$500 million to date in charitable grants to organizations in Massachusetts and South Carolina.



KING BOSTON



Dr. Myechia Minter-Jordan, trustee of the Yawkey Foundation and a member of the foundation's grants committee, called The Embrace monument "a living testament to the important, and sometimes difficult, stories that need to be told and conversations that need to be had about the Kings and their lives' work, as well as the critical contributions of the other esteemed Boston civil rights leaders and activists highlighted in the Freedom Plaza, each of whom was uniquely essential to advancing the movement."

