

GRATITUDE AND SYMBOLISM INSPIRE DESIGN OF ANTHEM VETERANS MEMORIAL

Written By Yvonne Dolby

When Renee Palmer-Jones was asked to create a design for the Anthem Veterans Memorial, inspiration came not only from her talent as an artist, but also from a family legacy of military service. She explains, "My father, grandfather and uncle were veterans, so that's in my blood. I have always admired the immense sacrifices that have been made, and are still being made, by the many American veterans on behalf of our county. The Anthem Veterans Memorial is a gesture of gratitude toward all of our servicemen and women."

Palmer-Jones's original concept for the Memorial was sketched on a napkin over dinner with friends, but it included all the basic elements of the design. Working with other members of the Memorial Planning Committee, refinements were made to accommodate engineering, aesthetic and construction considerations. Palmer-Jones says, "The committee members agreed that the overall feel of the Memorial should be classical architecture similar to the monuments on the Washington Mall, but with a decidedly contemporary twist. When people see the finished Memorial for the first time, we want them to instantly recognize that it is a significant Memorial and not just a piece of art in the park."

An experienced painter and sculptor, Palmer-Jones approached the Memorial design as sculpture rather than architecture. She says, "I like to think of sculpting as simply 'painting from all sides.' I tried not to get too caught up in the enormity of the project. If I had dwelled too deeply upon the significance of it, I might not have been so free-thinking with the design concept."

She envisioned five marble pillars in graduated sizes representing the unity of the five branches of the United States military. Precise alignment and elliptical openings in the pillars will allow sunlight to pass through and illuminate a mosaic of The Great Seal of the United States at the foot of the pillars at 11:11 a.m. every year on November 11, Veterans Day. "My intent was to make Veterans Day significant and to distinguish it from any other day of the year by using the sun's azimuth in Anthem at that exact time," explains Palmer-Jones.

Brick pavers inscribed with the names of U.S servicemen and women will form the Circle of Honor surrounding the marble pillars. The Circle will represent an unbreakable border and the pavers will symbolize support for the five pillars. Red brick pavers, white marble pillars and the blue sky represent the American flag.

Palmer-Jones adds, "As Americans, we all owe so much to our Veterans, and hopefully this Memorial will help express how proud we are of them. It has been my privilege to have a part in its development. I hope one hundred years from now our descendants will still enjoy the Memorial and appreciate its symbolism."

The Anthem Veterans Memorial will be built in the Anthem Community Park, and the Opening Ceremony will be on November 11, 2011. For more information about the Anthem Veterans Memorial and how to support the project, go to www.OnlineAtAnthem.com and click on "Veterans Memorial."

515 words