

## Quotes About Freedom Park

### Howard Lee

“One of the most important concepts that we can ingrain in the hearts and minds of our children, is the importance of understanding, preserving, and maintaining freedom. And if we can remind them of the struggles that have led to bringing about freedom for all of us, I think we certainly stand a great chance of developing very strong and committed citizens. [NC Freedom Park] will be a symbol that will allow these students to not only be informed, but it will introduce them to history, the concept of history, from which I hope they will learn.”

- ◆ *Howard Lee is a political leader in NC who was the first Black mayor elected in Chapel Hill (serving 1969 - 1975) and the first elected Black mayor of any majority-white city in the South. He also served as Secretary of the North Carolina Department of Natural Resources and Community Development, and was elected to the NC Senate from 1990 – 1994, and again from 1996 - 2002. He also served as chairman of the NC State Board of Education and later as executive director of the NC Education Cabinet.*



**What does this quote tell you about the purpose of Freedom Park, its importance to our state, and/or the significance of its location?**



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### Phil Freelon

“My hope for the Park is that everyone who comes there, young and old, will be affected in some way. They will come and they will read the quotes. They will feel the ambiance of the space. And they’ll leave that moment changed somehow for the better. They will learn something and be moved.”

- ◆ *Phil Freelon was a world-renowned architect. His firm, the Freelon Group, was located in the Research Triangle Park of NC. He made his home in Durham. He is best known for being the principal architect of the magnificent National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, DC. In 2014 the Freelon Group was acquired by Perkins and Will, a global architectural firm. North Carolina Freedom Park was one of Mr. Freelon’s last projects. He remained deeply committed to it until his death due to ALS in 2019.*



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## Michael Stevenson

“I think it’s important for everybody in our state to understand our history and how we got to where we are, because we’re all in it together and we’re all going somewhere. A place like this is going to help give everybody that deeper and broader understanding that we need to move forward together.”

- ◆ *Michael Stevenson is in charge of Perkins Eastman, the architecture firm that carried on with NC Freedom Park upon the passing of Phil Freelon. Stevenson’s love of cities and urban culture has motivated his career in architecture and urban design for over forty years.*



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## Dr. John Hope Franklin

“The goal is a public art tribute to freedom as expressed through the African American experience. It will be called [North Carolina Freedom Park] and will be located in the heart of the state capital as a continuing reminder of the struggles for freedom – and how much more we need to do to achieve equity and justice in our society.”

- ◆ *The distinguished historian, Dr. John Hope Franklin, was a professor at Chicago and Duke Universities. In 1995 he was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. He was the author of The Free Negro in North Carolina, 1790-1860; From Slavery to Freedom: A History of African Americans; and The Emancipation Proclamation. He was a founding member and president of the Board of Advisors of North Carolina Freedom Park.*



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## Dr. William Friday

“Locating [Freedom Park] in our Capital City where tens of thousands of children go every year - why do this? It’s terribly important...so many times young people find going to a thing like this where they can touch something or feel something catalyzes all they’ve been taught in school.”

- ◆ *Dr. William Friday served for thirty years as president of the multi-campus University of North Carolina forty years as the host of "North Carolina People," the UNC-TV program that aired every Friday night, where he characteristically interviewed those ranging from major public officials to North Carolina citizens from all walks of life.*



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## Dr. Reginald Hildebrand

“Our public art and public spaces proclaim what and who we value, and what we aspire to achieve. With the construction of North Carolina Freedom Park in a very prominent location in the state capital, we are reclaiming a neglected history and proclaiming through that history how much we value Freedom. The premise of the park is that the people who can speak with the greatest power, poignancy and moral authority about Freedom, are the people who were denied it most completely...the people who were enslaved and their descendants. So, words about Freedom are the “monuments” in Freedom Park. Words that were spoken and written by Black North Carolinians of different backgrounds, and from different time periods, are artfully inscribed on the walls of five walkways that lead to the towering, illuminated sculpture at the park’s center called the Beacon of Freedom. The Beacon symbolizes the flame of Freedom that lit the soul of every slave, and that must continue to inspire and guide us today. Twenty years in the making, it is the product of the vision, hard work and commitment of many people. Freedom Park will be a legacy of our times to future generations.”

- ◆ *Dr. Reginald Hildebrand is a member of the NC Freedom park Board of Directors. He was a Professor of African American Studies and History at UNC-Chapel Hill, and after retiring, he served for three years as an instructor of history at Durham Technical Community College. He has served as a member of the North Carolina African American Heritage Commission and is a former co-chair of the North Carolina Freedom Park Board of Directors.*



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## Architect's Statement on Freedom Park

Perkins+Will | June 9, 2016

There is power and truth in what lies below the surface. The subterranean root system allows the mighty oak tree to stand tall and extend its branches skyward. Without this strong foundation, the trunk could not support the expanse of limbs, branches and ultimately the leaf system that in turn gathers the sunlight and fuels photosynthesis. But how often do we stop to consider the network of roots that make this all possible as we enjoy the beauty of the forest? By revealing the root structure, we can fully appreciate its vital role.

Just as the oak tree relies on structure that is hidden from view, North Carolina's growth and prosperity has depended greatly on the contributions of countless men and women – many of whom have been hidden below the 'surface' of our states' written history. There are numerous people of color and other under-represented groups who have played vital roles in the storied history of North Carolina. Sadly, the history books often overlook these hidden heroes and sheroes to focus primarily on entertainers and athletes. The North Carolina Freedom Park represents a fantastic opportunity to expand on North Carolina's history and bring the hidden branches of the Freedom story to the surface.

The Freedom Park site has been in plain sight (so to speak) in the core of our state's Capital for decades. Yet this horticultural gem has gone virtually unnoticed by most passersby. Our design proposal will dramatically change this dynamic by creating paths through the park that facilitate connections between several key destinations in town. These paths are excavated into the site, revealing architectural side-walls that hold back the earth and support the root balls of the legacy trees. These walls provide a textured surface where words and images telling the Freedom story can be displayed.

The diagonal paths also form edges for the three major components of the Freedom Park; the existing NC Victims Memorial, an area to Reflect, and an area to Gather. The Reflection component is oriented toward the State Legislature building and its message is closely related to the stories along the Memory paths. A grassy plateau forms the Gathering area which is suitable for small performances, poetry readings, and viewing films projected on the blank white wall of the Archives building.

In the center of the Park stands a vertical structure which extends from the lower path walls. This architectural element adds prominence to the composition and draws attention to the Park, welcoming pedestrians into this new Capital destination.



### Think About It

1. What are the main components of Freedom Park?
2. Why do you think designers chose this way to tell the "Freedom story" of North Carolina?

3. Why are a tree's roots, even when hidden, important to the life and health of the tree? Why do you think the architect uses this metaphor to explain the purpose of Freedom Park?
4. Why do you think words (quotes, known as the "Voices of Freedom") are a focal point of Freedom Park?
5. What would you suggest to an artist or architect attempting to create a work of art honoring the African American experience in North Carolina?
6. What ideas, themes, values, characteristics, images, events, people, etc. would best exemplify that experience in a work of public art?
7. What should we highlight, as a state, about the African American experience in North Carolina to future generations?
8. The article starts with the statement, "There is power and truth in what lies below the surface." What do you think this means and how does this apply to Freedom Park?
9. What are you most excited about regarding your planned visit to Freedom Park?
10. What does FREEDOM mean to you? Write (words, phrases, rhymes, etc.), sketch, doodle, below:

