

October 24, 1966

Mr. and Mrs. Charles Digiola  
215 Manor Road  
Birmingham  
Michigan

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Digiola:

We have received, and accept with lasting gratitude, the Number One casting of your magnificent sculpture, John Henry.

From the moment last spring when I saw your photographs of the sculpture, I looked forward to seeing this work of art. I quite understand and appreciate the time and care taken to produce this special casting. Now that it is here and I have contemplated it, I can say that John Henry is a deeply moving study of power and dignity.

This is meaningful art. Here is John Henry, the child of God, the victim of oppression, the slave of injustice. And here is a man, beaten down and weary, yet a man of indomitable will and spirit. Here is this gentle man with a hammer in his hands and love in his heart. His strength is visible, his courage real. He is still standing. He will not fail.

This is what Mr. Digiola's sculpture expresses to me. I am honored to accept it. John Henry is an inspiration to take up that hammer, and, praying for his strength, to use it as he would; not destructively, but with compassion. Let that hammer ring the bell of freedom.

Mrs. King and I want you to know that we now place John Henry among our most treasured possessions.

Sincerely yours,

Martin Luther King, Jr.

Km