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GROUNDBREAKING ANNOUNCED FOR THE AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE MEMORIAL -- NOVEMBER 10 IN WASHINGTON, D.C.

Memorial Will Be Nation's First Permanent Public Tribute To More Than Three Million Living Disabled American Veterans, Countless Others Who Have Died

Award-Winning Actor Gary Sinise, Memorial Spokesperson, Among Program Participants

WASHINGTON, D.C., October 12, 2010 – The day before our nation commemorates Veterans Day, hundreds of disabled American veterans will gather in Washington, D.C. to mark a historic milestone in a decades-long effort to achieve special recognition for the unique sacrifices they have made in service to our country.

Joined by their able-bodied brethren, as well as civic and community leaders, and elected and appointed officials, they will convene on Wednesday, November 10 for the groundbreaking of the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. Located on a 2.4-acre triangular site across from the U.S. Botanic Garden and in the shadow of the U.S. Capitol, the Memorial will be the nation's first and only permanent public tribute to the over three million living disabled American veterans and the countless hundreds of thousands who have died.

The groundbreaking ceremony – beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the site, Washington Ave. and Second St., S.W. – will include the participation of award-winning actor Gary Sinise, the Memorial's spokesperson, and Lois Pope and Arthur H. Wilson, co-founders and chairman and president, respectively, of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation. The non-profit Foundation was established in 1998 and charged with developing and raising the necessary funds for the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial. Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric Shinseki and Secretary of the Interior Kenneth Salazar have been invited to speak.

"It cannot be stressed enough how important it is to recognize the sacrifices that our country's disabled veterans have made on behalf of us all," said Mr. Sinise. "We owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude and respect. This Memorial is a magnificent way to help pay this debt."

Through the juxtaposition of granite and glass, the Memorial will convey an interplay of strength and vulnerability, loss and renewal. The focal point will be a star-shaped reflecting pool, its surface broken only by a single eternal flame. Three walls of laminated glass with text and images and four bronze sculptures will tell the universal story of the disabled veteran's call to service, trauma, challenge of healing, and discovery of purpose. This unique and powerful design was conceived by Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd., and received final approvals from the Commission of Fine Arts in 2009 and the National Capital Planning Commission in 2010.

"As a disabled veteran, this Memorial has deep and profound meaning to me," said Mr. Wilson, a Vietnam veteran who is the National Adjutant and chief executive officer of the

1.2 million- member Disabled American Veterans. "It will also hold a special place in the hearts of all Americans, serving both as a never-ending reminder to all of the cost of human conflict and as an essential lesson in courage, sacrifice, tenacity, loyalty and honor, by bearing witness to the experiences of our heroes who are disabled."

The Memorial is the brainchild of Mrs. Pope, a prominent Palm Beach, FL philanthropist. Her commitment to disabled veterans dates back some 40 years to a performance she gave for a group of them receiving treatment at the Rusk Rehabilitation Center in New York. She then conceived the project almost 15 years ago while visiting the Vietnam Veterans Memorial.

"I was there to honor my first cousin, who died in that war," Mrs. Pope recalls. "After tracing his name off the wall, I asked a park ranger to point me to the memorial for disabled veterans. He told me that no such memorial existed. I thought back to those veterans I met at the Rusk Center lying there, some with no arms, some with no legs, and in a flash it hit me. We should build a memorial to them. Long after the fighting on the battlefield ends, they continue to fight to reclaim their lives and readjust to society. Far too often, they are marginalized and forgotten. This memorial will ensure that they and their sacrifices will always be remembered, while educating future generations about the human cost of war."

She took her idea to the now deceased Jesse Brown, then U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs, who introduced her to Mr. Wilson. Together, they established the Foundation to spearhead the campaign for the Memorial.

"This ceremonial groundbreaking is the next step in a long process," Mrs. Pope says. "We still have much more work, from fundraising to construction, to be completed before we open the Memorial and finally pay an overdue and proper tribute to the unsung heroes of war, our nation's disabled veterans."

For more information on the American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial and ways to contribute to its construction and endowment, visit www.avdlm.org or call 800-331-7590.

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Editor's Note: Images of the Memorial model are available by contacting The Murry Agency at (305) 531-5720.