



CERTIFICATION

I certify that I am Didi Barrett. I live at 771 West End Avenue, New York, NY, 10025. I am Director of Publications at the Museum of American Folk Art and Editor of The Clarion, America's Folk Art Magazine, published by the Museum of American Folk Art.

I have visited Kea Tawana's Ark in Newark, New Jersey, three times in the last few weeks. I find it to be a remarkable work of urban folk art. Since it is still under construction, it does not, of course, have the appearance of a finished work anymore than a construction site for a building would. However, when it is completed it will offer extensive opportunities for the Central Ward, a neighborhood which has suffered a troubled past. Already the Ark has become a symbol of hope and human potential for this neighborhood. In the future it could also become a community center, a tourist attraction, and create jobs for local children.

While this structure reflects Ms. Tawana's unique vision, it is part of a much larger phenomenon of American folk expression. Such folk environments exist all over the country, more often in rural settings than in cities. Other examples of such environments are Watts' Towers in Los Angeles, Howard Finster's Paradise Garden in Georgia, S.P. Dinsmoor's Garden of Eden in Kansas, and Veronica Terillion's home in upstate New York. There are hundreds of other examples, as well.

In my visits to Kea's Ark I have been continually impressed by the outpouring of support from a steady stream of neighborhood people. They are clearly inspired by her vision and her feat, and moved by her plight.

I urge that this unique work be preserved so that it may be completed, and that a plan, which accomodates the city's needs, as well as Ms. Tawana's be arrived it. There are numerous precedents for such projects. I suggest they be called upon to come up with a viable way to save Kea's Ark.

I certify that the statements made by me in the foregoing are true. I am aware that if any of the foregoing statements made by me are willfully false, I am subject to punishment.

Didi Barrett

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Sworn to before me the 28th day of April, 1987

Phyllis A. Tepper

PHYLLIS A. TEPPER
NOTARY PUBLIC, State of New York
No. 30-9304015 - Hamilton County
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Commission Expires March 30, 1988