

National Native American Veterans Memorial

DESIGN COMPETITION

Stage I Jury Report



The Design Challenge

Taking up the charge given by Congress, NMAI will establish a National Native American Veterans Memorial to “give all Americans the opportunity to learn of the proud and courageous tradition of service of Native Americans in the Armed Forces of the United States.”

The Memorial carries the deep responsibility of educating across generations; respectfully acknowledging Native veterans; and reminding all Americans of our national obligation to honor this inspired legacy.

The National Native American Veterans Memorial Advisory Committee established, through extensive Native American community consultations, a Vision and Design Principles for the memorial. The Committee determined that the Memorial should honor the interrelated elements of culture, spirituality, sacrifice, place, valor, healing, and the legacy of those past and those to come. Design concepts should address balance, inclusivity, respect, sustainability, endurance, accessibility, and interpretation of memorial elements.

Design Competition Process

The purpose of the Competition is to select a design concept for a new memorial that will be located on NMAI’s grounds and honor Native American veterans. The competition will be conducted in two stages. Stage I was an open call to submit design concepts, on an anonymous basis, for evaluation by the Competition Jury. In Stage II, the invited participants will develop their design concepts for the Memorial and present their evolved designs to the Jury.

Competition Jury

The Jury is comprised of individuals representing a broad range of disciplines with both Native American and non-Native perspectives on the military, military history and commemoration, architecture, landscape architecture, urban design and planning, and arts and culture. The Jury is responsible for evaluating the submittals for both stages of the Design Competition, identifying Stage II participants, and selecting the winning memorial design concept.

Stage I Jury Session and Next Steps

The Jury examined each of the 120 anonymous submittals. Each received a rigorous evaluation, in strict accordance with the Design Competition Regulations, to determine which concepts best addressed the Vision and Design Principles. Per the regulations, the authors of each entry remained anonymous throughout the selection process and were not revealed to the Jury until after the conclusion of the Jury session.

Through their thorough evaluation, the Jury selected five design concepts to advance to Stage II. These five entries are to be understood as concepts only, which will undergo further development and refinement throughout Stage II, in consultation with the Design Oversight Committee (DOC) and other stakeholders, and will continue to evolve through the ensuing stages of the design process after the Competition.

In Stage II the DOC, which consists of representatives from various Smithsonian departments, will hold individual mid-course reviews with each of the five design teams to provide input and advice regarding their respective designs. Stage II will conclude with a public exhibition of the five designs, with opportunity for public comment, and a presentation to the Jury to which the public will be invited as observers. The Jury will evaluate the design submittals and the input from the DOC and public exhibition to determine the design concept that best fulfills the Vision and Design Principles for the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

After selection of the final design concept the NMAI, designer, and public agencies will continue to evolve the design concept as necessary for successful implementation of the Memorial.

Stage I Jury Action & Selection

The Vision and Design Principles established through the community consultations and listed in the Competition Manual constitute the evaluation criteria used by the Jury. Details of the proposals were discussed at length relative to each entry and overall. Through their individual evaluations and group discussion, the Jury identified collective values that impacted their analysis and findings.

- The Jury believes the existing grounds and its relationship to the museum building is very harmonious and contributes to the visitor experience. The Memorial should be an integrated part of, and addition to, the grounds, and not be a dominant element.
- The Memorial should be welcoming and accommodating for all visitors, but especially for veterans. While being a public facility, the Memorial should enable quiet contemplation and a place of solace.
- The Jury did not feel that weaponry or armaments should be a part of the Memorial, and if figurative work was included in the Memorial, it should be culturally appropriate and inclusive of the diversity of tribes and bands.
- Additionally, the Jury determined that the concepts selected for inclusion in Stage II should represent a diverse set of design approaches, allowing exploration of different concepts and locations. Stage II will provide the opportunity for each concept to evolve into a more mature design.

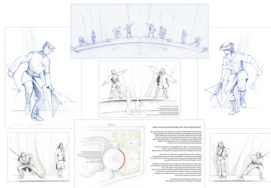
The following is a listing (in alphabetical order) of those Stage I entries unanimously selected by the Jury whose designers will be invited to participate in Stage II of the Competition. Descriptions of the concepts are summarized from the artists' statements on their submittals.



Wellspring of Valor by James Dinh

The Memorial would be sited near the museum’s south entrance, next to an old tree, which fosters a deep connection to time and place. A purifying, ever-flowing wellspring serves as the heart of the Memorial. From this center five translucent totems reach skyward in solemn dignity to form a star, expressing the nation, the land, and the many brave Native American men and women who served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Symbolizing those who sacrificed their lives, the middle void is illuminated at night to memorialize their profound absence.

The “ripples” of the wellspring extend to an embracing wall of remembrance, on whose face are etched texts documenting each major conflict in U.S. history and acknowledging the contributions of servicemen and women. The concentric circular motif is repeated as light etchings on the wall, like petroglyphs, symbolizing connections across history and boundaries. Emerging from both ends of the wall is a low platform for resting and placing offerings.



The Enduring Dance by Stefanie Rocknak

Four groups of two figures are choreographed into a dance—their universal and timeless postures reflecting a general, but powerful, sense of Native American spirituality, community, family, and a traditional way of life. They dance on a low base around the Welcome Circle, between the grandfather rocks, as if they are grandfather rocks that have permeated the eternal human form. They represent valor, legacy, and the ancient and ongoing responsibility to protect the community.

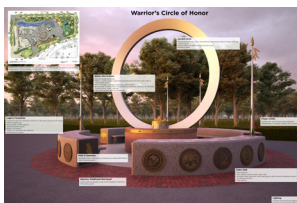
By way of their dress the figures would represent the major past, present and, potentially, future wars in which Native Americans have served. The figures, representing all branches of service, would be approximately eight feet tall and cast in stainless steel with a light granite patina. General facts about the sacrifices made by Native American family members and service members would be inscribed on the base. Healing, pride and place in the Native American community, as well as in the American community in general, would be visceral.



We Fight For Our Country by Daniel SaSuWeh Jones (Ponca) and Enoch Kelly Haney (Seminole)

The Memorial features a bronze sculpture of a woman and child representing Nature and the Future. The girl carries a medicine bundle symbolizing cultural tools of spirituality. Nature’s healing feather is passing spiritual energy for the child’s endurance. Below, six bronze Spirit Warriors surround Nature and Future as a symbol of protection. There is one Warrior from each branch of the military and one representative of women in the forces. The Warriors’ headdresses represent one of the eight regions of Native Americans, inclusive of America, Alaska, and Hawaii, with ultimate respect for all our nations. Under the Warriors, six bronze plaques show the history of the military/Indian relationship through an artist’s interpretation of great valor, endurance, and sacrifice.

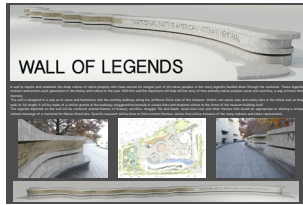
A compact memorial, the monument would be located north of the Welcome Plaza and stand approximately 20 feet tall with a footprint of about 8x8 feet. The hexagonal base would be clad in rough-hewn marble designed in color, pattern, and style to balance with the NMAI building.



Warrior’s Circle of Honor by Harvey Pratt (Cheyenne /Arapaho)

The Sacred Circle represents heaven, earth, and the pathway followed by honor bound Native People. Wind Spirits can pass through the stainless steel Sacred Circle. Water, fire and the drum are the central design elements within the circle. Water represents purity, prayer, cleansing, and reflection, running over smooth river rocks in a red granite basin. Fire symbolizes strength, courage, endurance, and comfort. The bronze and granite drum is the heartbeat of memorial and connects all the elements.

The outer wall is comprised of four sections with the five military seals on each section. It provides an outer perimeter and allows private meditation space on interior benches. Legacy Footprints of different colors on top of the outer wall represent warriors of the past, present, and future: white (beginning), red (power of the Creator), yellow (Mother Earth), black (ancestors). The Warriors Traditional Red Road, made of red brick pavers surrounding the outer wall, represents the way of life leading to harmony. The memorial would be located north of the Welcome Plaza



Wall of Legends by Leroy Transfield (Māori: Ngai Tahu/Ngati Toa)

The Memorial is a sculptural wall to inspire and celebrate the deep culture of native peoples who have served. An integral part of all native peoples is the many legends handed down through the centuries. These legends connect and anchor each generation in the history and culture of the past. Common themes to depict on the wall will be identified—stories will be inclusive of the many cultures and tribes in America and be centered around bravery, sacrifice, struggle, life and death, loved ones lost, and other themes that would be appropriate.

The wall is designed in a way as to curve and harmonize with the existing walkway along the Jefferson Drive side of the museum. Visitors can easily view and slowly take in the whole wall as they walk its full length. It will be made of granite similar to the walkway, staggered horizontally to create lines and shadows similar to the forms of the museum building itself.

Jury Summary

The Jury, through its examination of the Stage I submittals, is honored to be appointed to serve on this important Design Competition. Through their deliberations, they were able to see the variety and diversity of concepts that were submitted—and thank each and every one that submitted for the commitment and contribution to the making of the National Native American Veterans Memorial.

Mr. Larry Ulaaq Ahvakana (Inupiaq)

Ms. Stephanie Birdwell (Cherokee)

Mr. Edwin Fountain

Mr. Mark Kawika McKeague (Native Hawaiian)

Mr. Brian McCormack (Nez Perce)

Ms. Lillian Pitt (Wasco, Yakima, Warm Springs)

Dr. Herman Viola

Mr. Kevin Gover (Pawnee)*

* Dr. Johnnetta Betsch Cole was unable to attend, so Mr. Gover served as a voting member of the Jury.