



Minnesota  
Humanities  
Center

March 10, 2025

Via E-Mail Delivery

Senator Foug Hawj, Chair  
Environment, Climate, and Legacy  
MN State Senate  
3231 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Senator Justin Eichorn, Lead Republican  
Environment, Climate, and Legacy  
MN State Senate  
2235 Minnesota Senate Building  
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Chair Hawj and Lead Eichorn:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit this letter of support for SF2046, legislation introduced by Senator Foug Hawj establishing an art installation to remember and celebrate the life and legacy of Gordon Parks.

Gordon Parks is one of our country's most talented photographers of the twentieth century. He established and left behind a large volume of photos and work documenting American life from the 1940s to the 2000s that examined urban life, race relations, poverty, and the civil rights movement. Parks was not only a photographer but also an author, composer, and filmmaker who interviewed and interacted with a wide array of people in America – from struggling Americans, elected officials, athletes, artists, and many others. Gordon Parks passed away in 2006 at the age of 93.

Parks spent many of his formative years in Minnesota learning photography through various gig jobs and shooting for the *Minneapolis Spokesman* and the *St. Paul Recorder* – both locally Black-owned newspapers – and he performed his first solo exhibition at the Hallie Q. Brown Community Center in St. Paul. He later moved to Chicago and then Washington DC where he worked at the Farm Security Administration, a New Deal agency formed to fight poverty in America. His photography and film work appeared in many national publications such as *Ebony*, *Glamour*, and *Life* for decades. One of his most iconic images is entitled *American Gothic*.

Gordon Parks' work in recent years has been featured at the Minnesota Museum of American Art in St. Paul, the History Theatre in St. Paul and most recently at the Minneapolis Institute of Art where entertainment icons Alicia Keys and Swizz Beatz honored him within their 'Giants' collection.

The Minnesota Humanities Center supports this legislation working with the family of Gordon Parks and Soul Touch Productions to develop and establish this important memorial who left an indelible mark on Minnesota and American life.

Thank you for your consideration of SF2046.

Sincerely,

Kevin Lindsey  
CEO

C: Members of the Senate Environment, Climate, and Legacy

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