

Artist Statement: Marvin Bowser

I am honored to serve as the lead artist and photographer for **See Me Hear Me: The Art of Living**, a project that uplifts and celebrates older adults living in Forest Hills of DC. This large-scale mural, featuring 70 portraits of Forest Hills residents and their caregivers, is a testament to the wonderfully wise, inspiring, resilient, endearing, and beautiful “seasoned citizens” and the skilled, dedicated, empathetic, and loving people who care for them.

I aimed to create a space for reflection and dialogue around aging and caregiving, inviting viewers to see value and richness in every stage of life. To experience the installation, start on the left as you face the building.

In curating the show, I relied on the portraits, my interactions with the subjects and the interviews lovingly conducted by our project team. I learned that it’s an honor for the Forest Hills of DC team to care for, love, and respect the residents and their families. Caregivers use the terms “family” and “team” interchangeably when describing the work environment that’s like “visiting a favorite relative’s home.”

The portraits, which are wheat-pasted to the front of the Forest Hills main building, will be left to naturally weather over time, symbolizing the impermanence and beauty of life itself.

Each portrait captures a moment of dignity and humanity while suggesting who the subjects were in their younger years. Better said, have you ever noticed a well-dressed woman in her 80’s and thought to yourself, what was she doing 50 years ago?” To help answer the question, [go to the companion webpage](#) where each portrait is titled and includes the subjects’ stories collected during the interviews.

To create this work, I spent a lot of time at Forest Hills of DC this summer and got to know some residents and team members. My father was in home hospice care when I agreed to take on **See Me Hear Me**. My personal experience of having a caring, chatty, tireless, strong-willed father who was now approaching the end of life prepared me well mentally, emotionally, spiritually, and artistically for this project. My father transitioned on August 2nd, 2024. I dedicate my contribution to **See Me Hear Me** to my father, Joseph L. Bowser.

This project was made possible by a generous AARP Community Challenge grant.

As part of [DC’s Art All Night 2024](#), this temporary mural is not only a visual celebration but also a reminder of the importance of honoring the contributions and experiences of

older adults. I hope that this artwork serves as both a tribute and a call to see and hear the stories of those who are often overlooked.