

Nina Simone Sculpture ^[1]

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[//www.ninasimone.com/](http://www.ninasimone.com/)).

^[2]

Nina Simone Sculpture

Tryon

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<https://docsouth.unc.edu/commland/monument/341> ^[3]

Description: The sculpture consists of an eight foot tall, larger than life statue of Nina Simone. Simone is seated and playing a keyboard and appears to be staring ahead, with a look of both introspection and outward determination. The keyboard is depicted in the form of a wave, conveying grace and motion, and it appears to be floating in mid-air. The statue rests on a seat of smooth stone atop a wide stone base. The sculptor, Zenos Frudakis, included a bronze heart containing Simone's ashes welded to the interior of the figure's chest.

The Nina Simone Plaza was designed specifically for the installation and includes a fountain, low wall, and obelisk of local dark blue and wheat colored stone. Inclusion of the obelisk may be an allusion to Simone's nickname as "The High Priestess of Soul" and her 1967 record album of the same name.

Dedication date: 2/21/2010

Creator: Zenos Frudakis, Sculptor

Materials & Techniques: Bronze, local stone

Sponsor: The Nina Simone Project

Cost: \$106000

Unveiling & Dedication: The Nina Simone Sculpture was dedicated on what would have been Nina Simone's 77th birthday. The dedication began with remarks from the mayor of Tryon. Crys Armbrust, the director of the Nina Simone Project, gave some brief remarks, and the Poet Laureate of North Carolina Cathy Smith Bowers recited a poem by Kwame Dawes intitled "What Do They Call You?" written in honor of Nina Simone. Following the recital of the poem, the sculptor, Zenos Frudakis, gave some brief remarks. Lisa Simone Kelly, Nina Simone's daughter, gave the concluding remarks. At the end of the ceremony doves were released while music played. The attendees congregated to socialize following the ceremony.

Subject notes: Born Eunice Kathleen Waymon, Nina Simone was an entertainer whose singing career spanned across decades, genre, and style. She was born in Tryon in 1933 and raised in the small town. Originally focused on a career as a classical pianist, Simone became known for gospel, R&B, and jazz fused with classical inspiration. Also known as the "High Priestess of Soul," Simone used her talent and position for many causes including composition and performance of protest songs such as "Mississippi Goddam" during the Civil Rights Movement. She died at the age of 70 in 2003.

Controversies: The Nina Simone Project included an appeal on their website for donations from the public in order to pay the outstanding debt of \$55,000 for the sculpture. Because of Simone's civil rights activism and personality, the creation of

a statue in her honor was met with opposition by some and yet seen as long overdue by others.

Location: The sculpture is located in Nina Simone Plaza on South Trade Street in Tryon, across the street from shops and the Tryon Theater. It sits facing the street.

Landscape: The Nina Simone Plaza is a small, paved plaza surrounded by shade trees and seasonal plantings. The plaza has benches on opposite sides of the sculpture and is bounded by a low stone wall. Railroad tracks and a municipal parking area are just behind the plaza.

City: Tryon

County: Polk

Subjects: African American Monuments, Historic African American Figures, Historic Cultural Figures, Historic Protest Figures, Historic Women Figures

Latitude: 35.20796

Longitude: -82.23766

Subjects:

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Origin - location:

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