



SKYLINE INK/PORTRAIT BY NEIL CHAPMAN

# The National Native American Veterans Memorial

On June 26 the Smithsonian’s Museum of the American Indian announced that out of the 120 original submissions and the five finalists, Harvey Pratt had been selected to create the Smithsonian’s National Native American Veterans Memorial.

## The Artist

**H**arvey Pratt, a member of the Cheyenne and Arapaho tribes, is a self-taught artist from Oklahoma who works in oil, watercolor, metal, clay, and wood. He served in the U.S. Marine Corps in Air Rescue and Security from 1962-65 while stationed at Da Nang Air Base.

Pratt chairs the Indian Arts and Crafts Board of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Recognized by the Cheyenne People as an outstanding Southern Cheyenne, he was inducted as a Peace Chief—the Cheyenne Nation’s highest honor.

## His Statement

**T**he *Warriors’ Circle of Honor* is a multisensory memorial nestled in a berm adjoining the museum’s Chesapeake Bay wetland environment. This site placement anchors the memorial in the geographic and historic landscape of our Nation’s Capital. An elevated stainless steel circle is the memorial’s centerpiece. The Sacred Circle is a symbol of unity among Native peoples. They recognize the circle in the cycles of heavenly bodies, nature, life, and death.

On ceremonial occasions, a flame will be ignited at the base of the circle. Veterans, families, and others will be invited to “come to the campfire” and tell their stories. Visitors may tie prayer cloths to the lances. When the wind blows, waves of prayers will be released into the heavens.

The heartbeat of the memorial is an intricately carved stone drum upon which the Sacred Circle rests. The drum is the voice of the people. Emanating from the outer wall, carefully arranged stones evoke a drumbeat, echoing into the landscape. The drumbeat is a call to gather. In the same way, a chorus of veterans’ voices calls out to us, asking us to remember the price of freedom. At the *Warriors’ Circle of Honor* their voices will echo into future generations. ■