

## **A Great Place for American Heroes – on the National Mall!**

### **IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

**January 28, 2026** – *Drawing on 25 years of engaging Americans in the history and significance of the National Mall in American democracy, the National Mall Coalition has proposed a place to locate the National Garden of American Heroes. Read online [here](#).*

For more than two decades, Judy Feldman has given talks on the history of the National Mall, often ending with proposals for its future, including expanding the Mall boundaries and creating a “Statuary Hall on the Mall.”

Audiences – civic groups, tour guides, and visitors – seem enthusiastic about the possibilities. Enlarging the Mall, as the 1902 McMillan Plan did when it extended the Mall westward to include the Lincoln Memorial, could open space for future museums and monuments, which keep coming despite Congress declaring the Mall a completed work of civic art in 2003. Small-scale statues lining Mall pathways could engage visitors in a deeper, richer civic experience on the Stage for American Democracy.



President Trump has proposed a National Garden of American Heroes to celebrate America's 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary in West Potomac Park near the Jefferson Memorial.

This Garden could expand the reach of the Mall beyond its historical boundaries. But it also could eliminate public recreational green space now used daily by local families, youth sports leagues, and community groups on popular baseball fields, and could also impact a public golf course.

There are also serious, unresolved environmental risks. This man-made land often floods during heavy rains. The ground itself is [subsiding](#). The National Park Service's ongoing seawall project is intended to mitigate flooding along the Potomac shoreline. But in public meetings for that partially funded project, NPS could not show that the higher seawalls would in fact protect memorials along the Tidal Basin.

There is a better answer: the great east-west axis between the Mall monuments and Smithsonian museums, where school buses and tour buses discharge millions of visitors every year. Small-scale statues lining the Mall's pathways, from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial, could enliven the two-mile walk with stories from every corner of the American experience. All without sacrificing recreational space or ignoring environmental and extreme weather realities.

Congress must act now. It should establish an independent commission of architects, engineers, historians, and planners to advise immediately on the Garden of Heroes and to establish an updated, comprehensive McMillan Plan for our National Mall in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This is not just about ensuring a successful 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary but safeguarding the national landscape that embodies our democratic ideals as we look forward to the next 250 years.

*Judy Scott Feldman, PhD, is a founder and chair of the non-profit National Mall Coalition.*

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**About the National Mall Coalition:** The Coalition is a nonprofit organization founded in 2000 to protect the legacy of the 1791 L'Enfant Plan and 1902 McMillan plans that are the blueprints for today's Mall and to advocate comprehensive, long-range planning to help ensure the vitality, beauty, and continued active role of this national treasure in the capital and in American life.