

Restored Hamilton sundial dedication set for end of May

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Kathleen Fox felt responsible for restoring the sundial that has sat on South Monument Avenue for nearly 85 years.

The weathered bronze sundial was dedicated in May 1941 and done so by the Daughters of the Union Veterans of the Civil War in honor of Josephine Straub Weiler, the mother of Hamilton author and one-time Journal-News columnist Stella Weiler Taylor.

In 2024, Fox wanted to have an Ohio Historical Marker installed to honor Weiler Taylor, and that's when she discovered the sundial was in need of restoration, including replacing the missing gnomon (the vertical piece that casts the shadow to tell the viewer the time of day). It also needed to be rotated to the north to tell the right time.

The state rejected her application for the historical marker — the Ohio-shaped plaques that usually depicts a milestone anniversary or historically significant event — so Fox focused her energy on the sundial.



Credit: Michael D. Pitman

The sundial at Monument Park on South Monument Avenue will be reinstalled at its place across from The Well House Hotel in downtown Hamilton. The sundial was dedicated in May 1941 by the Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War. MICHAEL D. PITMAN/STAFF

“I felt a great responsibility had been placed on my shoulders, and that I needed to find a way to restore the sundial to its original beauty and usefulness,” she said.

The effort by Fox to restore the sundial was in large part due to her connection with Stella Weiler Taylor. Not only has Fox has been a Weiler Taylor historian, but her family had personal connections to the writer. Former Journal-News publisher and editor Homer Gard, who is Fox’s great uncle, hired Weiler Taylor in 1931. She wrote for the paper until she suffered a stroke in 1948.

The columnist and author was also friends with Fox’s mother, and heard many stories as she grew up in Butler County.

Fundraising efforts included a Sundial Social Hour event at Tano Bistro last May and selling 140 bricks to pay for the restoration work by J.K. Hawkins in Deer Park. The sundial was polished and a patina applied, as well as attaching the new gnomon. It will sit on a platform and will be “perfectly aligned to the north.”

The dedication will be at 1 p.m. on May 31 at Monument Park, 15 S. Monument Ave., with a reception following.



Credit: Michael D. Pitman

Hamilton native and historian Kathleen Stuckey Fox has partnered with the city of Hamilton, the Butler County Historical Society, and the Hamilton Garden Club to refurbish sundial memorial in Monument Park. MICHAEL D. PITMAN/FILE

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About the Author

Michael D. Pitman has been a reporter in southwest Ohio since 1999. He's covered local governments in Warren and Butler counties, as well as state and national issues. He currently covers the cities of Fairfield and Hamilton.