

Versia Harris

SIR HUGH SPRINGER:

a life, a legacy
a memorial

All Souls College
UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

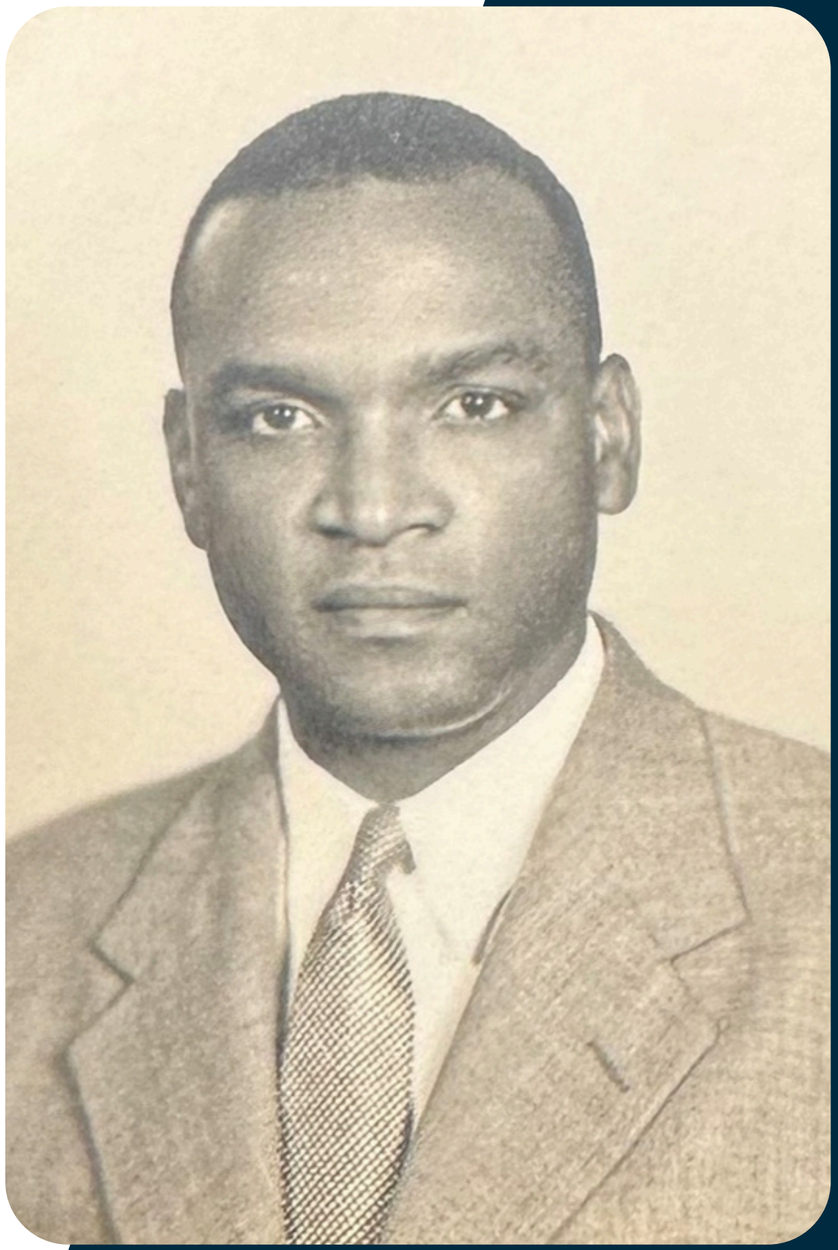
Sir Hugh Springer

22 June 1913 – 14 April 1994

Sir Hugh Worrell Springer was a lawyer, politician and public servant, dedicated to developing higher education in the Caribbean.

Educated at Harrison College in Barbados, he first came to Oxford to study Greek at Hertford College, receiving his BA in 1936.

He was then called to the Bar at the Inner Temple in 1938, and shortly afterwards returned to Barbados to practise law in his home country.





Sir Hugh Springer

a career in public service

With 15 honorary degrees, Sir Hugh was a champion of education in Barbados.

Some of his most high-level positions included:

- First General Secretary of the Barbados Workers' Union.
- First Registrar of the University of West Indies, Jamaica; later becoming its Director.
- Governor General of Barbados; the highest political office in his country.

He was posthumously named a National Hero in 1998.

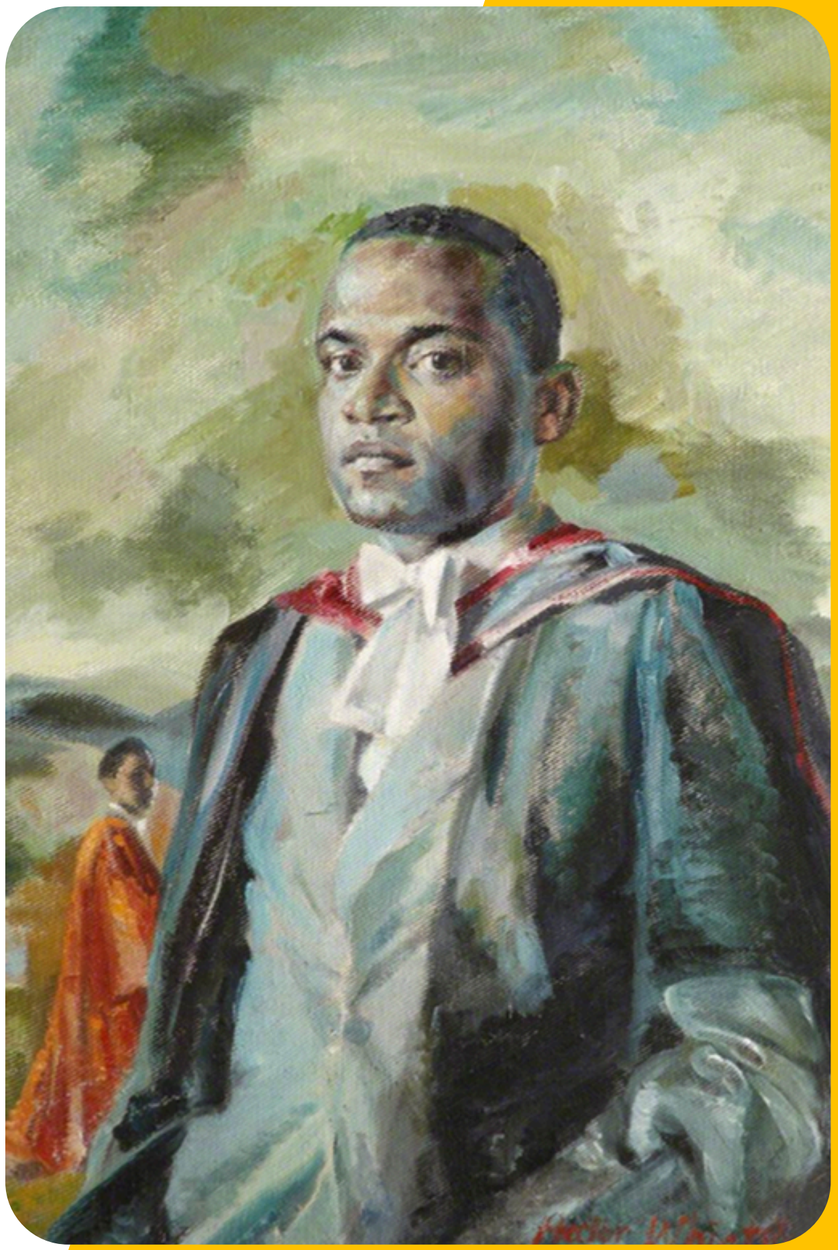
Sir Hugh Springer

and All Souls College

During a brief pause in his career in Barbadian public service, Springer returned to Oxford as a Senior Visiting Fellow at All Souls College in 1962, the first black Caribbean Fellow to be elected.

He was then elected an Honorary Fellow of the College in 1988.

This portrait of him (right), painted by Hector Whistler, now hangs in the dining hall.





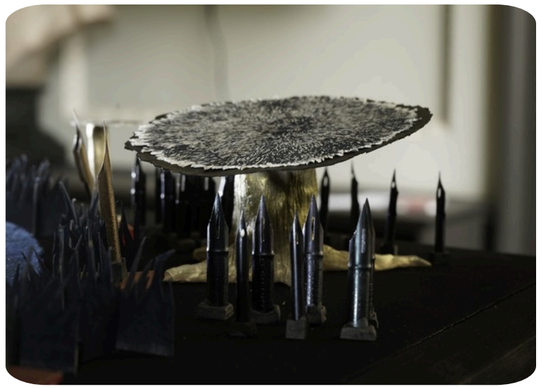
The Memorial

a life; a legacy

Designed by Versia Harris, this artwork seeks to spotlight Springer's life as a monumental figure in the formation of the Barbadian political landscape.

It also aims to bring out his enthusiastic involvement in education for the region and the wider world.





The Artist’s Vision

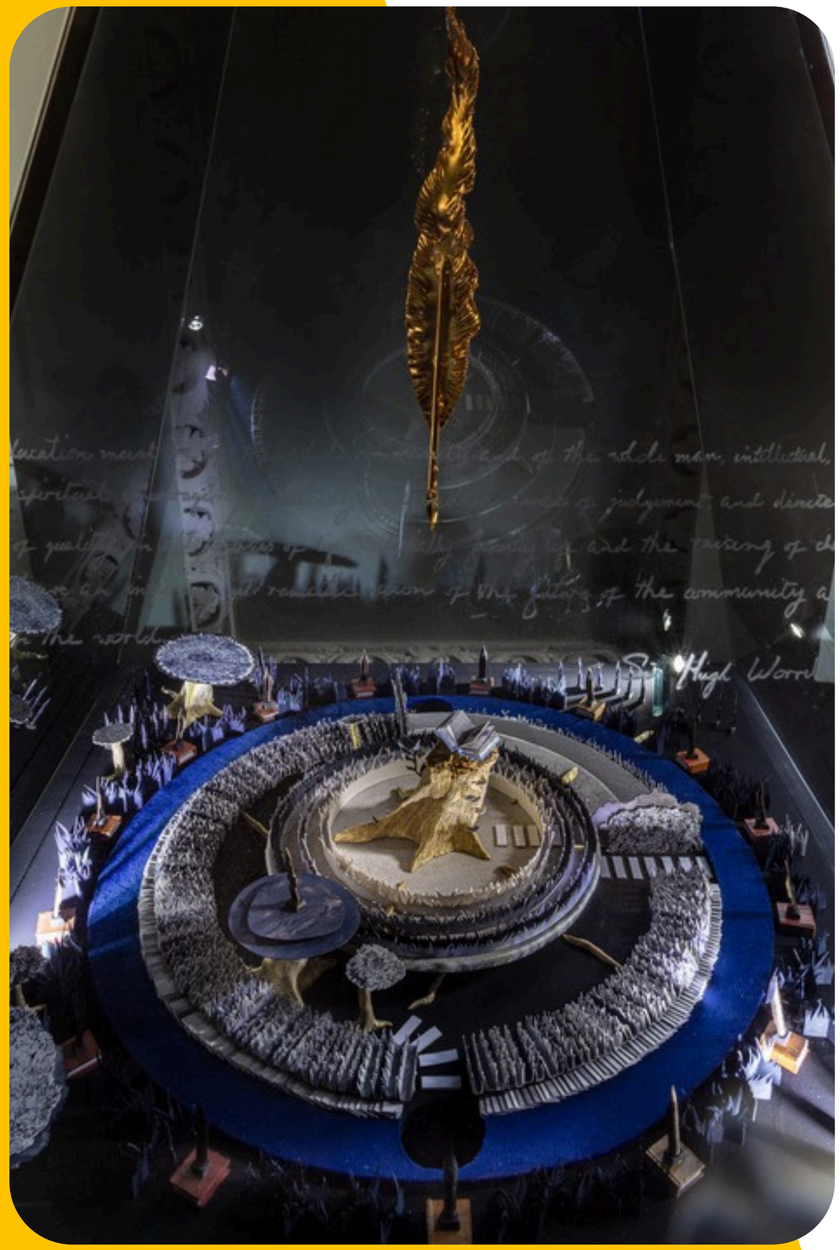
in her own words

“... when a tree dies and leaves behind its stump, that stump is not in fact a dead empty thing. But rather it continues to be fed nutrients from its neighboring trees.”

“This struck me as an apt metaphor for the death a man whose work and legacy clearly still remains today and is fed by those who are still here and by projects like these.”

Extracts from Versia’s speech at the unveiling in June 2024.





A Lasting Legacy

Community, growth, and progress

“Therefore what I created is a garden. A site of cultivated community, relationship and friendship with Sir Hugh Springer at its center.”

“It is about a spirit who grew, bore fruit, served and ended not simply as a lone individual but amongst a circle of such spirits.”

Extracts from Versia’s speech at the unveiling in June 2024.

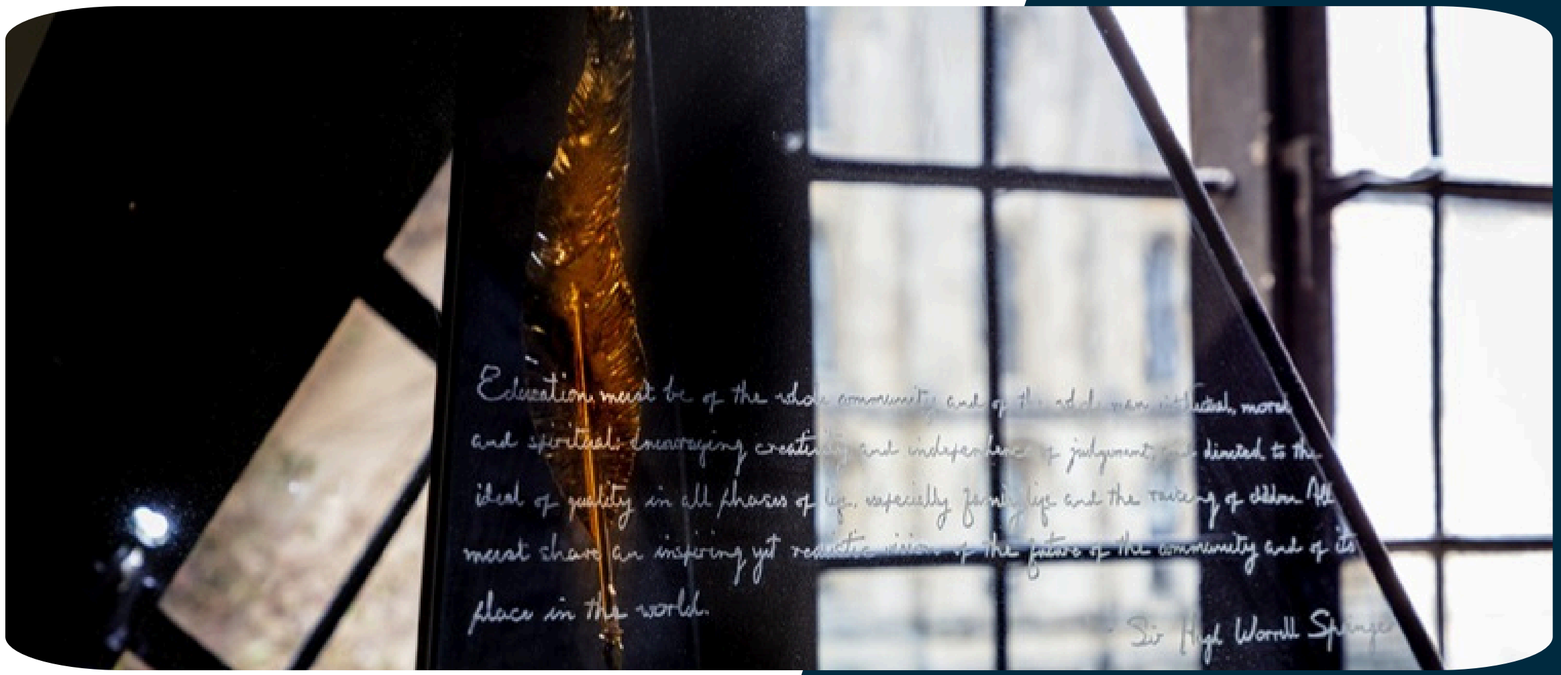
Rejecting Tradition

Representing a soul



“Amongst the multitude of figurative busts and portraits at All Souls, I wanted this work to stand out as representative of more than a likeness.”

“The black tinted glass, in colour, is a rebellion against the traditional white marble busts of the aforementioned portraits.”



Extracts from Versia’s speech at the unveiling in June 2024.



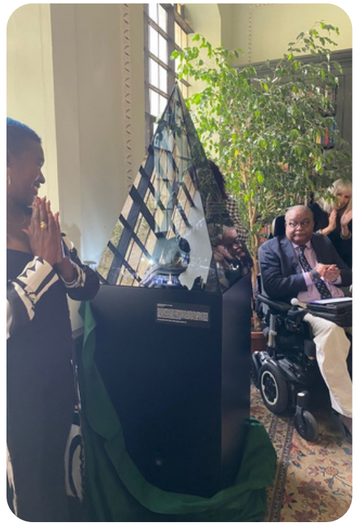
A Work Unveiled

Celebrating Sir Hugh

The memorial was unveiled by the artist, Versia Harris (pictured left), and Sir Hugh Springer's son, Stephen Springer (pictured right), on 14th June 2024.







The Artist

Versia Harris

Versia Harris is an interdisciplinary artist who lives and works in Barbados.

She has done a number of residencies, and has shown in multiple countries including England, China, Nigeria, Russia, Germany, Aruba and the US.

She was awarded a Fulbright Laspau Scholarship in 2017 and received her MFA at Cranbrook Academy of Art, Michigan USA in May 2019.



Learn more:

‘Sir Hugh Springer: a life, a legacy’ by Versia Harris

‘Versia Harris’s memorial to Hugh Springer’ by Marina Warner