



STATE OF INDIANA
OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR
State House, Second Floor
Indianapolis, Indiana 46204

Eric J. Holcomb
Governor

August 27, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary of the Interior
U.S. Department of the Interior
1849 C St. NW
Washington, DC 20240

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

Thank you for the opportunity to recommend sites and honorees for consideration by the Task Force for the National Garden of American Heroes as created by President Donald Trump by the Executive Order (EO) on Building and Rebuilding Monuments to American Heroes. Indiana would be proud to be home to the National Garden of American Heroes, and looks forward to engaging the Task Force on the important work of vetting potential locations and additional "Heroes" to the ones thoughtfully included in the EO.

- Are there locations of natural beauty within your unit of local government that would serve as a reputable location for these monuments, statues, and the National Garden of American Heroes? Please list and describe any such locations consistent with the White House's Executive Order (EO).

Pursuant to Section 3(c)(v) of the EO, I propose three sites in the State of Indiana for consideration:

Fort Harrison (Fort Ben)

Fort Harrison is operated as an Indiana State Park where landscape and history blend together at this unique setting on the north-east side of Indianapolis. The 1,700-acre park features walking and jogging trails, picnic sites, fishing access to Fall Creek and two national historic districts. The former Citizen's Military Training Camp is preserved around the park office in what was once known as Camp Glenn. Fort Harrison is one of the hidden gems to be found in the state, just minutes from home for many visitors needing contact with nature.

Hoosier National Forest

Hoosier National Forest, in the hills of south central Indiana, provides a wide mix of opportunities and resources for people to enjoy. Rolling hills, back-country trails, and rural crossroad communities make this small but beautiful 203,000 acre Forest a local treasure. The Hoosier National Forest is a property managed by the United States Forest

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Service in the hills of southern Indiana. Composed of four separate sections, it has a total area of 202,814 acres. Hoosier National Forest's headquarters are located in Bedford, with a regional office in Tell City. Prominent places within the Forest include the Lick Creek Settlement, Potts Creek Rockshelter Archeological Site, and Jacob Rickenbaugh House. The Hoosier National Forest is situated between Indianapolis and Evansville, Indiana, and Louisville, Kentucky.

The Dunes National Park

The Indiana Dunes National Park is a United States National Park located in Northwestern Indiana, managed by the National Park Service. It was authorized by Congress in 1966 as the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore, the name by which it was known until it was designated the nation's 61st national park on February 15, 2019. The park runs for nearly 25 miles (40 km) along the southern shore of Lake Michigan; it contains approximately 15,000 acres (6,100 ha). Its visitors center is in Porter, Indiana. Located in the park are sand dune, wetland, prairie, river, and forest ecosystems. The Dunes National Park is a mere 50 miles from Chicago, Illinois.

- In addition to the 31 individuals listed in the EO, are there any other American heroes who should be recognized in the National Garden of American heroes? Please list and describe any such individuals consistent with the EO.

Pursuant to Sec. 7 of the EO, below are the names and descriptions of historically significant Americans who should be considered by the Task Force for recognition in the National Garden of American Heroes. These suggestions are not meant to be exhaustive:

Science and Space

Neil Armstrong (August 5, 1930 - August 25, 2012) was an American astronaut and aeronautical engineer and the first person to walk on the Moon. He was also a naval aviator, test pilot, and university professor. He was a graduate of Purdue University in West Lafayette, Indiana. Armstrong was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom by President Richard Nixon. President Jimmy Carter presented Armstrong with the Congressional Space Medal of Honor in 1978, and Armstrong and his former crewmates received a Congressional Gold Medal in 2009.

Virgil Ivan "Gus" Grissom (April 3, 1926 - January 27, 1967) was a United States Air Force (USAF) pilot and a member of the Mercury Seven selected by National Aeronautics and Space Administration's (NASA) as Project Mercury astronauts to be the first Americans in outer space. As a member of the NASA Astronaut Corps, Grissom was the second American to fly in space. Grissom was a World War II and Korean War veteran, mechanical engineer, and USAF test pilot. He was a recipient of the Distinguished Flying Cross, the Air Medal with an oak leaf cluster, two NASA Distinguished Service Medals, and, posthumously, the Congressional Space Medal of Honor.

Business

Madam C.J. Walker (born Sarah Breedlove; December 23, 1867 - May 25, 1919) was an American entrepreneur, philanthropist, and political and social activist. She is recorded as the first female self-made millionaire in America. Walker made her fortune by developing and marketing a line of cosmetics and hair care products for black women through the business she founded, Madam C. J. Walker Manufacturing Company. She became known also for her philanthropy and activism. At the time of her death, she was considered the wealthiest African-American businesswoman and wealthiest self-made black woman in America.

Government and Military

General Lewis Wallace (April 10, 1827 - February 15, 1905) was an American lawyer, Union general in the American Civil War, governor of the New Mexico Territory, politician, diplomat, and author. Among his novels and biographies, Wallace is best known for his historical adventure story, *Ben-Hur: A Tale of the Christ* (1880), a bestselling novel that has been called "the most influential Christian book of the nineteenth century."

The Arts and Journalism

James Whitcomb Riley (October 7, 1849 - July 22, 1916) was an American writer, poet, and best-selling author. During his lifetime he was known as the "Hoosier Poet" and "Children's Poet" for his dialect works and his children's poetry. His poems tend to be humorous or sentimental. Of the approximately 1,000 poems Riley wrote, the majority are in dialect. His famous works include "Little Orphant Annie" and "The Raggedy Man".

Newton Booth Tarkington (July 29, 1869 - May 19, 1946) was an American novelist and dramatist best known for his novels *The Magnificent Ambersons* and *Alice Adams*. He is one of only four novelists to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction more than once. In the 1910s and 1920s he was considered America's greatest living author. Several of his stories were adapted to film.

Kurt Vonnegut Jr. (November 11, 1922 - April 11, 2007) was an American writer. In a career spanning over 50 years, Vonnegut published fourteen novels, three short story collections, five plays, and five works of nonfiction, with further collections being published after his death. He is most famous for his darkly satirical, bestselling novel *Slaughterhouse-Five* (1969).

Ernest Taylor Pyle (August 3, 1900 - April 18, 1945) was a Pulitzer Prize-winning American journalist and war correspondent who is best known for his stories about ordinary American soldiers during World War II. Pyle is also notable for the columns he wrote as a roving human-interest reporter from 1935 through 1941 for the Scripps-Howard newspaper syndicate that earned him wide acclaim for his simple accounts of ordinary people across North America. When the United States entered World War II, he lent the same distinctive, folksy style of his human-interest stories to his wartime reports from the European theater (1942-44) and Pacific theater (1945). Pyle won the Pulitzer Prize in 1944 for his newspaper accounts of "dogface" infantry soldiers from a first-person perspective. He was killed by enemy fire during

the Battle of Okinawa. President Harry Truman said of Pyle, "No man in this war has so well told the story of the American fighting man as American fighting men wanted it told. He deserves the gratitude of all his countrymen."

Theodore Clement "T.C." Steele (September 11, 1847 - July 24, 1926) was an American Impressionist painter known for his American landscapes. Steele was an innovator and leader in American Midwest painting and is one of the most famous of Indiana's Hoosier Group painters. In addition to painting, Steele contributed writings, and public lectures. He was also involved in organizing pioneering art associations, such as the Society of Western Artists.

Basketball

John Robert Wooden (October 14, 1910-June 4, 2010) was an American basketball player and coach. Nicknamed the "Wizard of Westwood," he won ten National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA) national championships in a 12-year period as head coach for the UCLA Bruins, including a record seven in a row. Within this period, his teams won an NCAA men's basketball record 88 consecutive games. As a 5'10" guard, Wooden was the first player to be named basketball All-American three times, and the 1932 Purdue team on which he played as a senior was retroactively recognized as the pre-NCAA Tournament national champion by the Helms Athletic Foundation and the Premo-Porretta Power Poll. Wooden was inducted into the Basketball Hall of Fame as a player (1960) and as a coach (1973), the first person ever enshrined in both categories.

We appreciate the opportunity to provide our recommendations for the National Garden of American Heroes project. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Eric J. Holcomb". The signature is stylized with a large "E" and "H" and includes a horizontal line under the name.

Governor Eric J. Holcomb
State of Indiana