

# Design finalist makes his mark

By BARBARA AGGERHOLM  
RECORD STAFF

He didn't win the American competition, but Ken Lum knows his design of a memorial remembering the heroes of Flight 93 told the emotional story.

Lum, 28, was the sole Canadian among five finalists in an international competition to design the Flight 93 memorial.

He graduated in July with a master's degree in architecture from the University of Waterloo.

His (F)Light design, called "sobering and shocking" by jurors, featured a "luminous scar" in the landscape with a roofscape that retraces the final journey of Flight 93.

The roof terminates in an engraved memorial slab that punctures the earth.

The winning design, called Crescent of Embrace, was announced yesterday in Washington. It was designed by Paul Murdoch Architects of Los Angeles, Calif., with Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects of Charlottesville, Va.

The selected memorial, which includes groves of sugar and red maples, will honour the 40 passengers and crew members of Flight 93, which crashed into a reclaimed strip mine in rural southwestern Pennsylvania on Sept. 11, 2001. They all died.

They were hailed as heroes for trying to seize control of the plane from four terrorists to thwart an attack on Washington.

Lum, who lives in Toronto, said it was a powerful experience to meet relatives of those who died and the corner who was in charge of the burial ground, called the "sacred ground," at the Pennsylvania site.

"It was emotionally charged," said Lum, who immigrated to Canada from Malaysia 10 years ago. "They were really sad and they expressed themselves quite a bit.

"We immersed ourselves into the tragedy, and tried to understand what kind of mindset the passengers would be in as the event transpired."

Lum translated what he learned in Pennsylvania into the design, which jurors said came closest to helping the visitor experience "what the 40 felt when they acted."

"The Jury commends (F)Light as a bold and daring design that captures the event and sends a strong emotional message.

The "scar" is art — disturbing to some, challenging to others, but memorable to everyone — and would be a lasting voice for the event far into the future," the jury report said.

However, the architecture of the sculpture might overwhelm the walking experience of visitors to the site, said the jury, which was composed of relatives, professionals and community members.

"In many ways, the memorial from our perspective was a success," Lum said.

The winning design, featuring landscape architecture, is a "very typical American park memorial," he said.

"It's something that everybody can embrace . . . That's one of the stronger points."



University of Waterloo architecture graduate Ken Lum was one of five finalists selected to design a memorial to honour the victims of Flight 93.

Lum, whose design team included other UW students — Dennis Fanti, Yvonne Lam and Ivan Ilic — said his concentration on Flight 93 has left a lasting impression on him.

"It comes to show how people can sacrifice themselves for people that they do not know."

A self-described "humanitarian architect," Lum said he has always designed in a way that focuses on conservation of nature and "giving back to society."

He is now working on an interior design for an information centre for the Baha'is of Toronto.

*baggerholm@therecord.com*