

Documentarian's space vision to put Apollo 11 crew statue at Kennedy Space Center

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A documentary filmmaker is pushing to bring a statue of the Apollo 11 astronauts to Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex in time for the 50th anniversary of the moon landing.

Steven C. Barber has made six documentaries since 2009, and now his focus is on the moon, or specifically the three men who trekked more than 220,000 miles from Earth to make history on July 20, 1969.

He wants to bring a \$750,000 bronze statue of [Neil Armstrong](#), [Buzz Aldrin](#) and Michael Collins to the Space Coast.



Sculptor [George Lundeen](#) of Loveland, Colorado, is creating a bronze statue of the three astronauts of the Apollo 11 mission that put the first man on the moon.

As part of his travels in support of his documentaries with titles like “Unbeaten,” “The Carrier” and “World’s Most Dangerous Paper Route,” Barber encountered an existing bronze statue of another notable Apollo-era astronaut, Jack Swigert, who flew on Apollo 13. The statue located in Washington’s National Statuary Hall Collection is the work of Colorado sculptors **George** and Mark **Lundeen**.



Documentarian Steven C. Barber is partnering with sculptor George Lundeen in an effort to bring a statue of the Apollo 11 crew to Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex. Barber is planning to make a documentary about the effort that was in part inspired by Lundeen's existing sculpture of Apollo 13 astronaut Jack Swigert in Washington’s National Statuary Hall Collection. (Courtesy, Steven C. Barber)

“I just remember being overwhelmed by that statue,” Barber said. “I was like, ‘Where does this come from? How did this get done?’”

Cut to six years later, and Barber was meeting with Buzz Aldrin ahead of the 49th anniversary of the moon landing, and something clicked.

“I thought, ‘Moon walkers, 12 statues, NASA, 50th,’” Barber said. “I’ve had 57 years of average thinking, and one stroke of genius, and this is it.”

That grand vision, though, has dialed back to a single three-men-in-one statue of the first moon-landing mission, at least to start. Before anything, though, Barber had to call the sculptor who did the Swigert statue: **George Lundeen**.

Lundeen was all in.

“When Steve started talking, I told him I was in New York City the day those three guys had their ticker-tape parade (in 1969),” **Lundeen** said “That was the very first time I saw Collins, Aldrin and Armstrong, and I'll never forget watching them as they were coming down the street on the back of those convertibles and that ticker tape just coming down.”

The call was made in June, and Lundeen's team got to work, even before Barber began pitching Kennedy Space Center.

“You know we work on optimism,” **Lundeen** said. “If you're not optimistic as an artist, you're not going to make it. We look at something like this that is such an important project because it's the 50th anniversary of probably one of the greatest endeavors that mankind has ever done.”

So with the sculptor enthusiastically on board, Barber managed to get a meeting with Delaware North, the company that runs Kennedy Space Center Visitor Complex at the end of July. In the end, Delaware North gave Barber approval to seek funding for the statue, although exactly where and how it will be presented was not nailed down.

While Barber hunts for funding from the likes of private entities like Blue Origin and SpaceX, **Lundeen** continues to solidify the vision for the statue.

“I've been just watching lots of videos and lots of collecting photographs,” **Lundeen** said. “When we do something like this, we want to get everything just as good as we can.”

He was able to visit Kennedy Space Center with Barber and photograph the astronauts' original outfits, and now has a design that shows the Apollo 11 crew in their space suits, helmets off and looking toward the moon.

“It's an interesting thing to give composition to, to have all three of them work together,” **Lundeen** said. “ It's just like the team they went up as. You've got three individuals, each one of the pieces we have endeavored to make into a well designed sculpture on its own, but at the same time to have them interact well together as a team.”

The end result will be figures that are a little larger than life at around 7 feet tall.

“They’d be like three guys about the size of Shaq standing there only they’re a lot bigger because they have their space suits on,” **Lundeen** said. “And those space suits, you know they make those guys look like Dick Butkus standing there.”

The timetable to get the statue done before the 50th anniversary is a challenge, **Lundeen** said, but doable. And the process from creation to delivery is what Barber’s documentary will be about.

“I’ve been on this journey as long as the Apollo program has been around,” Barber said.

“I can’t be more honored. This is my dream, for me to be able to do this.”



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