

THE COMMISSION OF FINE ARTS

Washington, D. C.

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The meeting of The Commission of Fine Arts was convened at 10:05 a.m., Thursday, October 22, 1987, at 708 Jackson Place, Northwest, Washington, D. C., CHAIRMAN J. CARTER BROWN presiding.

In Attendance;

J. CARTER BROWN, CHAIRMAN

NEIL PORTERFIELD, Vice Chairman

CAROLYN DEAVER

ROY GOODMAN

FREDERICK E. HART

DIANE WOLF

Staff:

Charles Atherton, Secretary

Donald Myer, Assistant Secretary

Sue Kohler

Jeffrey Carson

Jose Martinez

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P R O C E E D I N G S

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Let's call the meeting to order.

The first order of business under Administration is approval of the minutes of the 18 September meeting. Do we have a motion to approve?

MR. GOODMAN: So move.

MR. HART: Second.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Do we have any recommendations or comments? Otherwise, without objection, so ordered.

I have a couple of typos, Charlie, that we will take up later.

The dates of the next meetings are as previously agreed, the 19th of November and 17th of December, and you have in your folders proposed dates for 1988.

MR. ATHERTON: What I would like to do, Mr. Chairman, is to circulate those at our next meeting and then they could be ratified at the November meeting, so everybody would have a clear signal on the dates.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: That makes sense, since we are almost a year away.

Let's move into Submissions and Reviews. The first is submitted by the Office of the Secretary of the Department

of Interior, and it has to do with the Vietnam Memorial, an addition of a statue representing women in the military who served in Vietnam.

MR. HART: Before we proceed, I would like to, in view of my long personal involvement in the Vietnam Memorial, I would like to defer to the Commission's wishes as to whether I should recuse myself or vote, or however the Commission feels.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Well, Mr. Hart here is the sculptor of the sculptural element that exists there now. We have been aware of his questions as to what his proper role should be here and we have referred them to the Office of Government Ethics, who have given us their official opinion that there is no conflict of interest here, and that he should not be asked to leave the room or recuse himself. They pointed out that, in fact, his closeness to the past history of this could be considered as a net plus to the Commission's deliberations in terms of the expertise he could bring to it.

I don't know what the other members might feel or whether Mr. Hart has any further comments.

MR. HART: I would offer that I would refrain from voting, and that whatever I would say in commenting on the issue would be regarded as expert testimony.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Does that make sense to the other members of the Commission?

MR. PORTERFIELD: Yes. Agreed.

MR. GOODMAN: Yes.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Let's proceed then.

MR. ATHERTON: You are already in receipt of a good deal of material that I sent out in advance of the meeting today, with the exception of the letter from Secretary Hodel, which arrived late last night, and I would like to read that for the record. It is addressed to the Chairman and it is dated October 21.

We have been approached by the Vietnam Women's Memorial Project, Inc. with a proposal to recognize the contribution of women, principally a nurse, who served in Vietnam. This recognition would be in the form of an additional statue to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial in Washington.

This statue would not be placed in proximity to the existing sculpture of the three fighting men, but, rather, is envisioned as a separate statue standing alone at the opposite end of the memorial. There is a group of trees where the statue could be erected in the same relative

position to the wall as the three fighting men are to it, thus closing the design. There may be other appropriate locations at the Vietnam Veterans Memorial which further study may unfold.

Based on the professional recommendation of the Director of the National Park Service, I support the inclusion of a commemorative statue that represents all women who served our country in the Vietnam War. My thinking is that the statue should not be restricted to any particular branch of the armed services, but I am prepared to defer to the Commission's expertise and judgment on that matter.

In 1980, P.L. 96-297 authorized the establishment of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. That law provides that the design be approved by the Secretary of the Interior, the Commission of Fine Arts, and the National Capital Planning Commission. We believe that the proposed statue fits within that provision of the law.

I, therefore, am recommending that this commemorative statue, representing all women who served in Vietnam, be added to the Vietnam Veterans Memorial. I seek your views at this time.

Sincerely, Donald Paul Hodel.

Mrs. Donna Marie Boulay has been leading an effort to establish this Memorial, and she will introduce a list of speakers who are in favor of this project.

Mrs. Boulay.

MRS. BOULAY: Thank you, Mr. Atherton.

Good morning.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Welcome.

MRS. BOULAY: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners: Completing the Vietnam Memorial with a statue of a woman is important to many, many people all around this country. Members of Congress have proved to be very helpful, very interested, indeed. People in both chambers, on both sides of the aisle, have been coming forward and expressing their interest.

This morning we are fortunate, indeed, to have the Senator whose leadership has been essential to the project's successes so far. I am very pleased to introduce to you one of our most valued advisors, Senator Dave Durenberger.

SENATOR DURENBERGER: Thank you.

I am going to use some notes, Mr. Chairman and gentlemen, for fear I will talk too long on a project that I feel strongly about, but I would like to first thank the members of the Commission for placing the Vietnam Women's



Memorial on the agenda today. There is some hope, and even an expectation that if we are successful in persuading you today of the merits of this proposal that we might see this in real life a year from now, which would be very appropriate at least sometime prior to November 11. It is, in my opinion, as worthy a project as I have been associated with in many years of public service.

In 1980 our nation began the process of recognizing the men and women we sent to war in Vietnam, and Congress passed legislation, signed by the President, which established a memorial for men and women. In 1982 we dedicated the wall that honored the 58,000 people who paid the ultimate sacrifice. In 1984 we dedicated a statue of three infantrymen, which eloquently represents the sacrifices that the men make at war, and the statutes have, for millions of people all over the world, have been a moving evocation of the experience and the service of men who served in Vietnam.

The time has come, in the opinion of many of us, for our country to complete the Vietnam Memorial and to complete it with a unique sculpture that represents women's experience in Vietnam. There is great support for the idea in both houses of Congress, from the Secretary of Interior, from whom

you have heard, from the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Fund, from veteran groups across this nation. I have lent my personal wholehearted support to the effort because I firmly believe our country has an obligation to include a representative work of art commemorating the service of women in the Vietnam Memorial.

I am not sure why there is a reference to "nurse" in Don's letter and I am not sure how that carries in there, because very specifically we are talking about women, not just one occupation, because there are so many represented in every war.

For too long our country has overlooked our brave women, women who dedicated themselves to our country and fellow citizens. Serving throughout the globe in war and peace, these unsung heroines are long overdue our country's honor and recognition for their strength and sacrifice, their commitment, and their contributions. In my opinion, Americans will not rest until this is done. Thousands of Americans are letting us know that they, too, feel this must be done. Letters of support flow daily to this project. Hundreds of phone calls offering help and encouragement have been received, and people are voting not only with their letters and communi-

cations, but with dollars, as well. The project began with no money, no facilities, and a very uncertain future. The only resources were three hard-working vets, Bender, Boulay, and Evans. You will hear from them today. But now we realize that the project has touched the conscience of the nation and our fellow citizens. The tremendous outpouring of support is crucial. It illustrates that Americans feel that a statue at the Vietnam Memorial depicting women's contributions is past due. They believe the historical role of women in Vietnam, in the Vietnam War, unreported is unfair and inaccurate

Maya Lin's concept was to cut open the earth and the initial violence in time would heal. This concept became a metaphor for an entire nation that began to heal the wounds of the Vietnam War, and the women, too, in particular, have begun their own private and collective healing process. The addition of the projected statue at the Vietnam Memorial would give the American people an opportunity to bring to a close that Vietnam. I hope the Commission will understand that the words and the support they hear today for the Vietnam Women's Memorial represents the feelings of many Americans who couldn't be here today. I urge the Commission to give

their prompt and favorable consideration to this project.

Thank you very much.

CHAIRMAN BROWN: Thank you, Senator.

MS. BOULAY: I would like you now to meet the Executive Director of the project, who will tell you about our goals and how we are achieving the goals and give you a broad picture that we are really even more than a statue-building event. Susanne.

MS. MILLS-RITTMAN: Mr. Chairman, Commissioners: Two hundred and fifty thousand women served during the Vietnam War. Ten thousand of these military and civilians served in Vietnam. The Vietnam Women's Memorial Project is a charitable organization formed in 1984 to honor and recognize these brave women. The impetus for the project, as Senator Durenberger mentioned, came from three individuals.

Jerry Bender, an attorney in the Minnesota Department of Veterans Affairs, was searching for women veterans. He could locate no women veterans. D. M. Boulay began a modest effort to tell people about women's experiences in Vietnam, and Diane Evans wanted to see a statue built of a woman Vietnam veteran. Three and a half years ago these people brought their ideas together under one umbrella and formed

the project. They developed their goals into finding all women who served during the Vietnam era, educating the public about the sacrifices and contributions of these women, and building a monument to insure their recognition.

The project has made incredible progress in this brief period of time. We have found more than one thousand women Vietnam vets. We have developed an extensive network for these women, who use the project to help themselves heal. They write, they call; they also volunteer for the project. We help them share their memories with us, with their families, with their communities. We are energetically searching for all the others, compiling a directory of them and determining the role that each of them played during this period of American history. We have begun to record their history accurately and fairly so that others may learn from their experiences.

Many of these women are working hard to help the project succeed. They are sharing with their communities, schools, churches, civic and professional and fraternal groups, what their lives were like during Vietnam. There is a great need for this educational process in view of the lack of media coverage of women's contributions during and after the

war, lack of recognition in our national monuments, and the lack of documentation that exists in our history books. We are helping to contribute to this educational process.

Now the media are doing many stories about these women. Millions of people are having the opportunity to learn about women's service to their country and the important roles that they played. In fact, since August alone, fifty million Americans have learned about the Project's work. Americans are now eager to listen to what they have to say and to teach.

Lastly, the VWMP is committed to completing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial with a statue of a woman. After the dedication of the beautiful life-like statue of the three infantrymen by Frederick Hart, people began contacting the Project urging us to add a statue of a woman to the Memorial. To do this would fully implement Public Law 96-297, in which Congress directed that a memorial be built for Vietnam veterans, for both men and women; specifically a memorial was authorized in honor and recognition of the men and women who served in the armed forces of the United States in the Vietnam War. Pursuant to this congressional chartered Vietnam Memorial Fund Board of Directors, we were given their wholehearted approval. They have retained certain rights concerning