



July 31, 2020

The Honorable David Bernhardt
Secretary of the Interior
1100 Ohio Dr. SW
Washington, D.C. 20242

Dear Secretary Bernhardt:

On behalf of all North Dakotans, we thank you for your efforts toward establishing a National Garden of American Heroes to honor heroes dedicated to American ideals. North Dakota is grateful for the opportunity to provide recommendations for potential locations and heroes to be represented within the National Garden. Please find the responses to your request sent July 21, 2020.

1. Are there locations of natural beauty within your State that would serve as a reputable location for these monuments, statues, and the National Garden of American Heroes?

Medora, within the Badlands of western North Dakota, would be an ideal site for the National Garden of American Heroes. Located next to the Dakota Prairie Grasslands and Theodore Roosevelt National Park, the Garden would be an inspiration to Americans for generations to come. This area is known for its natural beauty and already drives visitors to experience the great outdoors and learn about famous figures in America's history, mainly President Theodore Roosevelt.

This location attracts more than 700,000 visitors per year to the Scenic Overlook of Theodore Roosevelt National Park and over 115,000 spectators annually to a nightly summer musical dedicated to the legacy of Theodore Roosevelt, the western way of life and the American dream. Located only 260 miles from Mount Rushmore, it will create a corridor of American monuments for families, students and vacationers. As a connection point to all of western North Dakota via the Maah Daah Hey Trail, a 144-mile trail system, and the Little Missouri River, this site will encourage visitors to spend time exploring all of America's unique assets.

In addition, Medora, N.D., serves as the future home to the Theodore Roosevelt Presidential Library and Museum, a facility dedicated to inspiring visitors to *dare greatly, think boldly, live passionately and care deeply*. Visitors will leave feeling inspired to jump "into the arena," as Roosevelt famously said. While it will require travel from a major population center, the location is perfectly suited to honor the heroes of America and inspire action, reflection and learning about America's past, present and future.

2. Are there any statues or monuments the State can donate or loan to this effort that will honor our Nation's heroes?

Currently North Dakota does not have statues or monuments that can be provided for donation or loan. We will continue to review possibilities for your future consideration.

3. Are there any other American heroes who should be recognized in the National Garden of American Heroes?

President Theodore Roosevelt, 1858-1919: Roosevelt served as the 26th President of the United States, Vice President, Governor of New York, Secretary of the Navy and Colonel of the Rough Riders. Aside from his formal positions, he also gave rise to the American Century, developed the modern conservation ethic and lived the "strenuous life." Theodore Roosevelt remains the only president to have won both the Nobel Peace Prize and the Medal of Honor.

Judge Ronald Davies, 1904- 1996: U.S. District Court Judge Ronald Davies' most famous case was ordering the enforcement of integration at Central High School in Little Rock (Ark.) Central High School in September 1957. Davies served in the U.S. Army during World War II, rising to the rank of lieutenant colonel before his discharge in 1946.

Woodrow Wilson Keeble, 1917-1982: Master Sergeant Keeble was the first full-blooded Dakota to receive the Medal of Honor and was inducted into the Pentagon Hall of Heroes in 2008. He fought with the North Dakota National Guard during WWII, and his unit was the first U.S. Army unit to engage in offensive operations in WWII when they reinforced the 1st Marine Division at Guadalcanal. Keeble re-enlisted during the Korean War, where he continued to serve, even after suffering over 80 shrapnel wounds. He famously remarked, "Fear did not make a coward out of me."

Sakakawea, 1788-1812: Sakakawea was a Shoshone woman who guided the Lewis and Clark expedition from the Mandan villages of North Dakota to the Pacific Ocean. She played a major role in the expedition's success, including interpreting and negotiations

with the Shoshone tribe to acquire horses which led the expedition over the Rocky Mountains. Her presence communicated the peaceful intentions of the expedition to the tribes as they passed through the area.

Sitting Bull, 1831-1890: Sitting Bull was a Hunkpapa Lakota leader who led the Lakota during the second half of the 19th century. He is famous for the Battle of Little Big Horn, after which he led his people to Canada for four years before returning to the United States and settling on the Standing Rock Reservation. After his return, Sitting Bull continued to advocate for his people and toured with Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show. Sitting Bull was killed during a confrontation with Indian police in 1890.

Little Shell III, 1830-1904: Little Shell III was an Ojibwa leader and one of the founding fathers of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa. He became a leader around 1873 after most of the Pembina Band of Chippewa was relocated to the White Earth Reservation in Minnesota. Little Shell advocated for his people to remain at their home in North Dakota and was instrumental in negotiating the creation of the Turtle Mountain Reservation. After contesting the cession of lands under the Ten Cent Treaty, Little Shell led his band to Montana, where he continued to contest the treaty until his death in 1904.

Four Bears, 1784-1837: Four Bears was a Mandan leader named after an observer noted that he fought in battle with the strength of four bears. A robe recounting his deeds was presented to the United States National Museum by George Catlin. He became a favorite subject for Catlin and Karl Bodmer's paintings and was held in high regard by both. His influence was not limited to his success in battle, as he was also a spiritual leader for the Mandan, leading the tribe in their most sacred ceremonies. Four Bears died during the smallpox epidemic of 1837.

Jean Baptiste Wilkie, 1803-1886: A Metis leader from Pembina, N.D., Jean Baptiste Wilkie was held in high regard by his contemporaries and was often elected leader of the Metis bison hunts. Wilkie was also instrumental in negotiating peace between the Chippewa, Metis and Dakota under the Sweet Corn Treaty, and was once hosted by President Lincoln for peace talks. Wilkie died at Olga, N.D., in 1886.

We hope that you will consider our recommendations for the location of the National Garden as well as the American Heroes who rightly deserve to be honored. If further information is required, please contact my office.

With gratitude,



Doug Burgum