



Media Contacts:  
David Cumpston  
Landis Communications, Inc.  
(415) 359-2316  
[cumpston@landispr.com](mailto:cumpston@landispr.com)  
[www.landispr.com](http://www.landispr.com)

Elena Fuhrmann  
Landis Communications  
(415) 359-2304  
[elena@landispr.com](mailto:elena@landispr.com)

## **Nelson Mandela Foundation, NorthStar Memorial Group and Skylawn Memorial Park Announce Winner of National Memorial Design Competition Honoring the Late Social Justice Icon, Nelson Mandela**

*Ohio native, Brian Sell, submits winning design, beating out nearly 200 entries;  
Permanent memorial to be unveiled at Skylawn Memorial Park in San Mateo, Calif. in late 2015*

*Winner announced on one-year anniversary of Mandela's death*

**SAN MATEO, Calif. (Dec. 4, 2014)** – The [Nelson Mandela Foundation](#), in partnership with [NorthStar Memorial Group](#) and [Skylawn Funeral Home and Memorial Park](#), today announced the winner of the Nelson Mandela Memorial Design Competition. The competition invited U.S. residents to create a permanent memorial in honor of the late social justice leader. The Foundation selected the design submitted by Brian Sell, senior designer and architect with Columbus, Ohio-based [Moody Nolan](#). Sell's winning entry was among nearly 200 submitted by architects, artists and students from across the country. The final monument, unveiled in late 2015, will be constructed by and permanently hosted at Skylawn Memorial Park in San Mateo. The winner is being announced one year following [Mandela's](#) passing on Dec. 5, 2013.

The monument's location in Northern California reinforces the strong connection between the San Francisco Bay Area and Mandela's life and work, which dates back almost three decades. In opposition to Mandela's imprisonment, Oakland, Calif. Congressman Ron Dellums drafted the Comprehensive Anti-Apartheid Act of 1986. Thousands of Bay Area residents rallied for civil rights and Mandela's release from prison. Shortly following his release in 1990, he visited Oakland.

"Although nearly 200 people submitted entries that were inspirational and moving, the design by Brian stood out in its rich representation of Madiba's legacy," said Sello Hatang, chief executive of the Nelson Mandela Foundation. "This memorial symbolizes the importance of everything Madiba stood for in his life. It will give visitors from the Bay Area and beyond a peaceful place to gather and it will inspire the living of his legacy."

An Ohio native and a graduate of Ohio State University, Sell credits his passion for meaningful architectural design as a reflection of his social values and his inspiration for the memorial. Moody Nolan embraced the design competition as a firm and a number of their staff prepared initial designs.



*Rendering of winning memorial honoring the late Nelson Mandela, designed by Brian Sell, Moody Nolan Architects*

“The challenge to capture Mandela’s spirit in a permanent monument is what sparked our desire to create a memorial that reframed people’s views about their circumstances and ability to drive positive change,” said Sell. “We want visitors to see the world and its challenges in a more positive way. If just one facet of this memorial inspires someone to change their lives for the better, our mission was accomplished.”



Brian Sell, senior designer and architect with Moody Nolan and winner of the Nelson Mandela Memorial Design Competition

When preparing for this opportunity, the Moody Nolan team immersed themselves in a wide range of material related to Mandela’s life and legacy. The final design, meant to symbolize life, growth and shelter, reflects a translation of his birth name, Rolihlahla, which means “pulling the branch of a tree.” A series of quotations, made famous by Mandela, represent the three distinct phases of his life before, during and after imprisonment. While in prison, for example, Mandela spiritually overcame the confines of the bars surrounding him. Although he was physically locked up, he refused to allow the situation to entrap his mind.

“As Mandela once said, ‘Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world,’” said Sell. “He always encouraged others to look outside the box and educate themselves. Our goal was to design a timeless

memorial that embodies this very element of Mandela’s life, and I hope my design will inspire visitors to advance his legacy.”

“The creativity and thoughtfulness displayed in the submissions we received was tremendous, and we want to thank everyone who contributed for honoring such an important figure in our collective history,” said David Montgomery, cemetery development and memorialization director at Skylawn Memorial Park. “Brian’s design will inspire many future generations to provide ‘service to one’s fellow human,’ and we couldn’t be more proud to host this memorial for all to see.”

“It was clear from the beautiful acknowledgements included in the design entries received that the designers who entered the competition were empathetic to Mandela’s struggles and inspired by his ultimate victory,” said Brian Kestenblatt, general manager, Skylawn Funeral Home and Memorial Park. “We are deeply honored that so many talented artists, architects and students from across the country contributed their time and energy to this project.”

Moody Nolan is one of the largest minority-owned firms in the country. They are responsible for such projects as the International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina. The design for the 60,000-square-foot structure communicates the largely overlooked history of African Americans in the state, explaining how this population impacted the nation.

#### **ABOUT THE NELSON MANDELA MEMORIAL DESIGN COMPETITION**

The contest was open to all U.S. residents over 13 years of age and submissions were accepted between April 15 and Oct. 15, 2014. Nearly 200 entries were received and each was juried by visionaries including:

- Barbara Lee, U.S. Representative for California's 13<sup>th</sup> congressional district
- Alice Huffman, California State NAACP president
- Rebecca Rolfe, San Francisco LGBT Center’s executive director
- Naomi M. Kelly, administrator for the city and county of San Francisco
- David Lim, San Mateo councilmember
- Neal Schwartz, California College of the Arts associate professor
- David Montgomery, cemetery development and memorialization director for NorthStar Memorial Group

– more –

The memorial will be unveiled at a special gala next summer. Those interested in attending can email [info@nelsonmandela-memorial.com](mailto:info@nelsonmandela-memorial.com) for more information.

**ABOUT THE NELSON MANDELA FOUNDATION**

The Nelson Mandela Foundation, a registered trust, is a human rights-oriented nonprofit organization. The Foundation delivers to the world an integrated and dynamic information resource on the life and times of Nelson Mandela, and promotes the search for sustainable solutions to critical social problems through memory-based dialogue interventions and tangible activations to realize the legacy of Nelson Mandela. For more information, visit [www.nelsonmandela.org](http://www.nelsonmandela.org).

**ABOUT NORTHSTAR MEMORIAL GROUP**

Founded in 2004, NorthStar Memorial Group is a privately held, funeral, cremation and memorialization company founded on the belief that passion, accountability, courage and trust are the keys to building a successful organization. The Houston-based company manages 78 locations in ten states. For more information, visit [www.nsmg-ext.com](http://www.nsmg-ext.com).

**ABOUT SKYLAWN FUNERAL HOME AND MEMORIAL PARK**

Skylawn Funeral Home and Memorial Park was established in 1959 as a non-sectarian cemetery in San Mateo, Calif., and a state-of-the-art funeral home was added in 2006. For more information, visit [skylawnmemorialpark.com](http://skylawnmemorialpark.com). (FD 1848)

**ABOUT MOODY NOLAN**

Founded in 1982 by Curtis J. Moody, FAIA, and Howard E. Nolan, PE, in Columbus, Ohio, Moody Nolan has since worked in more than 40 states. Specializing in civic, corporate, education, collegiate, healthcare, historic preservation, housing, retail/mixed-use and sports & recreation facilities. For more than 30 years, the firm has developed a strong reputation for design excellence evidenced with the more than 210 local, state and national design citations. The 160-person firm has regional offices in Chicago, Covington, Ky., Cleveland, Dallas, Houston, Indianapolis, Nashville and Washington, D.C. For more information, visit [www.moodynolan.com](http://www.moodynolan.com).

**MEDIA, PLEASE NOTE:** To request an interview with Brian Sell or David Montgomery, or for hi-res images of the winning design or of Skylawn Memorial Park, please contact David Cumpston or Elena Fuhrmann at [northstar@landispr.com](mailto:northstar@landispr.com) or (415) 561-0888.

###