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Architecture student is finalist for 9/11 memorial design

University of Waterloo architecture student Ken Lum is one of five finalists in a competition to design a memorial for the passengers and crew who died when their plane crashed in Pennsylvania on September 11, 2001.



Architecture student
Ken Lum

"This is a truly remarkable accomplishment," said Rick Haldenby, director of the UW School of Architecture, noting Lum is the only student and only non-American selected. He will receive \$25,000 USD to develop his final proposal to be presented to a jury in June, with the eventual winner to be announced this fall.

Known as the Flight 93 Memorial Project, the web site explains: "The flight left Newark Airport at 8:42 a.m. and began its journey to San Francisco. But at 9:36 a.m., as the Boeing 757 was nearing Cleveland, Ohio, it abruptly changed course, turning southeast toward the nation's capital. . . . Just after 10 a.m. the plane crashed, at an estimated speed of more than 500 miles per hour, into a reclaimed strip mine at the edge of the woods in Somerset County, Pennsylvania. . . . All 33 passengers, seven crew members, and the four hijackers were killed."

The memorial is planned near the site of the crash, and designers throughout North America were invited to submit designs, with 1,011 proposals received. "The common thread among the five is that each provides a 'memorial expression' while considering and respecting the land," a news release said.

Lum, whose home is Toronto, created a project titled "(F)LIGHT: The Luminous Roofscape." The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette reported that Lum "hopes his design conveys the sacrificial gesture made by the 40 passengers and crew members. . . . It's believed that the terrorists were headed toward Washington, D.C., and that the passengers and crew led an uprising against their abductors.

"One of the defining aspects of Lum's design is the way visitors would be channelled through a defined path as they head to the sacred ground at the crash site, which contains the victims' remains. 'It expresses a sense of loss,' he said. 'Although they were individuals, they worked collectively to save lives.'"

Lum writes: "Our proposal aims to transform a common field into a sanctuary that resonates a sense of individual and collective memory, sacrifice and loss. . . . Through its annual cycle of rebirth, the reclaimed landscape accentuates the experience of the memorial through a metaphor of life.

"Descending into the bowl, visitors are gradually removed from the sights

and sounds of the park." The shape of the design echoes the path followed by the United Airlines jet in its last flight and the "luminous" roof is "sculpted to invoke a physical and spiritual experience of awe, inspiration and hope through the recollection of events that unfolded."

Three of the other final entries in the design competition are from professional architects or designers; one is from a team headed by the dean of architecture at the University of Texas at Austin.

For more details, go to: <http://www.flight93memorialproject.org/press.asp?area=doc&ExpandGroupID=11879>

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