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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

**Mount Vernon Place Conservancy
Announces 13-Year Old Pennsylvania Numismatist to be
Involved with Research Project Aimed at Cataloguing the
Contents of the Washington Monument's Two Time Capsules**

(Baltimore, Maryland) – The Mount Vernon Place Conservancy (“*Conservancy*”) announces a new research project is underway with the assistance of 13-year old Garrett Ziss of Pennsylvania.

During the Washington Monument’s 2014-15 restoration by the Conservancy, not only was the Monument’s original 1815 Cornerstone discovered, but a previously unknown time capsule from the Monument’s 1915 centennial was also found. Both contained coins and medals.

At the time these time capsules were discovered, conservators from the Walters Art Museum assisted with their immediate care and preservation, and a selection of items, including the coins and medals, was chosen to go on display at the nearby Maryland Historical Society. The exhibition opened at the time of Monument’s July 4, 2015 Bicentennial, and currently remains on view.

Dr. Lance Humphries, the Executive Director of the Conservancy, who led the Monument restoration project, noted of the discovery: “At the time of the discovery of the time capsules, the Conservancy’s first priority was the immediate preservation of the objects. We recognized at that the time that there was much additional research that could be done with these astounding discoveries, but realized that that opportunity would need to wait until after the restoration was complete, the Bicentennial celebrated, and the Monument once again opened to the public.”

Since it’s opening on July 4, 2015, over 30,000 visitors from the region, nation, and around the world have visited the Monument.

Garrett Ziss, an 8th grader from southeastern Pennsylvania visited the Maryland Historical Society in the Fall of 2015, and was intrigued by the coins from the Monument’s 1815 cornerstone. An avid numismatist, Garrett is already making important discoveries in the history of United States coinage.

Ziss contacted the Conservancy with his interest in obtaining photographs of the Monument’s coins so that he could further explore exactly what coins had been included.

While not a numismatist, Dr. Humphries of the Conservancy has previously published an award-winning scholarly article with noted numismatist Dr. Joel Orosz, on the coin collection of Robert Gilmore, Jr. (1774-1848) of Baltimore, one of the earliest significant coin collections in the United States. Notably, Gilmore was on the original board of managers who built Baltimore's Washington Monument. When the Monument's 1815 cornerstone contents were revealed, it was clear that Gilmore was involved with selection of items included, as several of the books included were inscribed by him. But, what role did he play in the selection of the coins?

Humphries contacted Orosz regarding Ziss's interest in the Monument's coins and quickly learned that young Ziss was achieving recognition in the American numismatic world.

"With Garrett's interest, and Dr. Orosz's deep numismatic background, this seemed like the perfect opportunity to catalogue and publish all of the coins and medals found in the Monument," notes Humphries.

On March 30, the coins will be temporarily de-installed at the Maryland Historical Society so that the team of three can examine each piece, and, importantly, all will be photographed, obverse and reverse, for the future publication.

Photography of the coins and medals will be provided by Len Augsburger, Project Coordinator for the Newman Numismatic Portal, the most comprehensive online resource for numismatic research and reference material. The photographer will be John Baumgart, one of the nation's leading practitioners of this specialized genre of photography.

Mark Letzer, President and CEO of the Maryland Historical Society notes that they are pleased to assist in this examination. "This outcome is exactly the result we hope every young person who visits our museum and library has—that they see something that sparks their imagination, leading them into further areas of exploration."

It will take several months for the resulting article to be assembled once the coins and medals are photographed, but the team hopes the article will appear in about a year. It will bring the Monument's restoration and discoveries to a national audience interested in early American history.

In its brief time as a non-profit, the Conservancy has raised over 8 million dollars in capital funding and overseen the design and multi-award winning restoration of Baltimore's iconic Washington Monument. While this major investment was underway, the Conservancy was also improving the maintenance and management of the Mount Vernon Place's park squares, and bringing attention to this important resource through an increased online presence.

For more information about the Conservancy visit

our website: www.mvpconservancy.org

our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/mountvernonplace