



Photo by OP

Mural at Benjamin Banneker High School

Benjamin Banneker Street Mural

Color the Curb Mural at 9th and R Streets NW



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The Benjamin Banneker street mural is not a traditional commemorative work and part of the Color the Curb program, a partnership between the Commission on the Arts and Humanities and the Department of Transportation. The collaborative design and placemaking program combines the creativity of local mural artists with promoting safety at intersections around public schools. Murals are painted in the street in areas that are off-limits to vehicles, increasing the buffer between vehicles and pedestrians and slowing vehicle traffic by creating narrower lanes for vehicle traffic. The program has completed 9 installations and is planning to install 7 more this year.

These murals are opportunities to recognize diverse Washingtonians, their accomplishments, or tools of their trade – in this case, the mathematician and astronomer tools used by Banneker painted at the intersection of 9th and R streets NW near the entrance to Benjamin Banneker High School. The mural honors Banneker who lived from 1731 to 1806 and was a free African American working as a naturalist, mathematician, astronomer, and almanac author. The tools incorporated into the mural relate to his work as a surveyor - he is known for computing astronomical calculations surveyors relied on to do their work, including assisting Major Andrew Ellicott in his work surveying the original borders of the District of Columbia.

Banneker is a notable American who became a folk-hero after his death, leading to many accounts of his life being exaggerated or embellished. The names of parks, schools and streets commemorate him and his works, as do other tributes.