



COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA

**HOUSE OF DELEGATES**

RICHMOND

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COMMITTEE ASSIGNMENTS:  
APPROPRIATIONS  
HEALTH, WELFARE AND  
INSTITUTIONS  
GENERAL LAWS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **MEDIA ADVISORY**

Citizens of Virginia are one step closer to having a permanent monument on historical Capitol Square, celebrating the legacy of the Commonwealth's Indian tribes. Last Wednesday evening the Virginia Indian Commemorative Commission approved by acclamation the final design to commemorate the many contributions of the Virginia Indians.

The consensus proposal, titled *Mantle*, consists of spiral elements, a winding footpath, a wall that doubles as a bench for seating, native plant species indigenous to Virginia, and at the center a reflecting pool containing the names of Virginia's Indian tribes. Alan Michelson, a Mohawk member of Six Nations of the Grand River, is an award winning artist, living in New York City. "*(Mantle)* requires the visitor to neither look up nor look down, but invites one to enter—from the east—and participate in it. It is not conceived as a static monument to be venerated but an active one to be experienced by moving off the everyday grid and into the American Indian circle." Images of the model may be found at: [facebook.com/groups/107566899293098](https://www.facebook.com/groups/107566899293098).

Members of the Commission, which consists of the Governor, Lieutenant Governor, legislators and citizens who are members of different tribes in Virginia, have spent the last two years working to determine an appropriate monument to commemorate the life, achievements, and legacy of American Indians in the Commonwealth. Chief Lynette Allston, Nottoway Indian Tribe of Virginia and member of the Technique Subcommittee, "Michelson's design blends contemporary interpretation with meaningful traditional American Indian symbolism. The memorial's uniqueness will be an inspirational honor for Virginia Indians."

Delegate Chris Peace, Commission Vice-Chair, "In this deliberative process, the Commission has conducted tribal outreach, provided for community input and compiled a base of talented artists from around the nation. The efforts have been sincere and comprehensive. We purposefully worked to be inclusive and diverse, wanting input from experts in public art as well as to hear from as many Virginians as possible before selecting a proposal. We were able to accomplish that goal and are excited about the future of this project.

The Commission's next step will be extensive fundraising as payment for construction of the monument, estimated at \$500,000 will be made through private funds. Susan Clarke Schaar, Clerk of the Virginia Senate, "This monument acknowledges the contributions, sacrifices and triumphs of Virginia's indigenous people. *Mantle* makes a strong statement about the history of the Virginia tribes and their culture."

In 2009 House Joint Resolution 680 passed expressing the General Assembly's support for and call upon the Governor to establish a commemorative commission to honor the life, achievements, and legacy of Virginia Indians on the grounds of Capitol Square. The commission has submitted its findings and recommendations to the Governor and General Assembly each year describing its progress which included working with local partners such as CultureWorks, Virginia Commonwealth University and the Virginia Foundation for the Humanities. With Executive Order 100 (2009) Governor Timothy M. Kaine established and Governor Robert F. McDonnell subsequently continued by Executive Order 37 (2011) the Virginia Indian Commemorative Commission. For more information please visit: [dela.state.va.us/Dela/ComOpsStudy.nsf/f7d0d3fefc1bdfde85256c330057350e/69c65824f46a4d248525784e00591134?OpenDocument](http://dela.state.va.us/Dela/ComOpsStudy.nsf/f7d0d3fefc1bdfde85256c330057350e/69c65824f46a4d248525784e00591134?OpenDocument)

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