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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## Tongva Monument to be Unveiled in Rancho Palos Verdes

**Oct. 6, 2021 (Ranchos Palos Verdes, CA)** — The City of Rancho Palos Verdes will unveil a monument honoring the Indigenous people of Los Angeles Oct. 16 at a site where the Tongva people once fished abalone.

Designed in collaboration with the Gabrieleño/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, the stone monument displays interpretive bas relief plaques sculpted by artist Geri Jimenez Gould. It will be unveiled to the public at a 10 a.m. ceremony at Abalone Cove Park.

The privately-funded project is the brainchild of Rancho Palos Verdes resident Tom Steers, who approached the City several years ago about adding a monument to the coastline honoring the Tongva people, peace-loving hunter-gatherers who inhabited the Los Angeles Basin and the Southern Channel Islands. The monument joins a series of similar nearby installations highlighting Catalina Island, the natural habitat of the Palos Verdes Peninsula, and Portuguese Bend.

The project won the support of the Gabrieleño/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians, Los Serenos de Point Vicente and the Rancho de los Palos Verdes Historical Society before it was approved by the Rancho Palos Verdes City Council in March 2020. Steers involved active tribe leaders and elders in the design process to ensure historical and cultural accuracy, including Chief Anthony Morales, the late Tribal Council Elder Julia Bogany, Ms. Gould, and Jesus Gutierrez, who are both Tongva-descendant elders.

The monument consists of a concrete block faced with Palos Verdes stone and bronze plaques, including a central scene depicting a Tongva village with Catalina Island visible in the background. The location at Abalone Cove was selected for both its historical significance and its high visibility, as the park sees thousands of visitors each month.

The monument was funded by more than 50 private donors. Marilyn Long, President of the Long Family Foundation, offered encouragement and initial financial support for this project.

Mr. Steers said he is pleased to see the monument shared with the public, especially during the same week as Indigenous Peoples' Day.

“The vision to honor the Indigenous people of the Peninsula and L.A. started six years ago, so this is a grand finale to finally have it done,” Mr. Steers said. “It was designed and vetted by registered Tongva natives which ensures that they are truly being honored. This means so very much. They have a small opportunity through this monument to be better known and respected.”

Ms. Gould, a Santa Fe, New Mexico-based painter and sculptor specializing in bas relief portraits for medals, coins, awards, and public works, chose to focus on the family and village life as they are central to Native American culture. The main plaque depicts a traditional Tongva village, a ki, or reed home, a young family, and fishermen preparing the daily catch. Two side panels tell the story of the Tongva and the coastal region known as Shwaanga. A fourth plaque lists the donors who made the monument possible.

“The Gabrieleño/Tongva San Gabriel Band of Mission Indians is honored that the City of Rancho Palos Verdes is acknowledging us as the local tribe of the Los Angeles Basin and allowing this sculpture to be erected on the bluffs of the Palos Verdes Peninsula, the site of Native American villages and where our people lived off the ocean,” said Chief Morales.

Rancho Palos Verdes Mayor Eric Alegria applauded Mr. Steers, Ms. Gould and all those involved in the project for their efforts to share and honor Indigenous culture and history.

“I hope this beautiful monument serves to educate generations of Angelenos about the Tongva people, both locally on the Peninsula, and regionally,” he said, encouraging everyone to visit and appreciate the monument.

The monument is located just south of the parking lot at Abalone Cove Park at 5970 Palos Verdes Drive South.

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### **About the City of Rancho Palos Verdes**

The City of Rancho Palos Verdes is located on a coastal peninsula overlooking the Pacific Ocean in the South Bay of Los Angeles County. Incorporated in 1973, the City is home to 42,000 residents, 7 1/2 miles of coastline, a 1400-acre nature preserve, and hundreds more acres of open space. Residents and visitors enjoy expansive ocean views and ample opportunities for recreation, including golfing, hiking, beach access, and whale watching. Notable landmarks and points of interest include the Wayfarers Chapel designed by Lloyd Wright, the Point Vicente Lighthouse, the Point Vicente Interpretive Center, Terranea Resort, the Palos Verdes Nature Preserve, and Trump National Golf Club.

### **About the Long Family Foundation**

The Long Family Foundation was established by John and Marilyn Long in 1992 to promote and support religious, educational, cultural, and research endeavors that align with their values. Through the years, LFF has supported numerous organizations across the globe, such as endowing centers of education and research at major universities, funding Christian churches and missions, installing public art, investing in rising nonprofit leaders as well as creating and sponsoring initiatives that bridge U.S.-China relations. LFF’s philanthropy is often characterized as active and highly relational, and is intended to be catalytic and transforming.