

I think additions to her design, in another style, from another time, would be inappropriate, and detract from the solemnity and grandeur of her design.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

James J. Butera.

MR. BUTERA: I am not sure if you called me, but I have been waiting all afternoon, so I will take the opportunity.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Do you want to give your name for the record?

MR. BUTERA: James J. Butera.

I certainly appreciate the opportunity to discuss the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. It is appropriate that the unresolved issues be debated and deliberated in an open forum such as this. It well exemplifies the basic concept that this country stands for, defending these democratic principles, and why the United States has involved itself in most of these foreign wars, and I believe this includes Vietnam.

By way of background, i should state that I am a lawyer by trade, not an architect, and thus I hope to contribute to this hearing simply as one who was involved in this war, who was involved in the efforts of the Vietnam Veterans Fund to raise the money necessary to complete this worthy project.

My legal specialization is in banking, so I have no client who is interested here.

To put it as clearly as possibly can be stated, I am staunchly opposed to the modifications to the original design submitted by Maya Lin. I am not going to argue this on the standpoint of aesthetics or artistic integrity, because you, after all, are the experts in that field.

However, from the standpoint of law, logic and elementary fairness, it strikes me as indefensible that anyone should now have a design that is based on free and open competition, available to anyone, and all entries.

Earlier I referred to the concept of open debate as embodying the essence of our system of government. Another fundamental concept is what we lawyers refer to as due process of law. Basically what this means is that no individual should be deprived of rights and privileges, except in accordance with the clearly established, and fairly administered rules.

As applied, the subject matter under discussion here, one could only conclude that this ex parte tampering with the winning design, after the fact, violates everyone's reasonable expectation of how the competition was restructured.

I am very sensitive to the views of the individuals

who have been directly involved in the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund. They worked hard, and accomplished a great deal to bring this project this far along. But sometimes we become so fixated by a goal that we lose sight of the larger purpose, and I would just like to talk about that larger purpose for a moment.

The larger purpose, as best I can perceive it, is nothing more than basic fairness, the fairness that we owe the Vietnam Veterans, because the burden of that war lasts, or rather, the role is not evenly distributed. The Vietnam War was unique.

The Post pointed that out well, but little else, in the article today. It was unique in that we reversed the time honored tradition of this country, that the ones in this society are the ones to do the most when the country is in need.

In my professional field, and I suspect it is true in medicine, the arts, politics and business, one rarely encounters Vietnam ^{veterans} ~~benefits~~. Because deferments and outs are too readily available for those who wish to take advantage of the situation. Let us not compound this unfairness by violating the rules that were established for selecting a memorial to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

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I believe that when called upon we all have the responsibility to give something back to this country, which provides us with the opportunity to succeed on the basis of our abilities, the opportunity is one of the reasons that my grandparents came to this country, they came from Italy, about the turn of the century. Through these opportunities my parents were able to pass on the living conditions to me, as I hope to do for my children.

The design competition for the Vietnam Memorial signifies the opportunities that still exist in this country. Why should this Commission, a government agency, or any person, whomsoever, now seek to deny Ms. Lin the fruits of her creative talents and her abilities?

Reflecting back to 1966, I recall, in vivid detail, the ideals and enthusiasm instilled in all the graduates of the Marine Corps Officer Training right here at Quantico, Virginia. Six of us took a brief holiday before shipping out to Vietnam. Of those six, two died in Vietnam, three of us got back with wounds of varying degrees. One got back unscratched, but I can attest that he attempted suicide on more than one occasion.

When you join the Marines, you know the rules, so ^{an} there is no complaints. But all of us should complain when

someone tries to change the groundrules, when they don't like the end result. Fairness is not one person or another. It is a concept of patriotism at today's hearing. Patriotism in my view is nothing more than doing the duty when the occasion arises.

Heroism, on the other hand, takes many forms, and it is not to be equated with Bronze Stars, Purple Hearts and medals accumulated in jungle warfare by individuals such as myself.

I am not -- I don't think it is appropriate here, although I would certainly be prepared to match medals and war stories with some of the speakers that preceded me. I just don't think that is the point today.

Most of the men and women who served in Vietnam, and surely all those who died, fall into the category of heroism, doing the unpopular, doing the difficult.

In light of their memory, I urge and plead to the members of this Commission not to take the easy course, but to do the heroic, reject the concept of architecture by consensus. Artistic endeavor by compromise, you have heard that word a lot today, and most of all, reject the political manipulation of an award won in free competition. Nowhere is it written that there can only be one Vietnam Memorial.

And so to those individuals who, for reasons sincere, I am sure, they may be dissatisfied with Ms. Lin's winning design, I say go back to work and create another award. This one should have been settled a long time ago, and we are now witnessing just another disservice to the individuals who should be honored.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you very much.

Peggy Robin.

MS. ROBIN: My name is Peggy Robin, I am on the Landmarks Committee ANC-3c. I came here as a citizen and resident of the city.

Most of the points I wanted to make about incongruity of the statue have been made.

But I would like to add my voice to someone who is neither an architectural expert nor a Vietnam Veteran, but one who will be visiting the Memorial as friends, who are preserved in Vietnam.

I would like to be able to walk through this beautiful and moving park, and look at the monument in quiet reflection and pride, without the fact that three enormous giants are looking over my shoulder. The statue may serve a need of the Vietnam Veteran, if that is so, couldn't it be placed on its own spot, and not left to intrude on the complete

serenity of the design?

Thank you.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you.

And finally, Darrell J. Gaebel. If he is still with us, private citizen and Vietnam Veteran.

(No response.)

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Okay.

That concludes this part of the meeting. We are going to go over to the site now, briefly, and then come back.

MR. NETSCH: Mr. Chairman, would you be assuming that we will be convening in approximately half an hour?

CHAIRMAN BROWN: That is right.

MR. NETSCH: So we will be reconvening about five o'clock?

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Right.

Thank you very much.

(Short recess.)

(Balance of transcript, consisting of 13 pages, del'd 10-14-82)