



Hugh C. Miller, FAIA

**Nomination for the ASLA LaGasse Medal
non-landscape architect category**

“I was amazed that an architect was so articulate and passionate about the nascent (at that time) concept of cultural landscape preservation. Little did I realize that Hugh Miller had been a leader in bringing the issue to the table at the National Park Service, and in bringing together a small group of landscape architects and allied professionals to begin to tackle the task of breaking into the American preservation community and the American mentality in recognizing our fast-disappearing historic and cultural landscape heritage.”

Suzanne Turner, FASLA



VIRGINIA CHAPTER

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS

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RE: Nomination of Mr. Hugh C. Miller, FAIA for the ASLA LaGasse Medal

Dear Members of the ASLA:

The Virginia Chapter of the ASLA submits their nomination of Mr. Hugh C. Miller, FAIA for the ASLA LaGasse Medal, in the non-landscape architect category. Mr. Miller's longtime nationwide contributions to the management and conservancy of public lands, properties and buildings through historic preservation spanned his career in the National Park Service, as Director of Virginia's Heritage Programs, as a preservation planner, an educator and as advisor working around the world.

His leadership has helped define vernacular and designed landscapes as heritage to be preserved and managed. He fostered the emerging landscape preservation profession by developing national and state-wide programs to identify and protect America's cultural landscapes.

Achievements to Further Preservation in the National Park System

Hugh C. Miller's twenty-eight year career in the National Park Service (NPS) significantly contributed to the formulation of historic preservation thought and practice in the United States. Beginning in 1960 as a staff architect in design and construction, he worked on the rehabilitation of historic Philadelphia townhouses and supervised the restoration of the Assembly Room of Independence Hall. For five years (1966 -1971) he was the architect/planner for master plans for preservation and tourism development at 13 antiquity sites in Jordan and Turkey. Here, and in Rome, he learned to apply the new techniques for architectural conservation being used for European monument preservation.

Miller joined the Washington office of NPS as the Assistant Chief Historical Architect in 1971 and was charged to develop new policy and guidelines for professional activities to be applied to the preservation of over 11,000 diverse historic structures in the National Park System.

He revived the 1928 NPS policy priority of preservation over reconstruction and expanded it to include the new philosophy of architectural conservation. He urged the development of scientific methods for problem solving . . . non-destructive testing of condition and materials analysis to determine the age of a building. He collaborated with national laboratories, universities and private consultants for basic research in materials performance; i.e., stone, adobe and coatings, and he fostered the use of applied science for testing and monitoring material, environmental and structural changes at specific historic structures.

In 1973, Miller initiated the first service-wide training in NPS for cultural resource managers. This was followed by courses and programs for preservation maintenance managers, historical architects and trades mechanics. He formed active partnerships with the AIA Historic Resources

Committee (HRC), the National Trust, the Association for Preservation Technology (APT) and exchanges with Parks Canada and English Heritage to organize technical workshops and training programs. These lectures and resulting publications are the knowledge base in preservation practice today.

The restorations, rehabilitations, repair and conservation of the immense collection of NPS historic structures became a laboratory for preservation action, research and testing, as well as examples for education. This information loop of research, treatments and education became Hugh C. Miller's formula for "Learning from Landmarks".

In 1979 Hugh C. Miller became the Chief Historical Architect responsible to advise the Director and Park managers about the stewardship of cultural resources in the Park System. He was the mentor to over 100 historical architects who made professional decisions for the planning and preservation treatments of wonderful national treasures, monuments to events and heroes and buildings and ruins depicting the broad patterns of human history from prehistoric time to the 1960's.

He served as the executive architect for the Statue of Liberty/Ellis Island restoration (1981 – 1986). This project became the model for lectures and workshops about analysis, problem solving and innovative treatments of landmarks for application to successful rehabilitation of existing buildings today.

He initiated the study of cultural landscapes in the Park System in 1979 and defined them with policies and procedures for their preservation. Until 1988 he coordinated all NPS landscape preservation programs.

Working with the Administration and the Congress he aggressively gained authority in 1980 for the leasing of vacant historic buildings and lands in for appropriate non-park use. He coordinated the leasing and rehabilitation of these properties for imaginative new uses by private or non-profit tenants.

He improved administrative, professional and technical procedures to meet the changes of modern society and the requirements for historic preservation for handicapped access, fire safety, energy conservation, museum environments, the control of acid rain damage and treatments of bronze monuments.

He directed yearly architecture and landscape preservation field schools. With Lee H. Nelson, FAIA, he authored the "Skills Development Plan for Historical Architects" that received an AIA award for "Education in Practice" in 1988. His dedicated public service has reached beyond the professionals in the parks system to a whole generation of people working actively in historic preservation as a career.

Accomplishments Directing Virginia's Heritage Programs

Virginia Governor Gerald L. Baliles appointed Hugh C. Miller, FAIA to be the first Director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (DHR) in July 1989. From a predecessor organization DHR became the official agency to speak for historic preservation in the Commonwealth. For five years he directed new historic preservation and archaeological programs to assist local officials, organizations and private property owners identify their own heritage places and preserve their values. In project reviews he created environments for dedicated professionals to excel in their project development, design and preservation. He administered departmental, State and Federal annual grants to enhance preservation activities in the Commonwealth.

He also served as the State Historic Preservation Officer (SHPO) to carry out the Federal historic preservation programs and reviewed Federally funded projects. As a member of the Arts and Architectural Board and the Tourism Board he encouraged compatible designs in the context of

historic buildings and spoke for the recognition of Virginia's diverse heritage of people and places as assets for economic development through preservation

Significant Programs and Partnerships

Miller expanded the survey and documentation of historic places for listing on the National Register and as Virginia Landmarks, to include large urban districts, small towns, rural historic districts and battlefields as well as individual properties dating from 9000 B.C. to the 1960's.

He initiated the study of African-American history that resulted in the publication of *Virginia of Black History*. The recognition of over sixty sites led to listing on the National Register and the celebration of significant work by black architects.

He recognized the remarkable collection of heritage buildings and landscapes owned by the Commonwealth of Virginia in a comprehensive Statewide survey. The identification of the historic and cultural values of these resources dating from the 18th century to the 1930's began an on-going conversation with the General Assembly, governing boards, university presidents and agency heads about preservation, appropriate alterations and additions as well as stewardship. This work has raised an awareness among architects, preservationists and the public about the excellent design of Virginia's public buildings.

Miller worked with the "first people" of Virginia and urged them to share their stories of special places and the meaning of the artifacts in the Commonwealth's collection. The book *First People -Early Indians of Virginia* was recognized as a reader for Native American children as well as for all Virginians.

He encouraged local government to participate in surveys, planning and tourism for historic preservation. The Main Street Programs and Certified Local Government (CLG) activities flourished as localities found their heritage to be an engine for economic development. He urged developers and architects to use the Federal tax credit program for the rehabilitation of historic buildings by demonstrating the economic benefits of successful rehabilitation. He was involved actively in the designation of historic properties and participated in project approvals to demonstrate how neighborhoods can be revitalized for affordable housing ("Cary 2000," Richmond) and high schools and old hotels can become elderly housing (Chase City, William Byrd, Richmond) or tobacco factories and 1940s garden apartments can be rehabilitated for use as market rate housing in urban centers.

Miller participated in programs to rehabilitate "main street" commercial buildings that have revitalized the cores of towns and cities across Virginia. He showed how preservation of local landmarks, like the Hotel Roanoke, can provide new life and expand economic activities in that community.

He organized programs of Statewide "Heritage Tourism Week" and "Archaeology Month" to celebrate Virginia's heritage and encourage public participation in local preservation events. He presented workshops to address timely subjects of building codes, handicapped access, easement donations, archaeological site vandalism and standards for rehabilitation for local design professionals and concerned citizens.

Leadership in Landscape Preservation

In 1979 while serving as Chief Historical Architect of the National Park Service, Miller initiated work to identify cultural landscapes as resources to be preserved. He promulgated the first NPS policies to define types of historic landscapes in 1981. He contracted with Kansas State University and Professor Robert Z. Melnick, FASLA for the preparation of a manual, *Cultural Landscapes: Rural Historic Districts in the National Park System (1985)*. He organized annual workshops to teach the principles of landscape preservation.

Working with landscape architects in the NPS, in the universities and in private practice he organized and lectured at the first historic landscape workshop held at an ASLA annual meeting in 1987. Similar workshops and technical sessions have been held annually by the ASLA ever since. In 1988 he was made an Honorary Member of in recognition of his leadership in the emerging practice of historic landscape architecture.

As Director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (1989 -1994) he endorsed the listing of large Rural Historic Districts on the National Register and as Virginia Landmarks to assist landowners and local officials in managing significant areas of Virginia cultural landscapes. Now with over twelve Rural Historic Districts, Virginia is a national model for recognizing its heritage in the countryside.

Miller has been active with landscape preservation organizations, preparing papers, publishing and taking leadership roles for their governance and program development

Membership:

American Society of Landscape Architects
Made Honorary Member 1988

Alliance for the Preservation of Historic Landscapes
Member 1979 – present
Executive Committee 1980 – 1988
Board Member 1997 – 2000; 2002 – present
Keynote Speaker Conference 1997.

Association for Preservation Technology (APT)
Life Member
Board Member 1974 -1981
Fellow 1998
Organizer and participant in conference landscape preservation sessions and tour,
Williamsburg VA 1998; Banff, Alberta 1999

Accomplishments in Education

Since teaching his first graduate course in 1970 about "Historic Preservation Policy and Management" at the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, Turkey, Hugh C. Miller has been involved in architectural and preservation education. He connects historic sites stewardship and landmark preservation lessons to the basic principle that "maintenance is preservation." At over thirty schools of architecture, he has taught generations of architects and preservation professionals about "building thinking," and that caring for existing buildings is an expanding opportunity for architectural service and is good business. Beginning in 1996, he has taught preservation technology (building geriatrics) at the Masters of Arts in Historic Preservation Program at Goucher College where he also directs master theses.

He is actively involved in the development of core content for preservation education and training. He works with educational institutions in the application of distance learning technologies. He has served on committees advising deans and faculties of architectural schools about curriculum, course content, preservation programs and projects. From 1986 to 1988 he was a member of the Advisory Committee for Preservation Technology for the College of Architecture and Urban Studies at Virginia Tech. He also served on four dissertation committees in the College. He advised the Dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia as a member of his first Advisory Board from 1990 to 1996, and served on the Commission on Historic Preservation Education from 1991 -1992.

Preservation Accomplished Through Service

Hugh C. Miller has generously shared the lessons he learned in the planning and preservation of national landmarks with non-profit organizations and community groups since his early contributions to the King of Prussia (PA) Historical Society in 1966. His recent work to enhance National Historic Landmarks has included continuing advice to governing boards for selection of professional staff and consultants, and review of programs, preservation treatments and conservation plans at:

Thomas Jefferson's Poplar Forest
Chair, Architectural Advisory Board, 1986 - 1989
Member 1998 – present
Member Landscape Advisory Board 1992 – present

University of Virginia's Academical Village
Member of Jefferson's Restoration Advisory Board (JRAB) and successor organizations
1989 – present

Robert E. Lee Memorial Association (Stratford Hall)
Chair, Advisory Panel for Historic Resources 1993 – present

Eppington Plantation, Chesterfield County, VA
Member, Advisory Committee 2000 – present

Benjamin Labtrobe's Pope Villa, Lexington, KY
Chair, Advisory Committee, 2002 – present

He has served on the Board of Directors of National Historic Landmarks making decisions about policy and programs, planning, preservation treatments and the selection of professional consultants at:

Foundation, Warsaw, Virginia
Founding Member of Board 1994 – 1998

Pinchot Institute for conservation at Grey Towers , Milford, PA
Emeritus Member of Board 2003
Board Member 1997 -2002
Treasurer 2000 -2001

His leadership has preserved Richmond, Virginia's historic buildings and its historic neighborhoods. He chaired the West Grace Street Associations Preservation Committee (1995-1999); co-chaired the Fan District Association Preservation Committee (1996-1999) and served as a board member of the Monument Avenue and Fan District Foundation (1998-2001). He successfully participated in the enactment of new preservation zoning, the designation of Monument Avenue as a National Historic Landmark and the "rescue" of abandoned buildings in the Fan for new uses. He is a member of Historic Richmond's "Preservation for Progress" coalition speaking about "good neighborhoods make a good city" and "preservation is good business."

Submitted by the Virginia Chapter of the ASLA
Lynn Crump, President
Terry L. Clements, Trustee