On Campus

Foundry Father

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Even in his early 30s, Alexander Hamilton 1788HON had stage presence. Sculptor William Ordway Partridge, who attended Columbia in 1885, depicted the young Hamilton at the height of his eloquence in convincing New York's delegates to vote in favor of the Constitution's ratification at the state convention in 1788. With feet firmly apart and hand to his chest, the bronze cast (undergoing maintenance, here,

in 1953) solemnly evokes Hamilton's oratorical passion. The original statue was exhibited at the World's Columbian Exposition in Chicago in 1893 and then stood at the Hamilton Club of Brooklyn until 1936. It then guarded the statesman's house in Harlem, the Hamilton Grange National Memorial, and is currently being moved 400 feet — along with the house itself — to St. Nicholas Park. Columbia acquired a cast of the statue in 1907 to serve as herald to Hamilton Hall, which celebrated its 100th anniversary and completed renovations this year. In addition to College Walk's sundial and a sculpture of mathematician and first official College dean John Howard Van Amringe 1860CC, Partridge created a statue of Thomas Jefferson. It stands in front of the Journalism building, opposite Hamilton, also looking southward — the two men ever did see eye to eye.

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