

# JAMES PENISTON SCULPTURE

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## **Philadelphia To Dedicate Bust of Ben Franklin In Historic Old City**

*Schoolchildren Gave 1.5 Million Pennies to Help Fund 9-Foot Bronze Sculpture*

PHILADELPHIA, PA. — Eyes alight, Benjamin Franklin turns from his work to greet visitors – or so it seems in the monumental bronze bust to be dedicated on Oct. 5 in historic downtown Philadelphia.

The nine-foot “Keys To Community” will be installed at 4th and Arch Streets, where it will replace the much-loved but deteriorated “Penny Franklin” sculpture. City and Fire Department officials will dedicate the new work at 10 a.m. on Friday, Oct. 5, 2007. The public and press are invited to the ceremony.

In 2003, the city of Philadelphia selected a proposal by sculptor James Peniston to replace the much-loved but deteriorated “Penny Franklin” sculpture. Peniston visited 24 elementary schools to talk about Franklin’s life and work; in return, schoolchildren contributed more than a thousand keys to be incorporated in the one-ton bust. They also donated nearly 1.5 million pennies – almost \$15,000 – toward the project.

The sculpture also honors the men and women of the city’s Fire Department, which organized the school penny drive and provided other funding. During its casting, several firefighters placed the brass nameplates of fallen comrades into the molten bronze.

“The pennies and keys will allow a generation of Philly kids to point to the sculpture and say, ‘I helped make that,’” Peniston said.

### ABOUT THE SCULPTOR

James Peniston’s commissioned works range from the tabletop to the monumental, and include the 7-foot sculpture of genetics pioneer Gregor Mendel at Villanova University. Born in 1973 in St. Louis, Peniston studied at Haverford College. He honed his skills at an artisanal foundry, where his work included the preliminary full-scale sculpting of Ray Kaskey’s eagles for the National World War II Memorial in Washington, D.C. He has taught in several programs at the Philadelphia Museum of Art.

### ABOUT THE LOCATION

“Keys to Community” will be installed in a historic courtyard one block from Franklin’s grave and three blocks from Independence Hall. In the 1750s, the ground was occupied by the city’s largest building: the Philadelphia Academy, which Franklin helped establish. Today it is next to the firehouse of Engine 8, a descendant of America’s first volunteer fire department, co-founded by Franklin in 1736.

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