

For Immediate Release

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Public Voting Open for Washington Monument Grounds Ideas

September 22, 2011 Washington, DC -- The National Ideas Competition for the Washington Monument Grounds – a truly unique and global competition – is ready for the public to weigh in and vote for the “People’s Choice” favorites from among the six winning ideas selected by an independent jury last July. The distinguished jury representing the fields of architecture, theater, history, journalism, and landscape architecture chose the six winners from a field of 24 semi-finalists.

The winning ideas – *Arcs of Shade*, *A Great Inclined Plane*, *Field of Stars*, *You and Me*, *The People’s Forum*, and *Monument of Unity* – were deemed by the jury to best fulfill the challenge set by the Competition, which was launched in the summer of 2010. The American people were asked at that time to send in their ideas to make these iconic but unfinished grounds more welcoming, educational, and effectively used by the public for decades to come.

Voting takes place online, at the website wamocompetition.org. The public is invited to view displays of the six different concepts, listen to interviews with the competition winners, and submit an electronic ballot. Voting will remain open until spring 2012 when the Competition will be the subject of an exhibition from April 5th to June 24th at the Virginia Center on Architecture. This fall, some of the semifinalists’ ideas will be highlighted in the “Unbuilt Washington” exhibition at the National Building Museum, which opens on November 19th.

James P. Clark AIA who chairs the Competition says public voting is crucial to the spirit of the Competition. “We wanted this competition to educate people from schoolchildren to design professionals about this important civic space and stimulate them to think creatively about its future. Opening it to anyone 12 and up was part of that goal. So is the public voting.”

Clark explains that the competition began from the realization that the 60-plus acre Monument grounds never were completed as intended and that is why this landscape is missing the shade trees, public amenities, and meaningful relationship to George Washington and the founding ideals that are the heart of the Mall’s symbolism.

“People may be surprised by the six winning ideas,” he said. “If the competition stimulates them to imagine a more lively and inspiring future for this great public open space, we’ll feel we’ve succeeded.”