

Capitol Square Preservation Council

Report on the 150th Anniversary of the Unveiling of Virginia's Washington Monument, February 22nd, 2008

Executive Summary: Pursuant to **House Joint Resolution Number 615** of the 2007 Session of the General Assembly, the Capitol Square Preservation Council, in association with the House of Delegates and Senate, is charged to propose a commemoration of the 150th anniversary of the unveiling of the equestrian statue of George Washington on Capitol Square. The original event, held on February 22nd, 1858, was attended by nationally prominent politicians and dignitaries from throughout the region. Music composed for the occasion was premiered during the ceremony.

The anniversary of the unveiling will be commemorated with three components, each with an educational element. On the actual anniversary, February 22nd, a brief ceremony will be held at the monument or, in case of inclement weather, inside the Capitol. The event will feature the music originally composed for the 1858 unveiling, welcoming remarks from the Governor's Office and from the General Assembly, and a brief history of Virginia's Washington Monument. Weather permitting, the public will be allowed to tour the monument inside its perimeter fence.

Also on that day, the exhibit *Virginia's Washington Monument* will open in the Capitol Extension. This exhibit will focus on the history of the monument, including the unsuccessful entries for its design competition, and how the monument has been used in scholarly and popular culture. The exhibit will be housed primarily in the cases outside House Room 3 and Senate Room 3.

Finally, a full-color brochure, *"Full of Strength and Fire": Virginia's Washington Monument*, will be made available to visitors beginning February 22nd. The brochure will feature images from the *Virginia's Washington Monument* exhibit and expanded text.

Progress to Date: The Clerk of the House of Delegates and Clerk of the Senate have approved the three components of the commemoration. They will meet with the Director of the Capitol Square Preservation Council shortly to confirm final details.

Ceremony: The original sheet music has been secured and is being copied for performance on February 22nd. The Library of Virginia has provided research notes and text for its 2003 exhibit on the Washington Monument for remarks during the ceremony. House and Senate staff will work with the Preservation Council Director to schedule speakers and to stage the event.

Exhibit and Brochure: Research has been completed for both elements. Selection of images is ongoing, with the Library of Virginia images from its collections. Private donors have also been contacted and have agreed to lend objects and images for the exhibit and for the brochure. Images and text should be ready for final production by January 25.