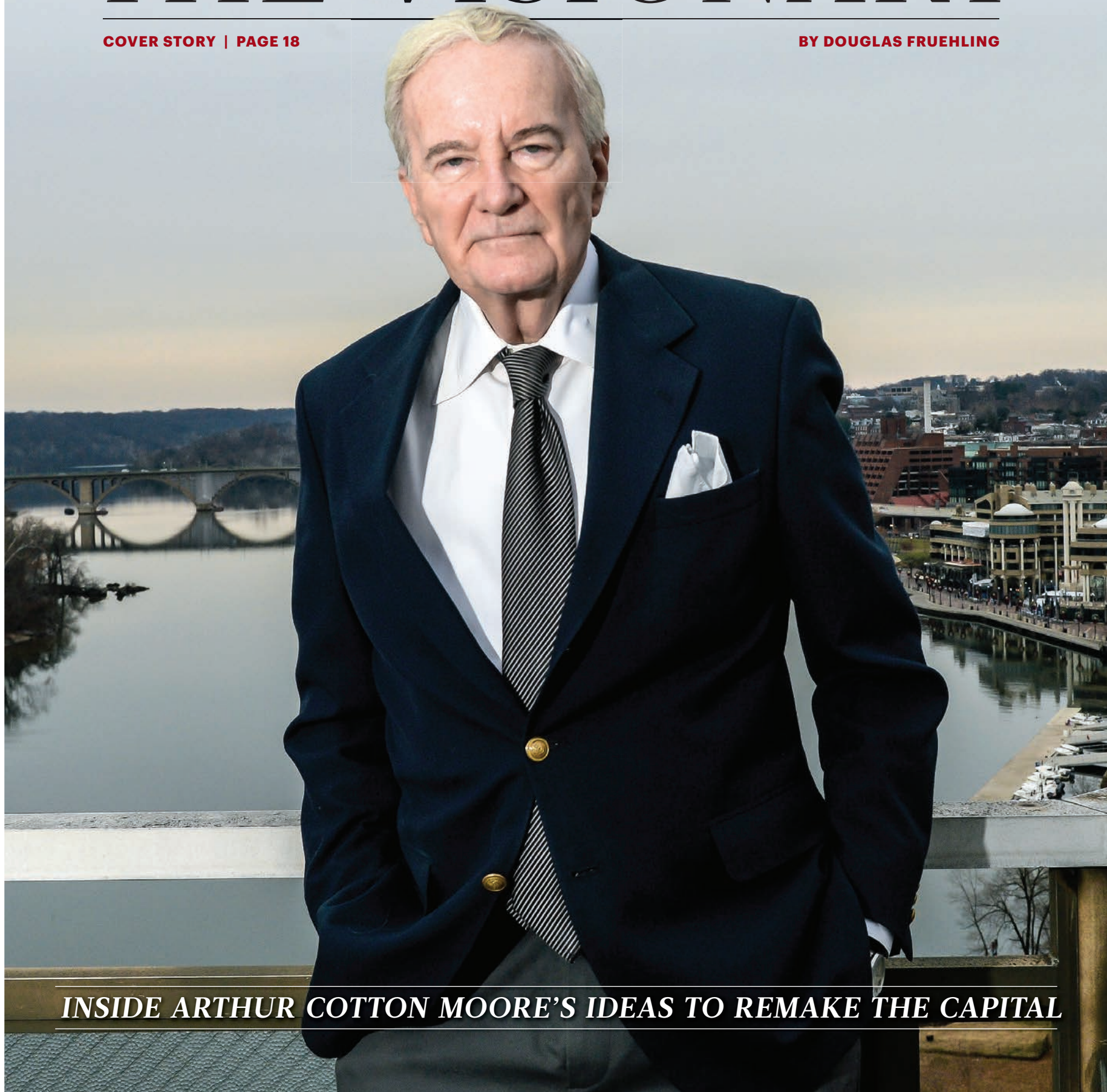


# WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

## THE VISIONARY

COVER STORY | PAGE 18

BY DOUGLAS FRUEHLING



**INSIDE ARTHUR COTTON MOORE'S IDEAS TO REMAKE THE CAPITAL**

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BY DOUGLAS FRUEHLING | dfruehling@bizjournals.com

**H**e's an architect, planner, preservationist, painter and furniture maker, a novelist, sculptor and cancer survivor. But perhaps most of all, Arthur Cotton Moore is a visionary. Everywhere he looks, he sees opportunity.

He always has. It started decades ago around the time the venerated D.C. architect launched his private practice. When he rode his bike around the city he grew up in, he saw mistakes. He saw design, architecture and planning gone awry. And he desperately wanted to fix it.

He seized the opportunity, if for no other reason than to sate his own desire to make things better. As he toiled weekdays building his own practice, he spent the weekends laboring over his visions to improve D.C. The Georgetown waterfront. The Kennedy Center. The Old Post Office. He tackled them all.

He'd sketch out his idea and share it with anyone who would listen – neighborhood groups, review agencies, the press. Sometimes they were receptive, sometimes not so much. Often he faced hostility. He never earned a commission, and they began calling him "Mr. Pro Bono."

Moore, now 82, wears the description with honor, calling his pro bono work "the most rewarding and satisfying activities of my life."

"Without a client, you could think entirely of what would be wonderful for the public. And the public becomes, essentially, your client," Moore said in an interview. "There's a certain freedom to that."

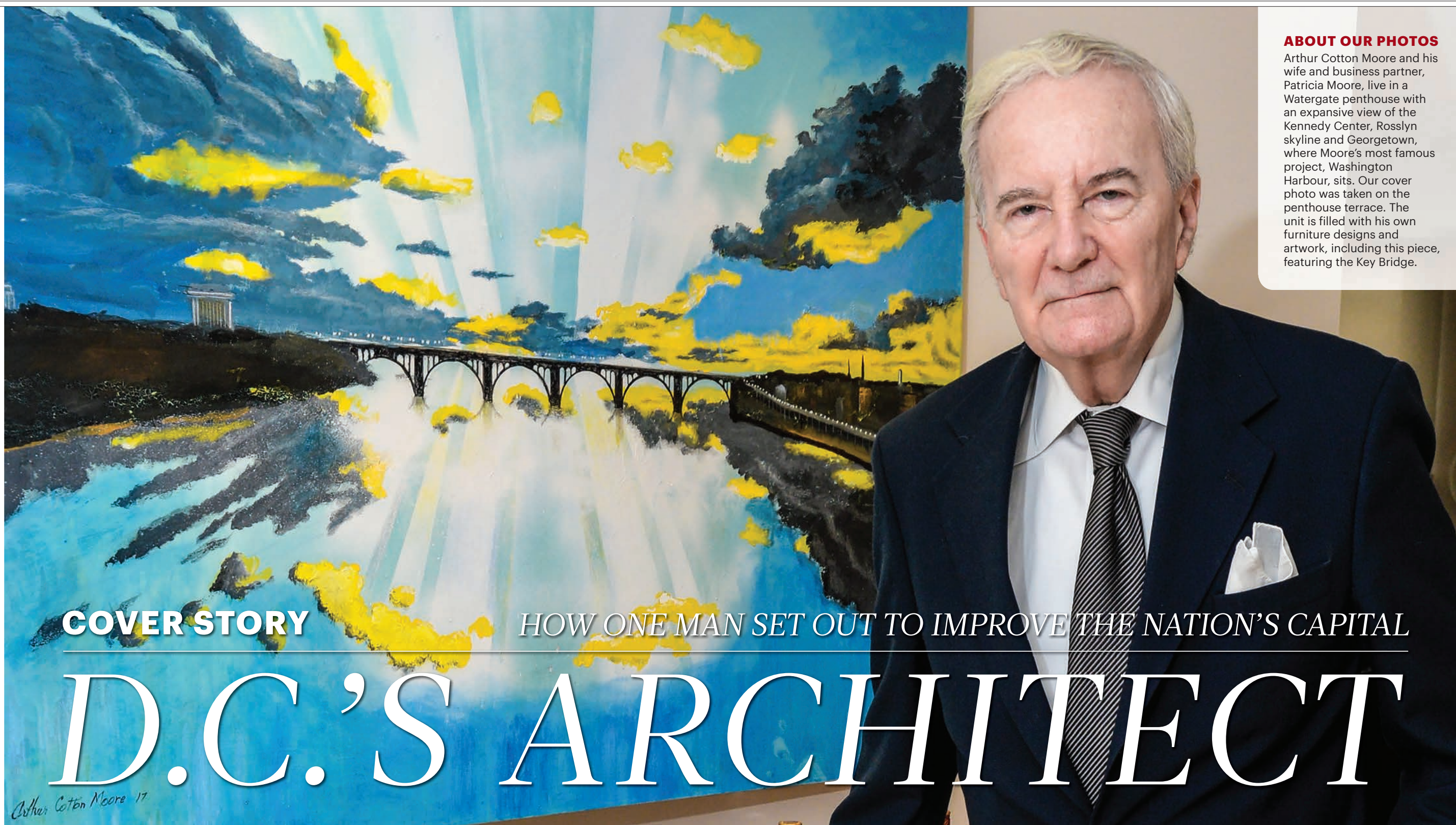
He's compiled all of his visions in a paperback book, "Our Nation's Capital: Pro Bono Publico Ideas." D.C.-based nonprofit publisher International Arts & Artists printed about 1,000 copies. They are available on Amazon.com for \$15, but Moore is donating many to schools, libraries and other public agencies. The book is also available at arthurcottonmoore.com.

His goal is to publicize the ideas. He knows it's part of his legacy, and he hopes the ideas live on, whether or not they ever come to fruition. Interested? He'll license any idea or image in the book for free.



#### FROM THE BOOK

- Ideas to expand, improve and remake the National Mall. **Page 20**
- How Moore would improve Potomac River connections. **Page 22**
- Ideas to help the homeless and save Maryland Ave. **Page 25**



#### ABOUT OUR PHOTOS

Arthur Cotton Moore and his wife and business partner, Patricia Moore, live in a Watergate penthouse with an expansive view of the Kennedy Center, Rosslyn skyline and Georgetown, where Moore's most famous project, Washington Harbour, sits. Our cover photo was taken on the penthouse terrace. The unit is filled with his own furniture designs and artwork, including this piece, featuring the Key Bridge.

## COVER STORY

HOW ONE MAN SET OUT TO IMPROVE THE NATION'S CAPITAL

# D.C.'S ARCHITECT

JOANNE S. LAWTON / STAFF

## Q&A

WITH ARTHUR COTTON MOORE

**► What do you hope to accomplish with the book?** I want to leave it as a series of ideas that people can take up over time. A few of the ideas have already been taken over, and some of them have been just influential. But the point is that these are something that can occur, what I think make practical benefits. But they take time. Everything in Washington takes a long time.

L'Enfant did a plan, but by the end of the 19th century, everybody realized the place was a mess. There were railroad stations on the Mall. It was a very chaotic situation. And they said, "Well, we've got to do something about it." So what they did was the McMillan Plan, which essentially took the L'Enfant plan and made it more three-dimensional and more formal. And it's basically what Washington is today. If we follow that kind of idea with

planning, we can continue to enrich and make a really wonderful national capital.

**► You say in the introduction that the pro bono work was the most rewarding and satisfying activity of your life. Why?** Who doesn't have a client who says, "I want a beautiful building, but I want it cheap?" You have a problem wrestling with that. Without a client, you could think entirely of what would be wonderful for the public. And the public becomes, essentially, your client. There's a certain freedom to that. There's not a lot of money in it all. And I think that there's been enough progress on some of these things to give me the idea that in future years, somebody might take up a number of these.

**► How much of your time did you spend working on the ideas?** I spent more weekends, odd times. Architecture is not a constant, even business. It goes up and down. Mostly, it was, shall we say, spare time.

**► What was the reaction to your ideas?** There was some level of hostility [from D.C. and federal officials] often because I would be seen to be trampling on somebody's turf.

The so-called planning people and the city and various agencies don't really plan. What they do is review. They review projects that come before them. So there is no sort of visionary agency. The only one I know of was Mayor [John] Lindsay's in New York. He had a special urban design group. It was short-lived. It's not government's métier or their way of doing things. It really comes from the outside. And so that's what I'm doing, essentially, giving them a lot of ideas that they ought to think about.

#### ► Did you deliver your ideas to agencies?

There were some of them that I had gone and actually presented – one of the earlier ones I presented to the National Capital Planning Commission, and that was the idea of steps down from the Kennedy Center to the water and a dock there [see renderings, page 22]. Rosslyn has 20,000 parking spaces, and they are empty at night and the weekend because they are business-oriented. And so, people could come and park there and take a ferry boat over to the Kennedy Center. And the way I had designed the steps would allow somebody to come by boat and actually go to their seat even in bad weather. So it was a way

that they could connect Rosslyn. The river has two banks. It has a right bank and a left bank. And the idea that it only operates on one side is crazy.

It would be a small boat ride because I think ferry service and long boat rides take too much time. And this could connect both Washington Harbour and the Kennedy Center and Rosslyn, a reasonable loop. And so, I have presented that to a number of groups, and Rosslyn Renaissance [the precursor to the business improvement district] loved it. The planning commission didn't know what to do with it because it wasn't a formal proposal. You have to be a government agency to apply to or put a project before the NCPD, which is, I think, too bad. But that has to happen. And so, I gave it only as an information thing to them. And they didn't decide at all, which is not unusual in Washington.

We have a certain negative approach. And many, many, many, many review agencies are really set up to say "no." And there is no agency or thing that is set up to say, "Yes, let's go this way" or "let's promote this" kind of thing.

So that's why the book's there. Maybe later on, when I'm no longer here, some people say

it will be an easier thing to think about.

**► You think of this as your legacy?** Yes, I do. And I think it eventually would improve the capital considerably.

**► So many people can complain about things, but they don't want to come up with solutions. You came up with solutions.** That was the idea, come up with ideas that would correct the problems. And, I mean, all the way from having a roof over the Carter Barron, seems like a logical thing to do. If it was lightweight, it could be taken down in the winter. There are things that would make things work better.

**► And you didn't think about cost when you were doing these?** Yes, we did. For instance, in the Kennedy Center steps, we actually had a donor. It was going to cost \$4 million. We had a donor who was going to donate that. And we went to see the chairman at that point, and he was excited about it. And then that went a little bit dormant. And then it turned out that the German embassy, well, actually reflecting Germany's interest, wanted to do the steps. And so they were going to pay for it. And they

were very embarrassed when the Kennedy Center said, "No, we don't want to do it."

And we had a presentation to a committee in Congress on alternatives to the Eisenhower Memorial. And one of them I did have professionally costed out – a professional estimate of, well, he came up with \$9 million. I said, "Round it up to 10." And it is significantly [less] compared to the present idea that they're going forward with, which, I think, is more than \$140 million, and it was liked by the family at that time. But I did have it professionally cost so that some of these would have a tag on them.

**► Do you get frustrated when good ideas aren't considered?** Yes [laughter].

**► How do you deal with that?** Well, I used to have a glass of wine or something. Again, one of Washington's characteristics is it's an area that makes up rules, regulations and other things which are essentially ways of saying no. And so, I was trying to deal with that culture, especially in Washington. And therefore some of these ideas will have to percolate a little longer before anybody really gets them, somebody positively takes them seriously.



COVER STORY: D.C.'S ARCHITECT

# THE NATIONAL MALL

ARTHUR COTTON MOORE HAS SOME BIG IDEAS FOR THE CAPITAL'S MOST IMPORTANT PIECE OF REAL ESTATE

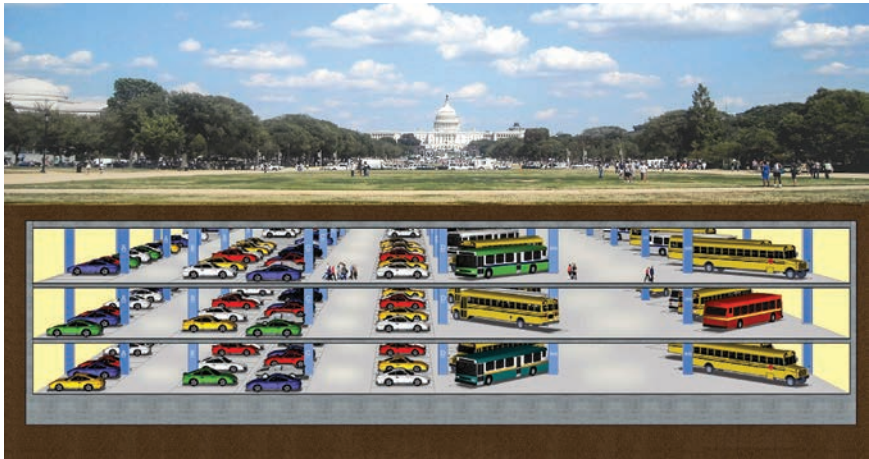
ALL IMAGES COURTESY OF ARTHUR COTTON MOORE



## EXPAND IT

The Mall has been expanded before, so why not again?  
L'Enfant's original plan laid out the area between the Capitol and the Washington Monument, while the McMillan Plan envisioned the area between the Washington Monument and the Lincoln Memorial, as well as the Tidal Basin and Jefferson Memorial grounds.  
Arthur Cotton Moore has proposed a whole new section, shown at left.  
"We need another stretch," he said, noting that the obvious answer is extending the north-south axis from the White House to the Jefferson Memorial.

"We have pushed the river to the west ever since Washington began," he said. "And so it's a little more pushing it to the west, though most of these places could actually be built on piers."  
His proposal would place the Supreme Court immediately south of the Jefferson Memorial, creating a true symbolic triangle with one of the three branches of government at each node.  
It would also create additional room for memorials on the Mall, an important element of the plan, given the fact that Congress has characterized the Mall as an essentially completed work.  
Moore says there would be another benefit: the elimination of the dead end at the north end of the Washington Channel. Boaters would be able to reach the Potomac River without navigating around Hains Point.  
"Washington Channel frustrates everybody who wanted to have a ferry service because it's a long cul-de-sac," he said.



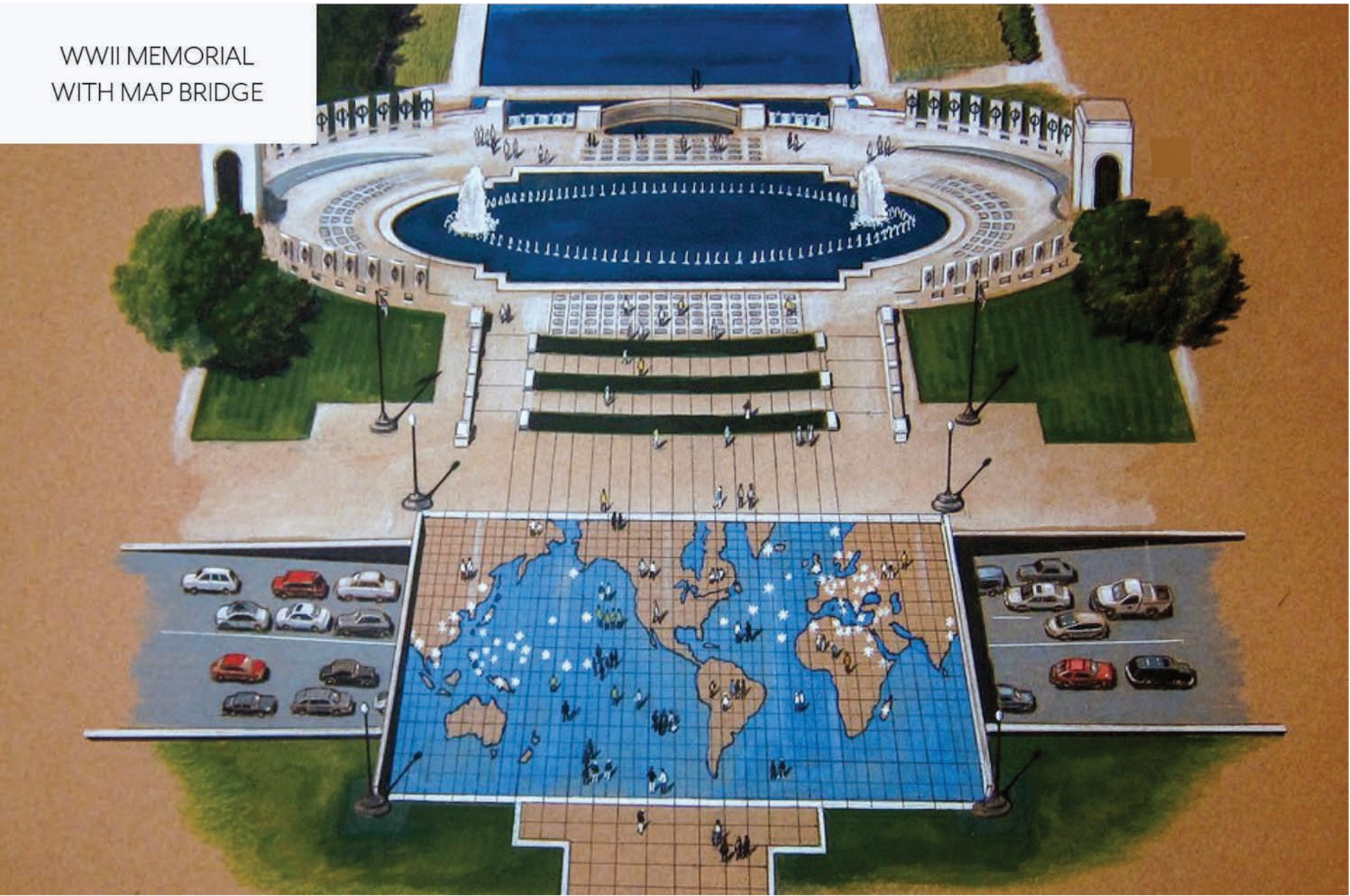
## BUILD UNDER IT

Everyone in Washington knows we have a lot of tour buses. They clog our streets and create noise and air pollution.  
"They offload their people and they park all over the Mall or around the Mall and they leave their motors running because the drivers want to be warm or they want to be cool," Moore said. "The problem with all of this is it actually measurably has increased pollution in the city."  
Moore wants to build parking for buses and other vehicles below the National Mall. The project is called the National Mall Underground.

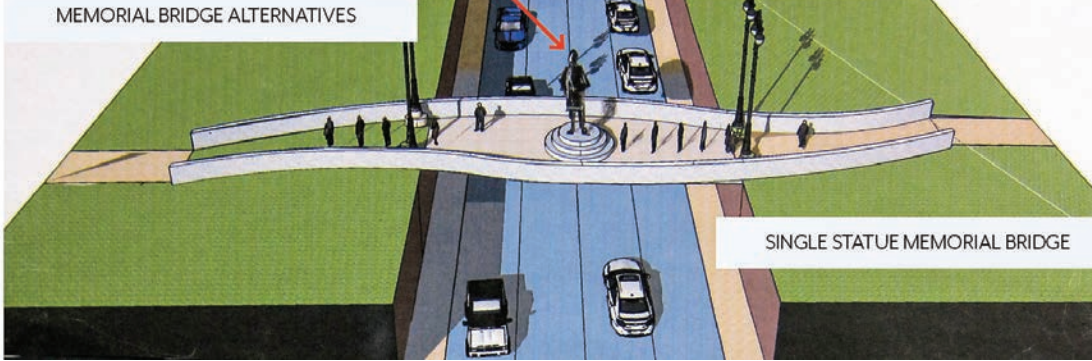
The project would also include first aid, security, food and restrooms. It would be built between the Smithsonian Castle and the Museum of Natural History.  
And, perhaps most importantly, it would provide a solution to stormwater flooding, serving as a reservoir as shown in the rendering above right. It's a model used at Moore's Washington Harbour project on the Georgetown waterfront. The lower garage level there is designed to take in flood waters.  
Even when stormwater surge isn't an issue, the

facility would have cisterns to collect rain water and provide irrigation for the National Mall.  
Moore's book includes additional renderings showing how the visitors center would look and how a robotic garage would work beneath the surface of the Mall.  
Moore, developer Albert Small and a local nonprofit have backed the idea, which Moore estimated in 2014 would cost between \$168 million and \$284 million.  
Although the proposal has intrigued many public officials, it has so far failed to gain traction.

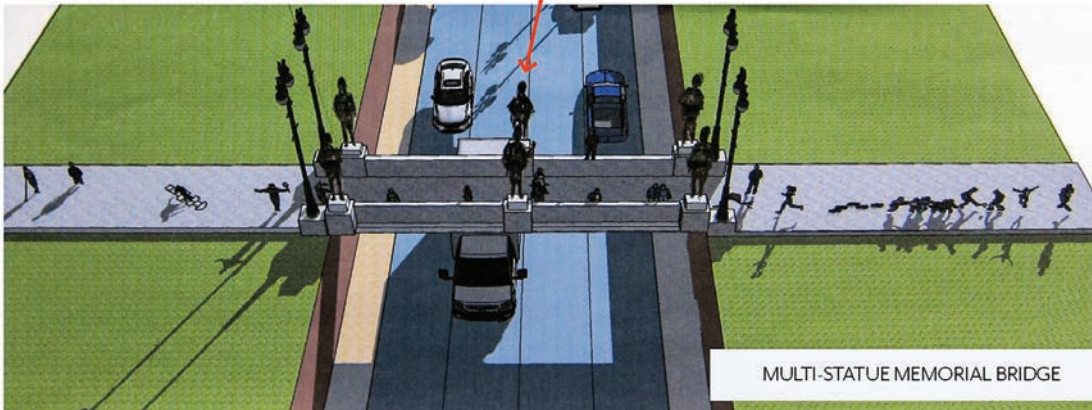
WWII MEMORIAL WITH MAP BRIDGE



LARGER CENTRAL STATUE



MEMORIAL STATUE WITH COMMEMORATIVE PLAQUE



## UNIFY IT

Not only does Moore want a bigger Mall — he wants to unify it.  
"I always believed that you should be able to tie the Mall all together so that somebody can walk or bicycle from the Capitol to the Lincoln Memorial and make a unified experience out of it."  
How? He'd build the roads below grade, creating bridges that would provide a seamless experience for pedestrians. Two of his drawings are shown at left.  
And there's a bonus: The bridges would provide more opportunities for smaller memorials. As Moore notes, bridges have been used as memorials throughout Europe for centuries.  
His idea for bridges across the Mall would also provide an opportunity to create a human element at the National War II Memorial on 17th Street NW between the Reflecting Pool and the Washington Monument. See his vision in the rendering above.  
"The World War II memorial is a little funeral," he said of the monument, which was designed by Friedrich St. Florian as part of a national design competition. It opened in 2004.  
"It looks like it belongs at Arlington Cemetery. It doesn't communicate at all. The idea is a bridge that itself could be a map of the world. It could be lit. You could be standing at Normandy with the Washington Monument in front of you, and you would have a kind of sense of both history and Washington's place in history. That's the kind of thing I think would enhance without being destructive."  
"I think it would be very much a positive thing for the city."

## MORE ABOUT ARTHUR COTTON MOORE

- **Age:** 82
- **Residence:** Watergate
- **Education:** St. Albans School, 1954; Princeton University, bachelor of arts, 1958; Princeton School of Architecture, master of fine arts, 1960
- **Resume:** Satterlee & Smith, D.C., 1960-1961; Chloethiel Woodard Smith & Associates, D.C., 1961-1965; Arthur Cotton Moore/Associates, D.C., 1965 to date
- **Honors:** American Institute of Architects fellow
- **Major works by Arthur Cotton Moore:**
  - Canal Square, Georgetown
  - Washington Harbour, Georgetown
  - Foundry, Georgetown
  - Portals, Southwest
  - Old Post Office 1980s renovation and addition
  - Cairo renovation
  - Library of Congress modernization and renovation
  - Phillips Collection
- **Other projects featured in "Our Nation's Capital: Pro Bono Publico Ideas":**
  - The Old Post Office
  - Pennsylvania Avenue
  - Carter Barron Amphitheatre
  - Fort Lincoln
  - FBI building
  - L'Enfant Promenade
  - World War I memorial
  - Washington Convention Center



## COVER STORY: D.C.'S ARCHITECT

## THE RIVERFRONT

ARTHUR COTTON MOORE EMBRACED THE WATERFRONT  
BEFORE WATERFRONTS WERE COOLCONNECT  
THE DOTS

Arthur Cotton Moore started thinking about the Georgetown waterfront, once a wasteland, as early as the 1960s. And he eventually got the chance to improve it, designing Washington Harbour, which delivered in 1986.

But even as Washington Harbour brought people to the Potomac River for the first time, Moore wanted even more.

In 1987, he proposed adding steps from the elevated Kennedy Center terrace to the Potomac River. The Washington Post published a column and rendering featuring the idea.

The idea garnered quite a bit of publicity through the years — Moore says he even introduced a donor to the Kennedy Center (see Q&A, page 18) — but the idea never got off the ground. The Kennedy Center is now building an expansion to the south of the main building that will have a pedestrian bridge linking it to the river.

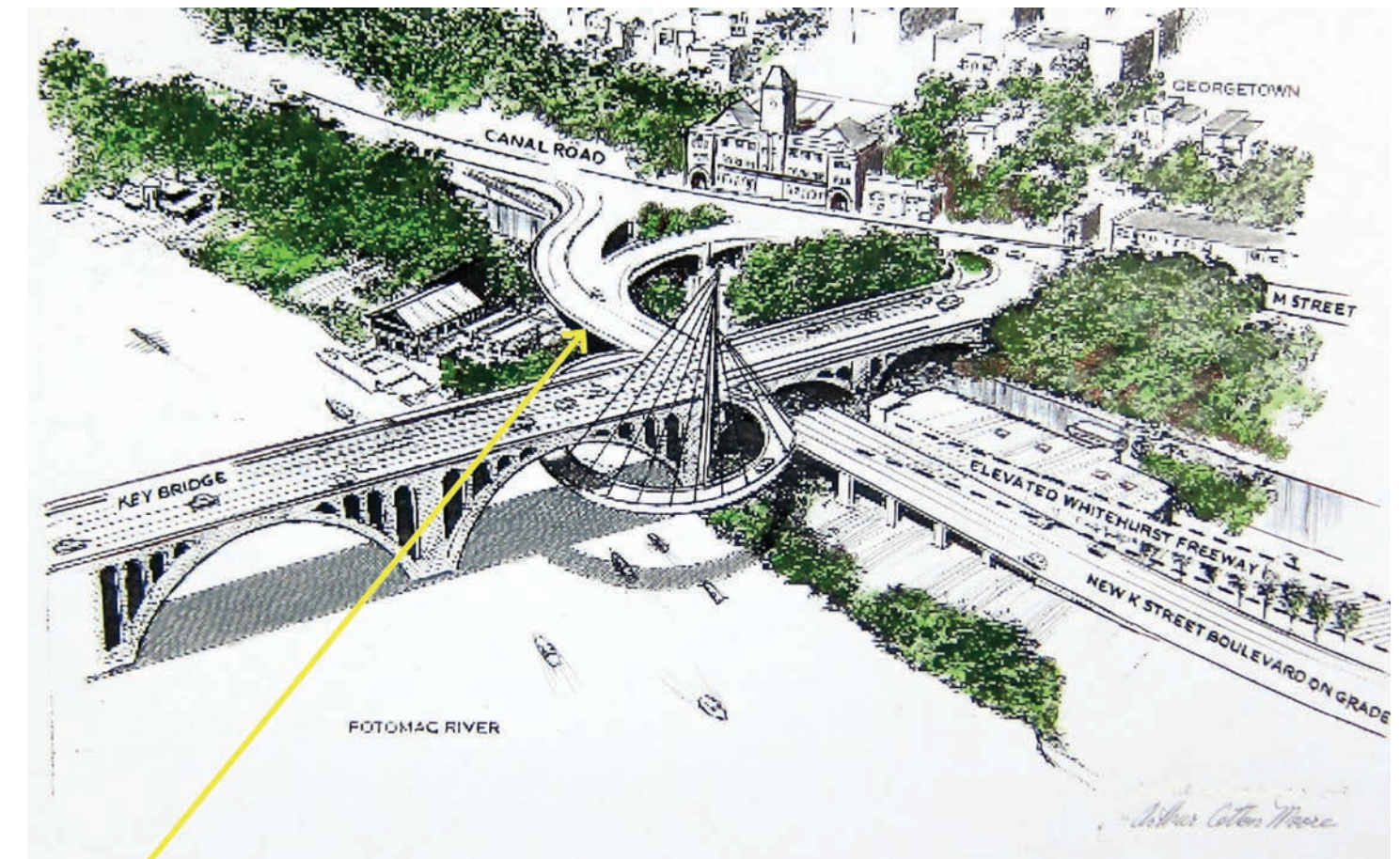
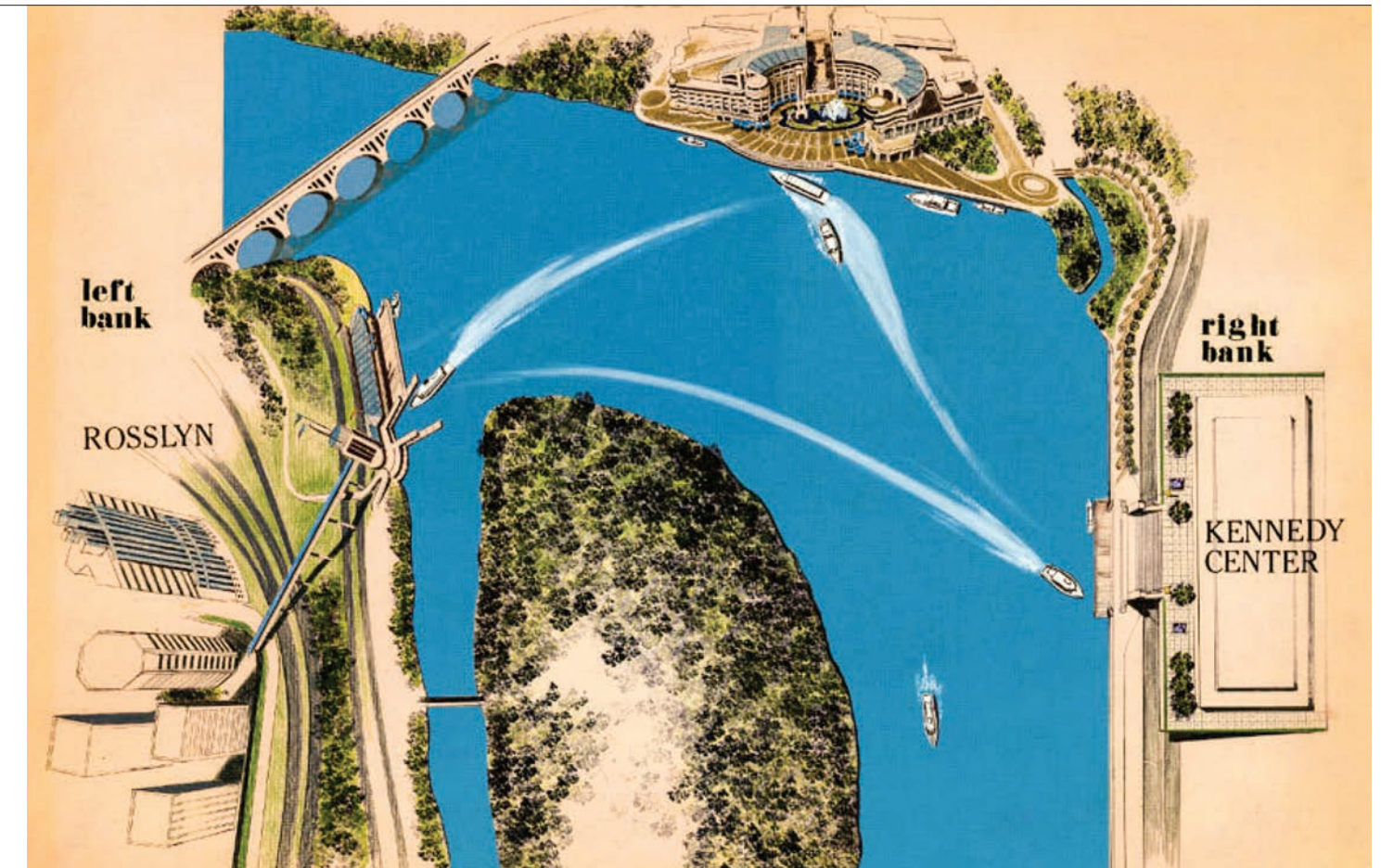
As part of the Kennedy Center stairs, Moore also suggested building a boat house in Rosslyn that would link the Virginia side of the river with Washington Harbour and the Kennedy Center, shown in the rendering above right.

"The river has two banks," he said. "It has a right bank and a left bank. And the idea that it only operates on one side is crazy."

Moore also pitched an idea to improve the pedestrian connection between the Kennedy Center and Georgetown. The concept is to build a grand promenade with separate bike lanes, benches and lights.

When it comes to Georgetown, he also wants to eliminate what he calls a travesty: the elevated Whitehurst Freeway.

He would remove the freeway and turn K Street into a boulevard connected to the Key Bridge, as shown in the bottom left rendering.



## Q&amp;A

WITH ARTHUR COTTON MOORE

► **Washington Harbour was groundbreaking, with its multiple uses and its embrace of the river. How do you feel about others replicating your ideas so much today?** What has happened is Washington is not an atypical American waterfront. These settlements which grew into cities where on the water for practical reasons. They need water. But after a while, they found it was also a pretty good easy place

to dump stuff. So over a period of time, a lot of the waterfronts became essentially sewers. And then what you'd find on these waterfronts was really second-rate, slummy kind of industrial stuff. Georgetown was a perfect example — a gravel plant here and a place where they rendered dead animals right over here. It stunk up the place. It was terrible. This was a typical situation.

And then, of course, you would put your highways there. You would put your elevated highways. In fact, we have one of the last ones that hasn't been torn down in the country, and that's why I have a couple solutions there where I think should take the Whitehurst down and still recognize the fact that people need to get through Georgetown because they're commuters and they want to

get downtown. So Georgetown's in the way, and you can't just load up M Street. So there is a possibility, with a kind of a boulevard solution, to provide that and still have people able to go to the waterfront as well.

But it is a historical parallel that we are beginning to discover, and that's why we wrote that book before ["The Powers of Preservation: New Life for Urban Historic Places," 1998] that waterfronts were a great resource for the cities, which 40 years ago, were in tremendous decline. What does an old city have? It has old buildings and it has a waterfront. So I showed in Georgetown you could use old buildings and make them into exciting places. And you could make the waterfront a wonderful place to be.

So that was an awakening, what you could

do to help cities, these cities which were in decline. And now, of course, there has been a revolution and younger people are coming back and revitalizing the cities.

Waterfronts and reusable buildings, in combination with new construction, are great saviors for cities.

► **On The Wharf:** Well, it has two phases. I want to point out a little bit of the difference. Washington Harbour was built for \$70 million. The Wharf is \$2.5 billion. So in any case, the first phase has been built. The second phase has yet to come. What it needs a little bit more is a center. It needs a center and a little bit more engagement with the water. Again, water is very important. We found [at Washington Harbour] that people really love

to walk over to the dock. The dock we have where we have transit boats come up there is actually over the water. So when you're walking on the dock, it is as if you're walking in the middle of the river.

► **On National Harbor and MGM:** National Harbor, I think, is an exceptionally bad case in that it has the Gaylord hotel. If you've been there, it's basically focused inward. So it's not taking advantage of the fact that it's on the water. Then, they have a casino. The casino has as little interest on being on the water as anything. I mean, a casino can be in Nevada where there's no water. I mean, everybody's in the casino, they want you looking at your chips. These are totally in-focused things that are not taking advantage of what is really a

unique and important aspect. I almost think it's a moral issue that you really should have an engagement with water.

► **On the Kennedy Center expansion:** I think it's OK. So [when they build the center] they wound up just taking three essentially boxes and putting them together to make the Kennedy Center. Now in the process, they did not allow really for offices. It's a building with practically no windows at all. And it's not nice to have an office without a window. And so I think that they need that. And they also need some rehearsal space. So those two things, I think, are reasonable needs. And I don't think they're hurting too much by being on the south side of the building.

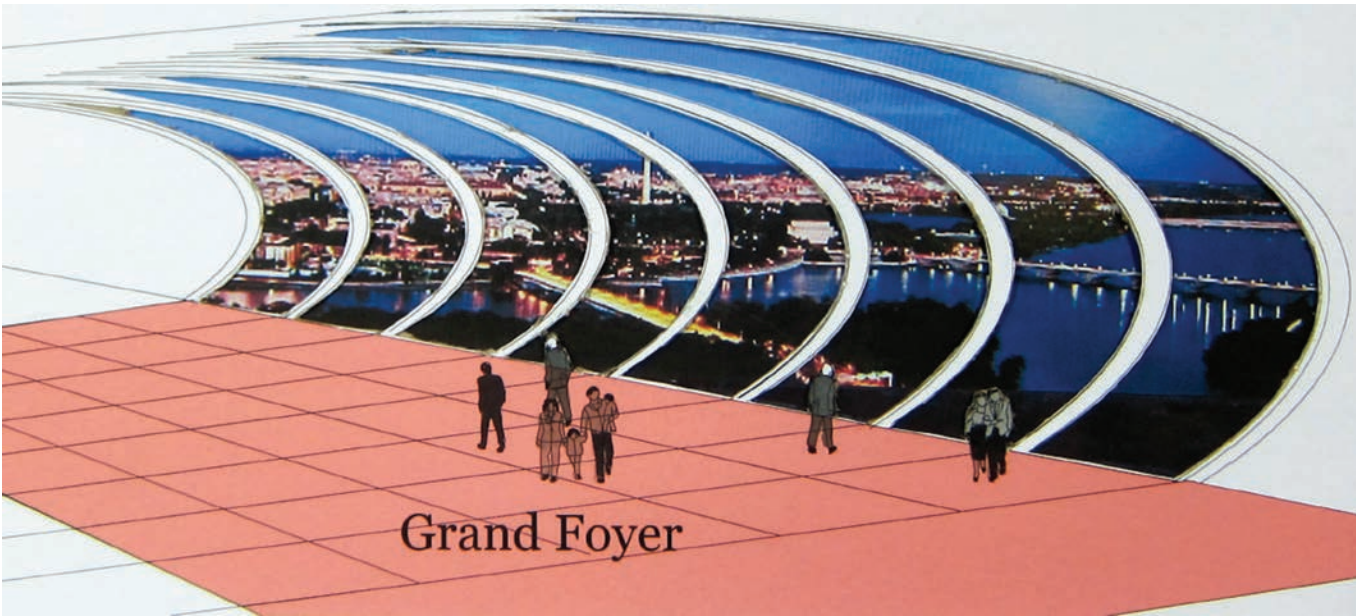




**A NEW CENTER FOR ANACOSTIA**

Not all of the designs in Arthur Cotton Moore's book were done on his own impulse. The book includes five concepts Moore was commissioned for on a pro bono basis, of course.

Former Mayor Marion Barry asked Moore to envision what a performing arts center in Anacostia might look like. He came up with the renderings above and at right showing how a facility at the St. Elizabeths West Campus, controlled by the federal government, could look like. The grand foyer would feature panoramic views of the Anacostia River. The city view here is used for illustrative purposes only.

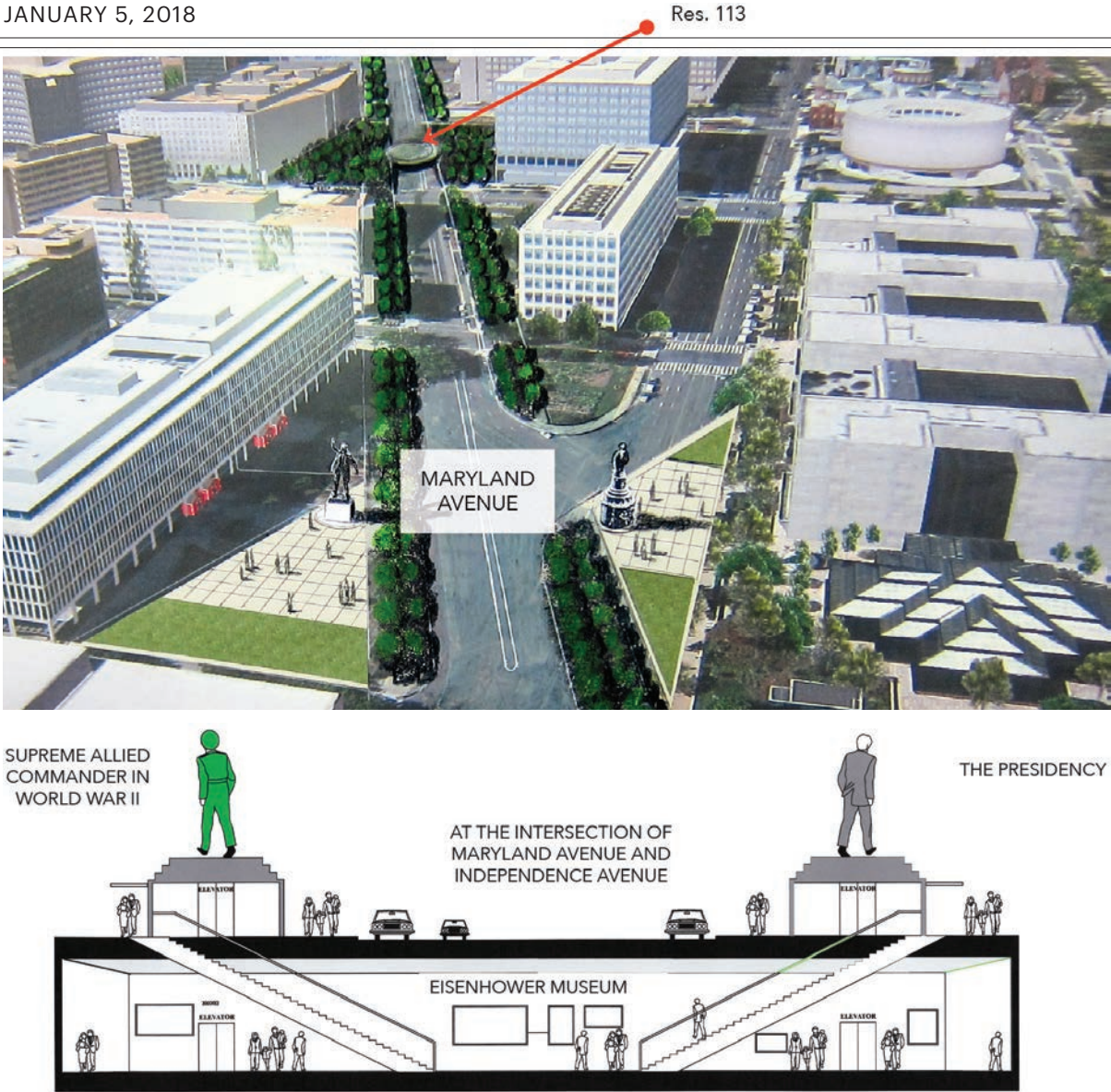


**A HOLY ALTERNATIVE**

The former Christian Science Church on 16th Street NW was always one of the most controversial buildings in D.C. Most observers — including the church itself — hated the Brutalist structure designed by I.M. Pei Partners, but some preservationists felt it exemplified an era in the city's architectural history and should be saved at all costs.

Those preservationists asked Moore to propose an alternative to demolishing the structure and a small adjacent office building. His proposal: a new office structure, shown in blue in the rendering at left, atop the two structures. It would have provided new revenue for the owner while saving the original structures and providing a covered exterior plaza.

The proposal was for naught: The D.C. Preservation League eventually negotiated an agreement that allowed the structures to be torn down, and a new office building occupies the corner today.



**ON MARYLAND AVENUE**

Arthur Cotton Moore wants to save Maryland Avenue SW, one of the original grand boulevards envisioned in L'Enfant's plan for the nation's capital. The street has never enjoyed the same grandeur as its counterpart to the north, Pennsylvania Avenue, thanks to the railroad tracks and lack of vision to continue the boulevard. And Moore is worried that sections of the street will be wiped out, namely by the Dwight D. Eisenhower memorial now planned to occupy a full block and sever the avenue.

He says the memorial will permanently destroy the integrity of the original L'Enfant plan, as well as the McMillan Plan.

His proposal for the memorial would include statues flanking Maryland Avenue — one from Ike's years as a general, the other representing his presidency — linked by an underground museum space dedicated to the 34th president. Alas, construction of the block-filling design by Frank Gehry is expected to begin soon.

He says projects such as the Portals, the mixed-use complex built above the railroad tracks near the 14th Street Bridge, show the integrity of Maryland Avenue can be maintained.

Moore has other ideas for the Maryland Avenue area as well, including creating a multimodal transit station to serve both VRE and MARC commuter trains at Seventh Street and Virginia Avenue SW. His book features renderings of the station, as well as a look at what Maryland Avenue could become if developed in the spirit of the L'Enfant and McMillan plans.

**HOUSING THE HOMELESS**

One of Moore's most recent proposals garnered quite a bit of attention early last year.

When Moore heard that it costs millions of dollars to turn older series Metrorail cars into scrap, he asked himself why they couldn't be converted to housing for the homeless. His book shows how a Metro car could become two one-bedroom apartments of 560 square feet each.

"And these could actually become really a place for housing where somebody who is homeless could actually go inside and have a warm, nice little apartment with a key and a lock on the door so that their possessions are not stolen," Moore says.

The Washington Post, The Atlantic's CityLab and the Huffington Post all wrote about the concept in early 2017.

Because of the attention his idea received, Moore took the idea a step further, envisioning how the converted rail cars could be assembled at a site like RFK Stadium. He pitches it as an "all-inclusive" property that would house 300 to 400 people in 86 cars laid out with playgrounds, a

medical clinic, social services and other facilities, as illustrated in the below rendering.

The cars, he said, are built with optimum materials and windows. Their wheels would be anchored to bolts on poured concrete footings. They would be powered by solar panels.

"The versatility of the cars as housing units really comes through when you start to imagine a whole village of them," wrote the Atlantic's CityLab. "Behold the future CityLab commune!"

"Now here's a housing solution we can get on board with," added the Huffington Post.

