

JAN 26 1982

Secretary and Administrative Officer  
Commission of Fine Arts  
708 Jackson Place N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20006

It is my understanding that the Fine Arts Commission has jurisdiction, in part, over whether or not the American flag is to be displayed at the Vietnam Veteran's Memorial.

Even though no provision for display of the flag was made by the designer, I firmly believe and strongly recommend that provision for perpetual display of our flag be added to the design at the earliest date. I do not view it merely as a matter of aesthetics; those of us who answered the call during the Vietnam War did so to defend our flag and all it represents. Therefore; it only stands to reason that the flag of the United States be on permanent display over the Memorial to those who made the ultimate sacrifice.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

George

James

After hearing Kevin Phillips' commentary criticizing the proposed Vietnam War Memorial design on the CBS Radio program SPECTRUM on January 4, 1982, I wrote CBS Network News. Joseph Williams, Associate Producer, called to ask me to give a telephone interview to be used on the program "Letters to CBS." In New York City it was heard January 26; nationwide it was heard at different times on local stations. Mr. Williams sent me a tape of the program and the following is a verbatim transcript of the portion containing my interview.

"Letters to CBS. A sampling of opinion and comment about CBS News and its broadcasts. I'm Roger Foster. SPECTRUM commentator Kevin Phillips in his January 4 opinion criticized a proposed monument to be built in Washington, D. C., that is to be a memorial to Vietnam veterans. Mrs. Harriet Gambaro of New York City writes, 'Both my husband, an architect, and I thoroughly agree with Mr. Phillips' comments about the proposed Vietnam memorial.'

"Mrs. Gambaro says she and her husband oppose the planned memorial for reasons similar to those expressed by Phillips, that the design of it is dull, impractical, and unsafe. But she says the most important reasons why they oppose it is that Congress authorized the memorial to honor and recognize all Vietnam veterans, while the proposed monument is to honor only those who died in Vietnam. She explained in a telephone interview:

"There are still veterans who are missing in action; there are some presumed dead, but not known dead; there are still veterans in hospitals who are disabled, and there are still veterans who have returned to normal life. We think they served with honor and they should be recognized too. And we feel that the Vietnam veterans deserve both recognition and gratitude, but we do feel they will receive it from this design."

Harriet

New York City."

-----  
Time limitation necessitated editing the complete interview. Among things said, which are on the recording I taped of the interview, that were not on the broadcast, are the following:

"Although the memorial was not meant to be just a roster of those known dead Maya Lin, the designer, has stated that it is a memorial to those who died. Some critics have called it a statement of shame and dishonor..... One of the original funders, Ross Perot of Dallas, and Adm. James B. Stockdale, of the fund's National Sponsoring Committee, both resigned after seeing the design.....Secretary of Interior Watts has ordered resubmission of the design because of changes made after his preliminary approval in June 1981..... We need a rebirth of patriotism, loyalty, and pride in America."

-----  
Prints to: The American Institute of Architects; David Olan Meeker, FAIA, Exec. V.P., Allen Freeman, Managing Ed., AIA Journal, Washington, D. C.; Pietro Belluschi, FAIA, Chairman of Competition Jury, Portland, Ore.; The Fine Arts Commission, Washington, D.C.; The National Sculpture Society; The National Sculpture Review, New York City; John Terzano, Vietnam Veterans America, Washington, D.C.; E. James Gambaro, FAIA.

Prints of Phillips' commentary sent to those listed above.

Skidmore, Owings & Merrill

1201 Connecticut Avenue NW  
Washington DC 20036  
202 828 0700

*File #/ VV Memorial*

*MA Lin*

January 27, 1982

The Honorable James Watt  
Secretary of the Interior  
Washington, D.C 20240

Dear Mr. Secretary:

I am writing to let you know of my support for Maya Lin's design for the Vietnam Veterans Memorial, and to urge you to approve its soonest construction.

As the designer of the Washington Mall Bicentennial Master Plan and of the Constitution Gardens, I find the proposed plan to be in keeping with the simple, landscape guidelines we recommended for memorials that might be located on these lands.

Respectfully,

bcc: J. Carter Brown  
Robert Doubek  
Maya Lin

Wilmington, Delaware  
February 1, 1982

J. Carter Brown, Director  
National Gallery of Art (FA)  
Washington, D.C.

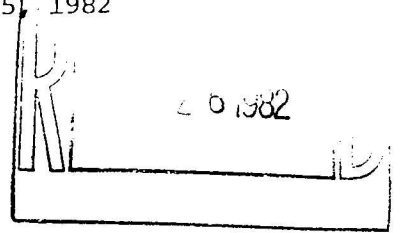
Dear Mr. Brown,

Concerning the Vietnam  
memorial for veterans -  
I agree with you one hundred  
percent. Why should there be  
an infantryman standing  
when nurses died, too?

Are people just too dumb or  
lazy to use their imagination?  
I thought the black granite would  
represent perpetual mourning  
and the "V" is victory over death.  
Read each name and think  
about that person. He doesn't  
need flags and statues now.

Sincerely,

2911 North 23rd Street  
Arlington, Virginia 22201  
March 25, 1982



TO: ✓ Commission on Fine Arts  
National Capital Planning Commission  
Interior Secretary James Watt

COPIES: Jan Scruggs, Vietnam Memorial Foundation  
Senator John Warner

SUBJECT: Flagpole and Statue

Many thousands of people, some veterans, some like me who hated the war and was fortunate not to lose my two brothers to Vietnam, gave millions of dollars to build the Vietnam Memorial. Our gifts were based on the original, awesomely simple and beautiful design by Maya Lin which was chosen from many entries by a competent jury. Now, without being asked, we are told that we must accept a compromise: a flagpole must be placed atop the apex of the memorial's two walls and a statue in front.

I have nothing against a flagpole, certainly love my country and its flag and generally can dismiss most memorial sculpture as innocuous flea bites. But this plan, rather than being an acceptable compromise, seriously compromises the beautiful simplicity of the original design and intent. Putting the flagpole on center, so to speak, removes the emphasis from the daringly simple memorial to those who served and puts it on a weird moral/design combination of "OUR COUNTRY, RIGHT OR WRONG" and the height of the flagpole and poor Old Glory. Why? Again?? This country, and especially this city, is already overloaded with such memorial emphasis. And, just where is the statue to be placed? How will it "symbolize all those who served in Vietnam"? Will it be male or female, disabled or healthy, standing or in a wheelchair, alive or dead, black or white?

Please force a further compromise: please remove these two objects from center stage; move them out and away from the memorial itself, to the distant left or right edge of the foreground -- where they would remain important but would not intrude or distract. Do not destroy the peace of this lovely memorial whose contemplation we need to remind us not to pay the price again.

Greer

William

Washington, D. C.

March 25, 1982

Gentlemen:

Mr. Lin's design for the Vietnam Veterans' Memorial was carefully and thoughtfully chosen by designated knowledgeable judges after a nationwide competition of professional and amateur artists. It is understated, simple and very beautiful and dignified. To defile it - and the noble stretch of mall between the Washington Monument and the United States Capitol - with a flag and a heroic statue and a maudlin sentiment (however "patriotic") demeans it.

Please do not allow this dignified memorial to be compromised.

Sincerely,