

MEDIA RELEASE



COUNTY OF ERIE
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COUNTY EXECUTIVE

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CONTACT:

Andrew Miller
amiller@eriecountypa.gov
814-451-6932

Erie County Public Library celebrates Minerva's homecoming

Erie, PA – The Erie County Public Library and County Executive Kathy Dahlkemper announced today that after 77 years, the statue of Roman mythology's Minerva has finally returned home.

Minerva resided in the original Erie Public Library location (what is now the federal courthouse on South Park Row) from 1899 until 1942. The statue was a prominent feature, greeting patrons and standing as symbol of all the wisdom the library contained.

Several renovations and location changes led to her whereabouts being lost to history. A series of local newspaper articles in the 1980s ignited public interest in her case, but no answers were unearthed.

In 2018, an individual in possession of Minerva contacted the library and expressed interest in donating the statue. Today, Minerva is displayed in its rightful place, the Erie County's Blasco Memorial Library.

To celebrate the statue's return, Erie County Public Library will host a series of events, programs and reading initiatives tied to Minerva's purview. Each month features a different topic attributed to Minerva:

- November: Commerce
- December: Wisdom
- January: Strategy & War
- February: Medicine
- March: Arts & Crafts
- April: Poetry
- May: "Goddess of 1,000 Works"

The homecoming celebrations will include a Roman festival unique to Minerva – the Quinquatria – to be held in March.

To involve the community in “wisdom’s return,” the library will solicit input on the future placement of the statue within the library, open a call to artists for design of the statue’s pedestal, and hold public art installations.

Minerva’s 100-plus years of traveling have left the statue in a state of wear. The library is planning to work with a local conservator to complete work on the statue and conduct much-needed repair.

To support this conservation work, the Friends of the Library group will undertake fundraising efforts. Individuals looking to contribute toward Minerva’s restoration, or become more involved with the celebration, are invited to contact the Friends of the Library.

For more information, contact Andrew Miller, adult services manager at the Erie County Public Library, at amiller@eriecountypa.gov or 814-451-6932.

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