



Diane Collier  
**Chair**

Angel D. Mescain  
**District Manager**

## COMMUNITY BOARD ELEVEN

BOROUGH OF MANHATTAN  
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September 14, 2016

Mitchell Silver  
Commissioner  
Department of Parks and Recreation  
24 West 61<sup>st</sup> Street  
New York, NY 10025

Re: Removal of the Dr. J. Marion Sims Statue from East Harlem.

Dear Commissioner Silver,

Community Board 11 voted by majority (38 in favor, 9 opposed) at the Full Board meeting on June 21, 2016, to remove the Dr. Marion Sims statue that is currently installed at East 103<sup>rd</sup> Street and Fifth Avenue.

Dr. Sims, a product of the antebellum South, strongly believed in the practice of slavery and used enslaved women as his medical research subjects. By law, slave women were three-fifths of a person who could not consent to or refuse any alteration to their own bodies. Dr. Sims operated on many of these women; most often three slaves named Lucy, Betsy and Anarcha, all without the use of anesthesia.

Many medical professionals consider the black women he operated on to be victims of medical experimentation. The forced silence of his patients, and the circumstances in which they were operated on, also leaves many questioning whether the statue honoring Dr. Sims should remain standing anywhere within New York City. As East Harlem is a neighborhood predominately made up of people of color, it is particularly egregious that this statue is installed here.

For all of these reasons, we urge the Department of Parks and Recreation to find an alternative location for this statue that is not in Community District 11.

If you have any further questions, please feel free to contact Mia Brezin, Assistant District Manager, at 212-831-8929.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Diane Collier'. The signature is written in a cursive style and is enclosed in a thin black rectangular border.

Diane Collier  
Chair  
Community Board 11

cc: Hon. Melissa Mark-Viverito, Speaker, New York City Council (via email)  
Hon. Gale A. Brewer, Manhattan Borough President (via email)  
Hon. Bill Perkins, New York State Senate (via email)  
Hon. Robert Rodriguez, New York State Assembly (via email)  
Steve Simon, NYC Department of Parks and Recreation (via email)  
Frances Mastrota, Community Board 11 (via email)  
Jewel Jones, Community Board 11 (via email)