

Behind the Statue: The Story of Lady Liberty

by **Teresa A. Statler** 

The Statue of Liberty is one of our country's most recognizable symbols; a stylized version of it is even contained within AILA's logo. In *Liberty's Torch: The Great Adventure to Build the Statue of Liberty*, author Elizabeth Mitchell tells us the statue's fascinating history and in so doing, dispels some myths. The statue was the long-held dream of a visionary French sculptor, Frédéric Auguste Bartholdi (1834–1904). Bartholdi, who hailed from the Alsatian town of Colmar, studied in Paris and traveled to Egypt, where he was inspired and intrigued by the Great Pyramids and the Sphinx. After that trip, he designed a female colossus as a lighthouse and proposed to the Pasha of Egypt that this be placed at the entrance of the newly-built Suez Canal. Turned down by the Pasha, Bartholdi nurtured his dream for almost 20 years until he convinced French luminaries to fund his project as a "gift" to the American people. Slightly modified from his original design, Lady Liberty became the icon we all know in New York's Harbor, "Liberty Enlightening the World."

Getting the statute built was an incredible effort on the

 **BOOK**



**Liberty's Torch:
The Great
Adventure to
Build the Statue
of Liberty**
2014, 384 pages

Once the coffers were empty, Bartholdi, along with American businessmen and politicians, cobbled together the funds from many sources; this went on right up to the date the statue was inaugurated in 1886. Bartholdi also sold postcards of the statue, and an admission fee was charged to enter the statue's crown, which was on display at the 1878 World's Fair in Paris. Although Congress had passed a resolution in 1877 to help fund

part of Bartholdi, who constructed it in his Paris studio, then dismantled it for the trip across the Atlantic. Mitchell also tells us that Bartholdi chose Bedloe's Island in New York Harbor, after Boston, Philadelphia, and Washington, D.C. all declined to be involved in his project. Publisher Joseph Pulitzer was a key figure in raising the necessary funds from American individuals and organizations for the pedestal and for the statue's erection. Pulitzer decided that his newspaper, *The World*, would publish the names of all donors, no matter how small the amount.

WHAT'S HAPPENING

Klasko Immigration Law Partners, LLP welcomes attorneys **LISA T. FELIX**, **MICHELE GALLO**, **FEIGE M. GRUNDMAN**, **R. TINA PATEL**, and **ANDREW J. ZELTNER** to the firm.

NY Chapter member **LEON WILDES** has been honored by the Cardozo School of Law where he taught immigration law for 33 years.

TX Chapter member **CYNTHIA R. LOPEZ** recently filmed a three-part documentary focusing on the misconceptions in the media regarding asylum cases. All three episodes can be found on [YouTube](#).

the statue, it did not come through until July 1886, authorizing only \$36,000 for the inaugural celebration.

Mitchell's book is well-researched, entertaining, and recommended for history buffs and immigration lawyers.

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