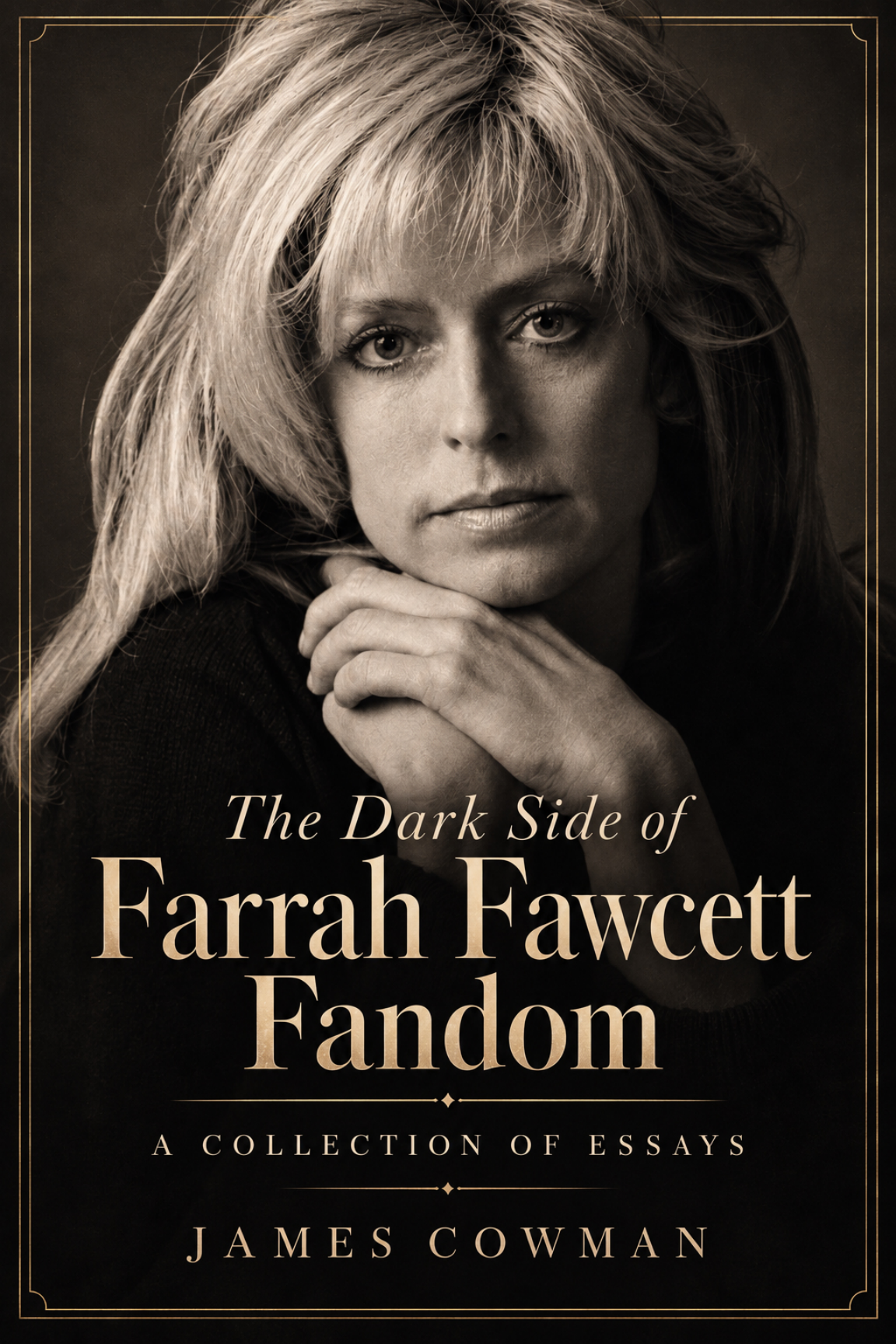

The Dark Side of Farrah Fawcett Fandom

A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS

JAMES COWMAN

Farrah Fawcett or Jill Munroe?

My research into the two proposed Farrah Fawcett statues in Corpus Christi and Rockport is over. I requested records, reviewed meeting materials and correspondence, contacted the involved cities and organizations, followed up when responses didn't answer my questions, and pursued every reasonable avenue available to me. Some questions were answered, some only partially, and others remained unresolved. All the information I have gathered is available on my website. At this point, I have no interest in continuing to pursue responses to questions I had already raised repeatedly.

I am not writing this because I expect to stop these two projects. Both statues are moving forward, and eventually they will become part of South Texas's public landscape. My reason for writing this now is much simpler. Permanent monuments become part of the historical record, and I think the decisions that produced them should become part of that record too. Years from now, someone looking at these statues should understand not only what was built, but what choices were made, what questions were raised, what the available documentation established, and why I believed there was another way to represent Farrah Fawcett.

My problem with these statues isn't really about whether I like them. What bothers me is something much more fundamental: basic respect. I do not think the choices behind these two proposed permanent monuments treat Farrah Fawcett with the dignity she deserves. Both concepts are kitschy, repetitive, predictable, and too dependent on the easiest, most familiar version of Farrah. Corpus Christi uses the image of Farrah on a skateboard as Jill Munroe in *Charlie's Angels*. Rockport uses the praying-hands *Charlie's Angels* promotional pose that has circulated for over 50 years. David Deming is creating both statues. The poses are different, but the interpretive framework behind them is remarkably the same. Two permanent chances to represent Farrah Fawcett, and both return immediately to *Charlie's Angels*.

At a certain point, I think we have to be honest about what these memorials actually represent. They are not really statues of Farrah Faw-

cett. They are statues of Jill Munroe. And yes, I understand why the idea of *Charlie's Angels* is visually attractive and popular. It is instantly recognizable. Jill Munroe made Farrah internationally famous, and the image she created during that period became one of the defining celebrity moments of the 1970s.

I am also well aware that cities sometimes install statues of fictional characters. Philadelphia has Rocky Balboa. Minneapolis has Mary Richards from *The Mary Tyler Moore Show*. New York has Ralph Kramden from *The Honeymooners*. But in each case, the fictional character has a meaningful relationship to the place where the statue stands. Rocky is inseparable from Philadelphia. Mary Richards was written as a Minneapolis television news producer, and the city itself was part of the series' identity. Ralph Kramden was a New York City bus driver whose fictional life was rooted in Brooklyn.

Jill Munroe has no relationship to Corpus Christi or Rockport. *Charlie's Angels* wasn't set there, Jill Munroe didn't come from there, and nothing about that fictional character connects her to either community. The specific skateboard image used for the Corpus Christi statue comes from the episode "Consenting Adults," in which Jill goes undercover posing as a hooker while investigating a computer dating service connected to prostitution and burglary. That makes the choice even stranger as the basis for a permanent monument in Farrah's hometown. If the goal is to create two statues of Farrah Fawcett, acknowledging Jill Munroe's cultural importance is different from letting that fictional character become the real woman's permanent public representation.

Farrah was very clear about how she saw herself, her career, and the work she wanted to do. Throughout her life, she repeatedly said she wanted to be challenged, take risks, do serious work, make art, and move beyond the assumptions her earlier fame created. She took parts that were difficult, unglamorous, and not always commercially safe. For example, when discussing *The Burning Bed*, Farrah said she wanted better roles and to show audiences there was more to her than the image they already knew. Admirers or media outlets did not impose those ideas on her decades after her death, seeking a more sophisticated version of her

life story. They are documented repeatedly in her own words and reflected in the choices she actually made.

I am not arguing that either community had to choose the version of Farrah I would have preferred. There are dozens of legitimate ways she could have been represented, and reasonable people could disagree about all of them. Nor can I know how everyone involved in these projects feels about Farrah or her legacy. I can only judge the choices they made. *Charlie's Angels*, the hair, and the publicity photographs already occupy an enormous place in the cultural memory surrounding her. That familiarity is precisely what makes the choice so easy. And when I look at those choices, I don't think they demonstrate the level of thought or consideration a tribute to Farrah deserves. A permanent memorial, however, can do more than reproduce an image the public already knows. It can shape how a person is understood and why they are remembered.

The Corpus Christi statue is the more disappointing of the two because this was Farrah's hometown. If any place could represent something beyond the Hollywood image, it was the city where she grew up. Corpus Christi holds her childhood, family history, education, Texas identity, and the beginnings of the artistic interests she carried throughout her life. Tom Campbell, one of the Corpus Christi organizers behind the statue project, later wrote that two prominent supporters of the effort had attended W.B. Ray High School with Farrah and had been good friends with her. The connection did not have to be invented. It already existed.

The planned Corpus Christi location makes that choice even harder for me to understand. City records place the planned Farrah sculpture roughly 1,500 feet from Mirador de la Flor, the waterfront memorial to Selena. Selena is represented as herself: a life-size bronze likeness of the performer in one of her stage costumes, microphone in hand. Farrah, by contrast, is being represented as Jill Munroe, enlarged to seven feet and riding a skateboard. Farrah was 5 feet 6 inches tall. The two monuments don't have to follow the same artistic formula, and I am not suggesting they should. But the contrast is difficult to ignore. Corpus Christi memorialized Selena at a human scale, as the person she actually was, without turning her into a fictional character. I wish Farrah had been shown the same consideration.

Rockport had a different opportunity. The Rockport Cultural Arts District is promoting an exhibition of thirty-one pieces of Farrah's artwork precisely because many people don't know much about Farrah as an artist. It introduces visitors to a part of her life that exists beyond the hairstyle, the swimsuit, Jill Munroe, and the enormous celebrity that formed around her. Yet nearby, the permanent sculpture they are planning immediately returns her to one of the most familiar *Charlie's Angels* promotional poses ever produced. In an email to the City of Rockport, the statue was described as making the event "even more of an attraction," with "countless photos" expected to be taken. Internal project correspondence went further, connecting the sculpture with the Cultural Arts District's goals of promoting tourism and economic development.

Those descriptions say a lot about how the statue was being positioned. The temporary exhibition attempts to expand public understanding of Farrah by introducing visitors to the artist they may not know. The permanent sculpture reinforces the Farrah they already recognize. One broadens the story. The other narrows it.

There is also the separate question of likeness. Based on what I have seen so far, along with a small sample of feedback from my Facebook page, I have serious concerns. In my view, neither statue bears a convincing resemblance to Farrah Fawcett. My assessment was based on the images available during my research rather than an in-person examination of the completed bronzes. Sculpture can look different under different lighting and viewing conditions, and I accounted for those limitations.

But likeness matters especially in Farrah's case because her face is both extraordinarily familiar and extensively documented. Thousands of photographs, television appearances, and films show her from nearly every angle, and the combination of her eyes, nose, cheekbones, jaw, smile, facial proportions, and hair made her unmistakably Farrah. Because the statues are based on familiar images, viewers can compare the likeness directly with the original photographs—and many already have. Comments on one Facebook post included "Looks nothing like Farrah," "Horrible likeness," and, perhaps most tellingly, "I recognize Farrah, but who is the statue of?" Those comments are not a scientific measure of

public opinion, but they illustrate the problem. My concern is not simply whether individual features are accurate, but whether the finished sculpture convincingly represents the woman whose name it carries.

The documentary record raises different questions. In Corpus Christi, the donor had chosen the artist before the City's Arts and Cultural Commission took up the proposal in April 2025. Later records identify the artist as David Deming, and Tom Campbell later explained how he was introduced to him. By October, Campbell wrote that Deming had completed a small clay model based on a *Charlie's Angels* episode. The City Council did not authorize the agreement to construct, donate, and accept the artwork until August 25, 2026.

That chronology shows when certain decisions were made, but it doesn't explain how they were reached. Who originally suggested using the skateboard image from *Charlie's Angels*? Who decided that this particular scene, rather than another image or period of Farrah's life, should become her permanent representation in her hometown? Were other ideas discussed, and if so, what were they? The records document that an artist had already been selected before the project reached the Arts and Cultural Commission. I could not determine the reasoning behind the artistic concept from the records.

The records also document communication between the Farrah Fawcett Foundation and the Corpus Christi project. In May 2025, the Foundation contacted the City and then Campbell to discuss how best to represent Farrah's image and likeness. The Foundation explained that it wanted to collaborate on projects using Farrah's image to help fulfill her wishes. The correspondence shows that a conversation occurred, and a later email from Campbell described the sculpture's progress and the need to obtain licensing for the imagery being used.

Those communications matter because they show that the question of Farrah's representation was raised early in the project. But what influence, if any, did those discussions have on the final design? Were alternative approaches considered? Did the organizers consider how Farrah herself spoke about her public image and artistic ambitions? I found evidence of communication, but no documentation showing how it affected

the decisions already being made. There is a difference between consulting someone and incorporating what that person has to say.

The licensing question also remained unclear in the materials I reviewed. Campbell's October 2025 correspondence acknowledged that permission would be needed for the imagery. That establishes awareness of a licensing issue at that point in the project, but it does not establish what permissions were subsequently obtained or from whom. I am not suggesting that the necessary permissions were lacking. I simply could not establish their final disposition from the documentation available to me.

The Rockport records provide a clearer timeline of how that project moved forward and how quickly it developed. The Rockport Cultural Arts District contacted the Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce on July 28, 2026, about what was described as a "new idea." By July 31, the Board had received an overview and was asked for preliminary authorization, and on August 18 it voted unanimously to move forward. The July 31 request also made the time pressure clear: members were told that an objection could cause the Chamber to lose the opportunity, while no objection by the deadline would be treated as approval. None of that proves the proposal was considered carelessly. It does establish that the decision developed rapidly and under pressure not to lose the opportunity.

Approving a project is not the same as understanding the decisions behind it. The Chamber's records establish the sequence of its approval process. They do not, by themselves, establish who originally commissioned the Rockport sculpture, who selected the *Charlie's Angels* pose, or whether alternative concepts were presented before the project reached the Chamber. I could determine when the Chamber agreed to proceed, but that did not necessarily mean the artistic decisions had already been made.

The July 31 Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce "Board Approval Request" email thread that I obtained during my research raises another revealing issue. Several participants asked why the statue belonged there. One voted to approve the proposal but said Farrah's connection to Key Allegro needed to be explained on a plaque so the statue would not "seem random." Another asked whether there was any specific connection between Farrah and Rockport-Fulton and supported the

project provided they could “rationalize why she is here.” A third also supported moving forward but wanted more context about Farrah's Rockport connection and how the proposal came to be considered. Those were not objections invented later by an outside critic. They were questions raised during the Chamber's own approval discussion while the proposal was still under consideration.

I found those exchanges particularly interesting because they used the historical connection to justify a permanent monument. Project correspondence referred to Farrah's appearance in a Rockport Chamber of Commerce advertisement associated with the Key Allegro subdivision during the 1970s. I contacted local historical researchers to learn more about that material. One explained that an image had been used in a Key Allegro exhibition and presented as authentic, but made clear this was a personal assessment. Another could not verify the model's identity or the date, though she offered historical commentary suggesting Farrah did publicity photos for early Key Allegro brochures.

That information has value, but it does not answer every question about the claimed connection. One participant in the Chamber correspondence referred to Farrah's significance to the grand opening of Key Allegro. I subsequently tried to determine what that meant and whether it referred to the advertising material or to some other involvement. I did not establish independent documentation confirming her participation in a grand opening. That does not mean the claim is necessarily false. It means the historical evidence I obtained did not establish it.

The distinction matters because there is nothing inherently wrong with a community celebrating someone who once worked there, modeled there, or had some other meaningful connection to the area. But when that connection is used to explain why a permanent public monument belongs in a particular location, I think it is reasonable to ask how well the connection has been documented. The people considering the Rockport proposal were asking versions of that question themselves.

Financing and ownership raised another set of issues. In Corpus Christi, the City approved an agreement with Friends of Farrah Fawcett, a private donor organization responsible for the sculpture's costs, installation, and other obligations specified in the agreement. In Rockport,

Chamber correspondence stated that the Cultural Arts District would cover creation and installation costs, while the Chamber would maintain the surrounding area. Those records helped establish the organizations' stated responsibilities. They did not establish every underlying financial arrangement or the Rockport sculpture's original commissioning history.

Who initially commissioned that bronze? Where did the money for its fabrication come from, and what fundraising was intended to cover the sculpture rather than the accompanying art exhibition? What agreements governed ownership, long-term care, and decisions about the artwork after installation? I am not suggesting there was anything improper about the financing. But an organization's agreement to cover particular expenses does not necessarily reveal who initiated a commission or every arrangement behind it.

Then there is the relationship between the two projects. Both statues represent Farrah Fawcett. Both use David Deming as the sculptor. Both return to imagery associated with *Charlie's Angels*, and both were developed for permanent display in South Texas communities located relatively close to one another. The Corpus Christi correspondence explains how Deming was introduced to that project, but I could not determine from the materials I reviewed how he became involved in the Rockport statue or whether the two projects shared organizers, donors, or artistic decision-making.

Were the projects developed independently? Did people associated with one project help initiate the other? Did the groups discuss their respective designs, or was the repetition of *Charlie's Angels* imagery simply the result of separate decisions to use Farrah's most familiar public image? I don't know, and the same sculptor's involvement doesn't prove coordination or anything improper. Nevertheless, the relationship between the projects is a legitimate part of their history, particularly when both were developed around similar interpretations of the same woman.

The question of Farrah's likeness also came up. The designs were based on familiar photographs, making it possible to compare the sculptures with the images that inspired them. But who evaluated whether the sculptures convincingly resembled Farrah? What standards were used, and who had the opportunity to review the work? Were the likenesses

discussed by the relevant organizations before the designs were accepted, and were changes requested as a result? My own objections to the likenesses are matters of artistic judgment, but the procedures used to evaluate them are questions about the projects' development.

In Rockport, however, it was much harder to establish who made the artistic decisions and what process led to them. After the City directed me to the Rockport Cultural Arts District for information it didn't have, I emailed RCAD for clarification about the statue's development, including who selected the pose and how the design decisions were made. RCAD responded that it was not aware of any official role or spokesman designation I had with the Fawcett family, Friends of Farrah Fawcett, the Foundation, or the Blanton Museum, and declined to answer my questions. I had never claimed to represent any of them. I identified myself exactly as I was: an independent writer trying to establish how a publicly promoted permanent memorial was commissioned and designed. It remains unclear to me why an official relationship with those organizations would have been necessary before asking who selected the pose. I was not asking for private family information. I was asking who made the decisions that determined how Farrah would be represented.

Not every inquiry went unanswered. The Rockport-Fulton Chamber eventually provided a project timeline and relevant approval records, and the cities and county supplied documents through public-information procedures. Those materials answered key questions about chronology, organizational responsibilities, and the formal decisions that took place. But they had limits, particularly regarding choices made before those projects were presented for approval.

In Corpus Christi, I also submitted a formal statement on August 29, 2026, questioning the memorial concept and asking for additional consideration of Farrah's broader identity. Two days later, I submitted a separate supplement addressing the portrait likeness and artistic review. The City's system acknowledged both submissions. When I later asked whether the City had reviewed, referred, discussed, or acted on either, the response directed me to City Council and commission materials that predated the submissions. I pointed out that distinction and repeated my

question. The correspondence I obtained did not establish what, if anything, happened to those concerns after the City received them.

That is a different question from whether the City had already approved the statue. I knew the City Council had authorized the agreement on August 25. I was trying to determine whether the City considered concerns submitted afterward and whether it documented that consideration. An acknowledgment establishes that something was received. It does not necessarily establish what happened next.

I recognize that privately commissioned artwork can involve conversations, judgments, and arrangements that do not appear in public records. I have never believed that every participant must disclose every private discussion simply because I ask. Nor does the absence of an answer prove that nobody considered the issues I raised. But the distinction between what I can establish and what I must assume is precisely why I conducted this research in the first place. I wanted to understand the decisions that produced these monuments, not invent explanations for decisions I could not document.

More importantly, those questions never belonged to just me. When permanent public tributes are created in someone's name, I think the people who care about that person's legacy have a right to ask why an image was selected, whether other ideas were considered, how a likeness was reviewed, who was consulted, and how those consultations affected the choices that were ultimately made. That does not mean Farrah's fans have a legal entitlement to every private conversation, internal document, or artistic discussion connected to these projects, and I have never claimed that they do. But asking basic questions about how a permanent public memorial came to represent Farrah in a particular way should not require an official title, a family relationship, or permission from the people creating the monument.

What remains now are the statues themselves and, eventually, the finished work. Corpus Christi and Rockport both had opportunities to show that they understood the difference between honoring Farrah and simply reproducing one of her most familiar images. Instead, half a century after Farrah first became Jill Munroe, both planned permanent monuments return us to essentially the same place. One puts her on a skateboard.

The other places her in a familiar Angel pose— different images, the same narrow view of who Farrah actually was.

Respect does not require pretending that *Charlie's Angels* was unimportant. It does not require erasing Jill Munroe or denying the enormous cultural impact of that period of Farrah's life. It requires understanding that *Charlie's Angels* was part of her story, not the whole story. Farrah spent decades deliberately showing the public that she was more than the image that first made her famous.

A permanent memorial in her name should recognize that difference. These two statues do not. In the end, both monuments ask the public to remember the icon instead of the woman, and that's a damn shame.

Sources and Records Consulted

- City of Corpus Christi records, including City Council File 26-0990; the agenda memorandum concerning the proposed Farrah Fawcett memorial; the agreement between the City and Friends of Farrah Fawcett; the City presentation concerning the project; City Council meeting records and minutes from August 25, 2026; and related Parks and Recreation Department records and correspondence.
- Corpus Christi Arts & Cultural Commission records, including the April 22, 2025 meeting minutes and related materials concerning the privately commissioned Farrah Fawcett sculpture, its proposed locations, artist selection, size, and review process.
- City of Corpus Christi public-information records and correspondence, including communications with the City Secretary's Office, Parks and Recreation Department, Lisa Oliver, Robert Dodd, Eleanor Miceli, and other city officials concerning the statue, its approval process, design, artistic review, and subsequent inquiries.

- Farrah Fawcett Foundation and project-organizer correspondence, including 2025–2026 communications involving Christine Romeo and Tom Campbell concerning the proposed Corpus Christi memorial, Farrah Fawcett's image and likeness, Foundation involvement, and the development of the sculpture concept.
- Correspondence concerning sculptor David Deming and the development of the memorial concepts, including references to the early clay model, the *Charlie's Angels*-based concept, meetings concerning the Corpus Christi project, and the planned sculptures in Corpus Christi and Rockport.
- City of Rockport public-information records, including records produced in response to Texas Public Information Act requests concerning the proposed Rockport statue, its location, approval process, funding, installation, maintenance, and the involvement of the Rockport Cultural Arts District and Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce.
- Rockport Cultural Arts District materials and correspondence, including records concerning the January 2027 *America's Sweetheart* Farrah Fawcett exhibition, the proposed permanent seven-foot bronze sculpture, fundraising, proposed placement, and communications involving Executive Director Jennifer Day.
- Rockport-Fulton Chamber of Commerce & Visitor Center records, including the July 31, 2026 Board approval correspondence, subsequent responses from Board members, and August 2026 Board of Directors materials concerning acceptance and placement of the Farrah Fawcett statue.
- Aransas County Public Information Act records, Request 26-OR-77, including the September and October 2026 productions of responsive records, correspondence from County legal counsel, communications involving RCAD and Chamber representatives, and records concerning the exhibition, statue, funding, location, installation, approval, and planning.

- Aransas County Commissioners Court records, including the July 21, 2026 budget workshop minutes and materials concerning the Farrah Fawcett exhibition, use of the Aransas County Community Center, and related Hotel Occupancy Tax and funding matters.
- Rockport and Key Allegro historical material, including the referenced 1970s Rockport Chamber of Commerce advertisement associated with the Key Allegro subdivision; the historical commentary *Early Memories of Key Allegro* by Pat Krueger; and related correspondence concerning the identity of the model, date of the material, and the nature of Farrah Fawcett's connection to Key Allegro.
- Research correspondence by James Cowman, including communications with Shelly Stuart, Jennifer Day, Shelley Goodwin, Lisa Oliver, Corpus Christi and Rockport officials, Chamber representatives, and others seeking clarification, documentation, and responses concerning the development and approval of both statue projects.
- Publicly available project materials and contemporary reporting, including Rockport Cultural Arts District exhibition information and published reporting, were consulted for chronology and background where identified in the essay.