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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Mount Vernon Place Conservancy Announces American Friends of Lafayette to Lay Ceremonial Wreath at Statue of Lafayette on the Frenchman's 260th Birthday

(Baltimore, Maryland) – The Mount Vernon Place Conservancy (“*Conservancy*”) announces a wreath laying ceremony at the Marquis de Lafayette statue in Mount Vernon Place on Sept. 6, 2017 at 11 am. The public is invited to this brief ceremony.

The wreath will be laid by the American Friends of Lafayette, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness of both the Marquis de Lafayette's central role in securing American national independence, and how that role created a lasting bond between the American and French people.

Chuck Schwam, Treasurer of the American Friends of Lafayette, notes: “We are honored to be here on Lafayette's birthday in 2017, not only because it marks his birth 260 years ago, but because 2017 is such an important year in the history of this statue.”

On May 16, 2017, the Conservancy hosted a Centennial commemoration of the groundbreaking for the Lafayette statue, which took place on May 14, 1917, just weeks after the United States entered World War I. At the 2017 ceremony, Mayor Catherine E. Pugh delivered an address as did a representative of the French Embassy in Washington, Michel Charbonnier, and the chairman of the National World War I Centennial Commission, Robert Dalessandro in addition to speeches by the Conservancy.

After the 1917 groundbreaking, the squares were redesigned by the distinguished architectural firm of Carrère and Hastings to create a setting for the new statue. The equestrian bronze, sculpted by American sculptor Andrew O'Conner, was dedicated on Lafayette's birthday in 1924. At that ceremony, President Calvin Coolidge provided a lengthy address on Lafayette's role in securing American freedom.

Dr. Lance Humphries, the Executive Director of the Conservancy, commented: “We are pleased to have with us today the American Friends of Lafayette, as we continue to commemorate the events of 1917. The addition of the Lafayette statue in 1917 physically transformed Mount Vernon Place into what we have today. It also added to the meaning of the Washington Monument, which honors the founder of our country, but also celebrates American national independence. The Lafayette statue honors centuries of

Franco-American relations, and its genesis in 1917 essentially makes it a World War I memorial.”

The Conservancy is releasing today (Sept. 6) a video of the May 16, 2017 event, capturing highlights of the moving and beautiful ceremony. It is available on their Facebook page and YouTube channel.

The American Friends of Lafayette wreath-laying ceremony will take place in Mount Vernon Place on Sept. 6, 2017 at 11 am.

For more information about the Conservancy visit

Website: www.mvpconservany.org

Facebook: www.facebook.com/mountvernonplace

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCm7IiyJiHv-ddenwgYKDlrg>

(YouTube channel name: Mount Vernon Place Conservancy)