

## **HUNDREDS ATTEND THE GROUNDBREAKING CEREMONY FOR THE AMERICAN VETERANS DISABLED FOR LIFE MEMORIAL IN WASHINGTON, D.C.**

***Program Participants Included The Honorable Nancy Pelosi,  
Gary Sinise, Roberto "Bobby" Barrera, The Honorable Eric Shinseki,  
Lois Pope***



**WASHINGTON D.C. – December 6, 2010** – Marking a historic milestone in the 12-year effort to construct the nation's first, permanent national tribute to America's disabled veterans, more than 500 veterans, disabled veterans, government dignitaries, VIPs and supporters gathered in Washington, D.C. on November 10 for the official groundbreaking ceremony of the **American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial**.

Held on the future site of the Memorial, a 2.4-acre triangular site across from the U.S. Botanic Garden and within view of the U.S. Capitol, the groundbreaking ceremony featured U.S. House of Representatives Speaker **Nancy Pelosi**; U.S. Secretary of Veterans Affairs **Eric Shinseki**; award-winning actor and Memorial spokesperson **Gary Sinise**; Chairman of the Board of Directors of the 1.2 million member Disabled American Veterans **Roberto "Bobby" Barrera** and National Commander **Wallace E. Tyson**; former Secretary of Veterans Affairs **Anthony Principi**; Veterans Affairs Chaplain **Clarence Cross**; as well as the Memorial Foundation's co-founders philanthropist **Lois Pope** and Disabled American Veterans CEO **Arthur H. Wilson**.

Following the presentation of colors by the **Army Color Guard** and a heartfelt national anthem from disabled Vietnam veteran **Wayne Miller**, a veritable who's who took the podium to emphasize the importance of a national Memorial commemorating America's disabled veterans.

"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 Sinise during his remarks to the crowd. "We owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude and respect. This Memorial is a magnificent way to help pay this debt."

Echoing Sinise's comments, Secretary Shinseki said, "The creation of this Memorial is a fitting tribute to patriots who answered the Nation's call of duty, and who have, in the face of devastating injury, shown us a quality of courage at which we can only marvel."

During her remarks, Speaker Pelosi said, "In building this Memorial, we are taking a critical step forward in fulfilling our pledge; that just as our troops leave no one behind on the battlefield, when they come home, we leave no veteran behind."

Speaking on behalf of the Memorial's Foundation, Wilson referenced the significant accomplishment the groundbreaking represented. "Today is an extraordinary day of recognition and tribute to America's disabled veterans. It's also a day to celebrate this critical milestone in our mission, now 12-years old, of creating the first national Memorial honoring our disabled veterans for their service and sacrifice," he said.

Through the juxtaposition of granite and glass, the design of the Memorial will convey an interplay of strength and vulnerability, loss and renewal. The focal point will be a star-shaped pool, its surface broken only by a ceremonial flame. Water flows over the fountain's perimeter into a large triangular pool that reflects the ever-changing sky, time of day and cycle of the seasons. Three walls of laminated glass with text and images and four bronze sculptures will tell the universal story of the disabled veteran's pride of service, trauma, challenge of healing and discovery of purpose

While fundraising continues in order to reach the Memorial's ultimate financial goal, major contributors include the DAV; Lois Pope; H. Ross Perot, Sr.; AT&T; Ford Motor Fund; Fifth Third Foundation; TriWest Healthcare Alliance; Kirkland & Ellis, LLP; Peter G. Peterson; Health Net Federal Services; numerous Veterans Service Organizations including Veterans of Foreign Wars of the U.S., Military Order of the Purple Heart, AMVETS; and more than one million individual grassroots donors.

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

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

#### **About The Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation:**

The mission of the Disabled Veterans' LIFE Memorial Foundation is to build The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial as a symbol of honor and unity for disabled veterans from all service branches and across all conflicts and generations. The Memorial, located in Washington D.C., will serve to educate, inform and remind all Americans of the human cost of war, and the sacrifices our disabled veterans, their families, and caregivers, have made on behalf of American freedom.

#### **About The American Veterans Disabled for Life Memorial:**

Congress approved the Memorial and President Bill Clinton signed the federal legislation into law in October 2000. The law authorized the Disabled Veterans' Life Memorial Foundation to establish a Memorial to be dedicated to both living and deceased disabled veterans, and to raise the entire \$81.2 million for construction, maintenance and preservation.

Following an invitational design competition in 2003, the Foundation selected Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd., of Alexandria, Virginia, to design the Memorial, with the graphics, text and bronze components of the Memorial created by artist Larry Kirkland in collaboration with Cloud Gehshan Associates. Washington D.C.-based architectural firm Shalom Baranes Associates is the project architect.