

Bench by the Road Project, an initiative of the Toni Morrison Society

The Bench by the Road Project is a memorial history and community outreach initiative of the Toni Morrison Society. The Project was launched on February 18, 2006, on the occasion of Toni Morrison's 75th Birthday. The name "Bench by the Road" is taken from Morrison's remarks in a 1989 interview with World Magazine where she spoke of the absences of historical markers that help remember the lives of Africans who were enslaved and of how her fifth novel, *Beloved*, served this symbolic role:

*"There is no place you or I can go, to think about or not think about, to summon the presences of, or recollect the absences of slaves . . . There is no suitable memorial, or plaque, or wreath, or wall, or park, or skyscraper lobby. There's no 300-foot tower, **there's no small bench by the road.** There is not even a tree scored, an initial that I can visit or you can visit in Charleston or Savannah or New York or Providence or better still on the banks of the Mississippi. And because such a place doesn't exist . . . the book had to" (*The World*, 1989).*

Because the Toni Morrison Society wanted to be a place where scholars and readers could, through their engagement with Morrison's novels, remember not only slavery but also many of the forgotten moments in African American history, the Society chose, when it was founded in 1993, "A Bench by the Road" as its motto. The Bench by the Road Project extends the Society's mission. While there have been several notable African American history and slavery museums built since 1989, as well as a number of outstanding state and federal initiatives honoring the stories of the African American past, the goal of the Bench by the Road Project is to address the lament that Toni Morrison expressed in her interview by placing Benches and plaques at sites commemorating significant moments, individuals, and locations within the history of the African Diaspora.

Since 2006, the Toni Morrison Society has placed 25 Benches at sites, including Sullivan's Island, South Carolina; Walden Woods in Lincoln, Massachusetts; The 20th Arrondissement in Paris, France; Fort-de-France, Martinique; and, most recently, the Schomburg Center in Harlem, New York.

Cartersville, Georgia (Cartersville Train Depot) will serve as the site of the **27th** Bench. Cartersville will honor the memory, sacrifice, and service of African American railway workers and the significance of the great Black migration to and from the South.

We will also acknowledge the importance of Toni Morrison's paternal legacy through the memory of the Wofford family. Information on placement date and related programming forthcoming (scheduled for Thursday, April 30, 2020 at the Grand Theatre in downtown Cartersville, GA).

Please help the Summer Hill Heritage Foundation & Etowah Bush School to fund the placement of the Cartersville Bench. Please see the attached contribution form.

Make checks payable to:

Summer Hill Heritage Foundation with "TMS Bench" on memo line.

Summer Hill Foundation Mailing Address:

P.O Box 1761, Cartersville, GA 30120-1680

Online Contributions:

Online contributions can be made via PayPal or credit card:

<http://www.summerhillheritagegroup.org/donate.html>

For more information on the Toni Morrison Society:

<https://www.tonimorrisonociety.org/bench.html>

Thank you in advance for your Support!

The TMS Working Group (Cartersville, GA)

Cathy Freeman, James Benham III (Trey), Hedy Benham Smith

Etowah Bush School

Noble Hill-Wheeler Memorial Center

Summer Hill Heritage Group

Toni Morrison Society Bench by the Road Project

In conjunction with the Summer Hill Heritage Foundation, a (501)(c)(3) organization, please add us to your list of supporters for the placement The Toni Morrison Society *Bench by the Road* project in Cartersville, Georgia at the Cartersville Train Depot.

I wish to participate as a sponsor at the following level (check one):

_____ Platinum Sponsor: \$1,000

_____ Gold Sponsor: \$500

_____ Silver Sponsor: \$250

_____ Individual Honorable Mention \$50

_____ Individual Patron \$25

Print Sponsor's Name

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applicable)

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This tax deductible gift in the exact amount of \$_____ has been received by Summer Hill Heritage Foundation, on behalf of local TMS Working Group Members as evidenced by two signatures below.

Representatives from Summer Hill Heritage Foundation + TMS Cartersville Working Group



CHLOE WOFFORD

Toni Morrison was born Chloe Anthony Wofford, on February 18th 1931.



Chloe Wofford (Toni Morrison) with her parents, George and Ramah Wofford. George Wofford was born and raised in Cartersville, Georgia.



The Cartersville Train Depot, built in 1854, is located in Downtown Cartersville, GA.



The 6ft Steel Bench seats four and will be placed in proximity to the Cartersville Train Depot in downtown Cartersville, Georgia.