



An Open Letter to our Journalism Community – From the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation

Dear Colleague:

Five years ago this month, we set out to establish a memorial at the National Mall in Washington, D.C., to commemorate America’s commitment to a free press by honoring journalists who sacrificed their lives in service to that cause – and we are well on our way to making that happen. We want to share with you some of the progress we have made, as well as how this memorial will support the journalism community and serve to educate current and future generations about risks to a free press and the contributions and sacrifices that reporters, photojournalists, editors, producers, and other journalists make every day.

About the Memorial

We launched the Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation in 2019 on the first anniversary of the deadliest assault against journalists in U.S. history when members of the Tribune’s *Capital Gazette* team were murdered in their newsroom in Annapolis. Since that launch, bipartisan legislation has been passed by Congress and signed into law authorizing our foundation to design and build a Fallen Journalists Memorial in the nation’s capital. Last year, we [received approval](#) from the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts to design the memorial on a prime site located at the National Mall with a direct view of the U.S. Capitol. Then, following a rigorous evaluation process, the [foundation selected](#) internationally recognized design firm, John Ronan Architects, as the winning design team for the memorial. Our goal is to receive final approval of a concept design in early 2025, begin construction in 2026, and complete the memorial in 2028.

Why the Memorial is Needed

Today, amid rising conflict and violence globally and political instability here at home, we believe such a memorial is needed more than ever. March marked one year since *Wall Street Journal* reporter Evan Gershkovich was wrongfully detained in Russia. August will mark a decade since the death of war correspondent James Foley. According to UNESCO, 65 journalists were killed in the line of duty in 2023 alone, a grim and alarming statistic. At home in the U.S. and abroad, the risks to the free press – and dangers often faced in protecting and documenting the truth – are present and ongoing.

For every memorial on the National Mall that honors a military or political leader, or commemorates an historic event, there was a journalist there to tell the story. But nothing in that sacred location honors the critical role of the press. The absence of a fallen journalists memorial is a glaring omission.

Join Us

As we approach the five-year anniversary of the start of this effort on June 28 – and as we move forward with design plans for the memorial at the National Mall – we invite you to join our mission. We all have colleagues who take risks every day to report news from all over the world – and may even know journalists who have been hurt or killed in this line of work. **We ask that**

you share this letter with five of your colleagues or other journalists. We hope you will help us raise awareness about this memorial and the importance of your work as journalists.

As a journalism professional, you bear the great responsibility of investigating and disseminating valuable information to the public, often shedding light on the misunderstood, uncovered, and dark corners of society. Sharing such information does not come without risks, but it is essential to a functioning democracy. The Fallen Journalists Memorial will serve to commemorate, educate and inspire visitors and the public by showcasing the value of a free press as a pillar of a vibrant democracy. It will galvanize future generations who may be inspired to support and fight for an independent press, and honor fallen journalists throughout history who sacrificed their lives reporting the news.

Sincerely,

David Dreier, Founder and Chairman
Barbara Cochran, President
The Fallen Journalists Memorial Foundation