

# BREUER TO SHAPE ROOSEVELT SHRINE

## Selection by Memorial Unit Ends 5 Years of Debate

By ADA LOUISE HUXTABLE

The architect for the on-again off-again Franklin Delano Roosevelt memorial planned for the nation's capital will be Marcel Breuer, it was announced by the Franklin Delano Roosevelt Memorial Commission in Washington yesterday.

The commission selected its own architect after five years of bitter debate over the 1961 prize-winning design of a national competition for the memorial. The design was finally rejected last June after loud publicity and the objections of the Roosevelt family.

Mr. Breuer, a New York architect of international reputation who has built extensively here and abroad, did not enter the competition. The controversy that it engendered in the press was almost as big as the winning design itself — eight 130-foot slabs with quotations by President Roosevelt, set in a landscaped park. The design, by Pedersen, Tilney, Hoberman, Wasserman & Beer of New York, had been called "instant Stonehenge" and "unfinished bookends."

"I rather liked it and was in a way sorry that it was dropped," Mr. Breuer said in New York yesterday after he had been notified of his selection. "It was an interesting design."

Mr. Breuer said he has no ideas yet on his own solution, but said he intends to approach it "as a fresh problem." He plans to start work immediately and expects the design stage to take six months to a year. The commission is known to be very anxious to get something built.

### Won't Resemble the Whitney

Mr. Breuer's best-known works include the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization buildings in Paris, designed in association with Pier Luigi Nervi of Italy and Bernard Zehruss of France; the United States Embassy office building in the Hague, the Netherlands; the De Bijenkorf department store in Rotterdam and a large International Business Machines building on the French Riviera. In New York, he has built a library for Hunter College on its Bronx campus, and the new, virtually complete Whitney Museum at Madison Avenue and 75th Street.

"The memorial will not look like the Whitney Museum," he told the commission. "That is a building on a tight city block. The memorial is a different kind of assignment, on open land."

The commission's announcement came a year after the competition fiasco, and six months after it had instituted a new method of picking an architect. This method has aroused some criticism in professional circles.

The commission, composed of 14 Senators, Representatives and special Presidential appointees and headed by Representative Eugene Keogh, Democrat of Brooklyn, decided in January to interview architects itself. Representative Keogh succeeded Francis Biddle, who resigned as chairman when the slab design was rejected.

### 55 Architects Approached

First, recommendations were solicited from such professional groups as the American Institute of Architects and members of the National Capital Planning Commission. Such suggestions were very broadly given, according to the strict ethics of the architectural profession, which does not encourage recommendations by official bodies.

Next, letters went out in March, to 55 architects, asking if they would be interested in designing the memorial. Almost all responded affirmatively.

In a series of commission meetings, during which members gave their personal first, second and third choices, the number was narrowed to 11. Still considered an overly time-consuming number for interviews, it was further reduced to five.

On Monday, the five finalists were called to Washington for interviews. The five were Mr. Breuer, who came directly from Europe; Philip Johnson and Paul Rudolph, all of New York; E. Lawrence Bellante of Bellante & Clauss, with offices in Scranton, Pa., and other cities, and Andrew Euston of New Haven, associated with Andrew Euston Jr. and Cooper & Auerbach of Washington.

### No Advisory Body

Questions have been raised principally over the fact that the commission operated without a professional advisory body, although the project is for a national memorial on Congressionally-ceded land, with probable Congressional appropriations for fees and construction. A preliminary \$100,000 was appropriated for the commission's work last October.

The selection process consisted of interviews concerning philosophy and intent. Mr. Breuer's interview was brief. Portfolios were not required at any stage; only a statement of interest in the job. Architects have indicated disapproval of the process, together with approval of Mr. Breuer's appointment.

Members of the commission who made the final decision were Senators Eugene J. McCarthy of Minnesota, Jacob K. Javits of New York and Leverett Saltonstall of Massachusetts; Representatives Keogh, Seymour Halpern and Theodore Kupferman, all of New York, and Presidential appointees Mr. Biddle and James H. Rowe Jr. Commission members Senator Maurine B. Neuberger of Oregon, Representative Frank Thompson Jr. of New Jersey, Clark M. Clifford and Mrs. Anna Rosenberg Hoffman were not present. The decision was unanimous.



The New York Times Studio  
Marcel Breuer