

Awareness of Leadership

As with many memorials, the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial in Washington, D.C., was built after years of debate.

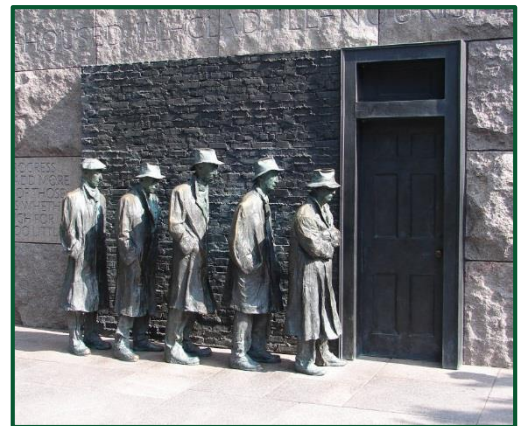


Women's groups demanded that Eleanor Roosevelt be given appropriate recognition. Activists for the disabled ardently believed that FDR should be portrayed in his wheelchair. On and on, the debates raged. Finally, in spite of all the controversy, it was completed.

The memorial gives testimony to the fact that President Roosevelt and his wife, Eleanor, served America during some of its darkest years. It is a fitting design because, as visitors approach it, nothing really stands out. All one sees is a flat granite wall, perhaps 20 feet in height, with a simple quote from FDR, but this is just the beginning.

The memorial stretches directly away from the entrance. After rounding the wall, visitors move from area to area; every one marked by unique stillness. Each succeeding area is creatively set apart from the previous one, making it a tribute in its own right.

Visitors find themselves looking at human-sized sculptures of men and women standing in bread lines, reading quotes decrying the savagery of war, staring eye to eye with Eleanor Roosevelt, and eventually looking up and across to see FDR in his wheelchair with his Scottish terrier beside him.



The strength of the memorial comes from its ability to draw the visitor into the presence of one man's passionate belief in serving his country. The impact of the memorial is to make each visitor more aware of the awesome responsibility of leadership – and not just the leadership of presidents, but leadership of all people.

Whenever you have doubts about your purpose, remember the words of Martin Luther King Jr.: "Everyone can be great because everyone can serve."

Whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your servant (Matthew 20:26).

– Beecher Hunter