



SOUTH
CAROLINA
CHAPTER

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS

March 3, 2006

Ms. Susan Jacobson, FASLA, Chair
Honors and Awards Advisory Committee
C/O Ms Carolyn Mitchell, Coordinator
ASLA
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

RE: ASLA Jot D. Carpenter Teaching Medal

Dear Susan,

It is both an honor and a privilege as Trustee for the South Carolina Chapter of ASLA for me to nominate Donald L. Collins, FASLA for the Jot D. Carpenter Teaching Medal. Don has spent over 35 years shaping the minds of countless students in the fields of landscape architecture and architecture. Among his many accomplishments during his tenure is the establishment of the landscape architecture program at Clemson University. He dedicated hundreds of hours working with the architecture department, as well as educating the citizenry throughout the state. However, the development of the program at Clemson is but one accomplishment in a career dedicated to the education of so many individuals that spans over 3 decades. Although Don remains active with the program and has attained emeritus status, he has retired from active teaching, sending this illustrious career into a new phase. Therefore, I can think of no better way to honor such a storied contribution to the profession than the prestigious Jot Carpenter Teaching Medal. I also cannot imagine anyone else that exemplifies the spirit of the award better than Don.

The development and nurturing of exemplary young professionals in the field of landscape architecture is one of the most important undertakings for the future of our profession. Landscape architecture relies on well-prepared graduates entering the field, whether it is in private offices, government agencies, or back to the academic setting as educators. Don is responsible for hundreds of these young professionals who continuously lift our profession to new heights. He was instrumental in creating the first and only landscape architecture program in the state of South Carolina – a program that draws students from across the country, trains them, and ultimately strengthens national and internationally known firms. His thorough understanding of landscape architecture was also instrumental in the establishment and structure of South Carolina's licensure law. In fact, he is the ninth registered landscape architect in our state.

Don is largely responsible for the respect and admiration the landscape architecture profession enjoys from our allied professions. Architects across our region, who have had the opportunity to be in his classroom, carry a deep respect for the landscape architect's role in the design process. In brief, no one has done more to positively impact and advance the profession of landscape architecture in South Carolina and the region, on so many levels.

The Bachelor of Landscape Architecture program at Clemson University is largely the result of Don's untiring efforts. The program was established in 1987 with the first class graduating in May 1993. The program was awarded full accreditation status the following year by the Landscape Architectural Accreditation Board (LAAB). Prior to his involvement in the creation of the landscape architecture department, Don was a leading force in the approval of Clemson University's Architecture program by the National Architectural Accreditation Board in the '80's and '90's

In his academic career, Don has served as Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture, Interim Head of the Department of Architecture, and Head of the Department of Planning and Landscape Architecture. During his tenure he has taught 100% of the Clemson's graduating Landscape Architects, over 50% of the state's architects and is a mentor to the overwhelming majority.

Reverently referred to by his students as Professor Collins, Don leads by example, serving as a role model for faculty and students alike. Award winning in his strategies for design studio teaching, he answers questions by posing another question, challenging the student to question the status quo perceptions of the project at hand and to discover the answers for themselves, empowering them with critical thinking skills. While team teaching the lecture component of second year design studio, Don scheduled regular field trips to sites under construction in downtown Clemson so that the students could gain firsthand understanding of the construction. This demonstrates that Don's sensitivity to the design process its creativity never overwhelmed the fact that the practicing Landscape Architect must also be able to produce a constructible design.

Don's exemplary efforts in the teaching of design studio were awarded one of four national awards by the American Institute of Architects Education Honors Program in 1991. Quoting from the letter from the president of the AIA announcing the award: "MASKS was considered among the most exemplary efforts in the teaching of architecture for its relevance to the architectural profession, its contribution to the advancement of the profession of architectural education and the practice of architecture, and its ability to be transferred to other instructional settings in architecture." This award typifies the transcendental nature of Don's impact on and awareness of the landscape architecture profession. Don was also awarded the Award of Distinction in 2003 by CELA. He has become and remains a point of contact for graduate landscape architecture and architecture students throughout the world. His mentoring of architecture students has led to a cross disciplinary respect and understanding of landscape architecture and the importance of the landscape architect in the design process. In addition, his students have won the CLARB sponsored Wayne Grace Memorial Design Competition two of the last three years and recent graduates are reporting starting salaries exceeding \$45,000.00.

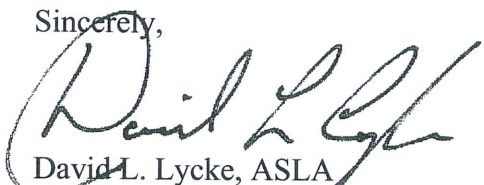
Just as he encouraged diversity grounded in sound principles in student work, he nurtured diversity in the work of his faculty empowering them to grow toward their full potential as educators. He led by challenging each individual to work together with the students and with other faculty while maintaining and strengthening their own unique contributions to teaching, research, and service. Although Don has gained national recognition for his undergraduate teaching and public service, he chose to maintain a low public profile. On numerous occasions he turned down opportunities for public and peer recognition, which has resulted in professional audiences and the larger public unaware of his efforts and selfless contributions not only as a teacher but as a committed citizen as well.

His contributions in public service range from what is traditional for landscape architects and university faculty - serving on numerous university, college, and departmental committees to serving on and chairing the Design Control Commission of the City of Clemson and the South Carolina Landscape Architects Registration Board - to non-traditional service such as being a volunteer firefighter for over twenty-five years, a featured speaker at national and regional firefighters symposium and seminars, and even applying his skills to the design and development of specifications for new emergency vehicles.

Even today, Don serves as an important link between students and professionals. He is guiding the new faculty representative to SCASLA and is still involved with the student award program. I have had the privilege to participate on the jury for more than ten years and I find it to be an event I look forward to each year. We just completed this years program and, as always, Don was there. Every year, Don worked with our Executive Committee as well as ASLA staff to facilitate the ASLA student awards as well the Universities own program. Both faculty and professionals participate on the jury and it has been Don's leadership and understanding of both disciplines that allowed him to guide the process smoothly and efficiently. Don has always emphasized the importance of the professional society to his students. He always encouraged and sometimes even personally aided students to attend SCASLA events, as well as the national convention.

Don Collins has dedicated his career to educating young people in a most personal way. He has played a significant role in the development and advancement of landscape architecture in the state of South Carolina and beyond. To hear so many of his students claim him as a mentor AND a friend is testament to his impact on so many lives. I believe that Don is very deserving of the honor of receiving the Jot D. Carpenter Teaching medal and I urge you to consider him for this prestigious award. Therefore, I am proud to forward this nomination on behalf of the South Carolina Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Sincerely,



David L. Lycke, ASLA
Trustee for South Carolina Chapter