

Traveling decalogue draws hoots, hoorays: Roy Moore's granite monument

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A national tour of former Alabama judge Roy Moore's granite monument to the Ten Commandments hit its first snag when atheist protesters confronted it on the National Mall in Washington, D.C., last month. Until then the 12-state, 64-town tour had been largely peaceful as people were allowed to read, touch and pose for pictures with the piece of granite from Alabama they had been reading about.

On October 22, however, there was a tense debate between a group of atheists from Pennsylvania and the Christians who came to pay their respects to the sculpture. The situation was initially defused by a group of Native Americans in ceremonial dress who brokered a brief peace, but the U.S. Park Police eventually escorted the atheists to the other side of Madison Drive, where they held signs calling for the separation of church and state.

The monument, hoisted out of a closet in the Alabama state judicial building in July and placed on the back of a 40-foot flatbed truck, attracted a steady stream of the curious, many of whom were on hand for a huge, unrelated prayer rally.

Hollis Summers of Maynardville, Tennessee, had been with the monument all of its 14,000 miles and was the designated truck driver in Washington. "Judge Moore gave up a lot more than I will going on this tour," Summers said. Moore lost his job as Alabama's chief justice when he refused to obey a federal court order to remove the rock from the rotunda of the judicial building in Montgomery. *-Religion News Service*