

# Lawrence Halprin

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1 March 2007

Board of Trustees  
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors & Awards Coordinator  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: ASLA Design Award  
Letter of Support  
Rich Haas, FASLA

To the Board of Trustees:

I am writing today to highly recommend Rich Haag for the prestigious ASLA Design Award. I recommend him with a great deal of confidence since I have known Rich a very long time. He came to work for me as a young landscape architect in the early 1950's. I have known him and worked with him from time to time ever since.

Rich is a remarkably talented designer, particularly in areas that require cultural sensitivity. His designs always respect their regional and environmental context and his sensitivity adds greatly to the emotional impact of his creations.

In addition to his great design talent, I have also been very impressed by Rich's commitment to the education of landscape designers. Rich has a wonderful rapport with his audience of students and is able to convey in a humorous and memorable manner the importance of landscape design as a social art.

I am delighted and proud to recommend him for this particularly appropriate recognition.

Sincerely,

  
Lawrence Halprin, FASLA

T h e O f f i c e o f L a w r e n c e H a l p r i n

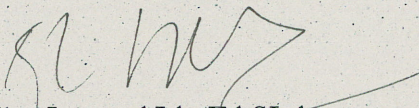


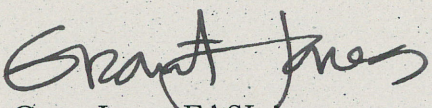
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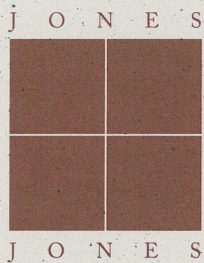
Dear Trustees,

With great pleasure, and in recognition of his exceptional design work which has lifted our profession to ever greater heights, we wish to unequivocally endorse the nomination of our teacher, mentor, colleague, and good friend Richard Haag for the ASLA Design Medal.

Yours sincerely,

  
Ilze Jones, AIA, FASLA  
Principal

  
Grant Jones, FASLA  
Principal



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Board of Trustees  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors & Awards Coordinator  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001



Dear Trustees:

I am writing today to endorse the nomination put before you by Charles Anderson, FASLA recommending Richard Haag, FASLA, for your consideration to receive the ASLA Design Medal.

Over the course of my career in the Pacific Northwest, Rich's influence has been nearly omni-present, infusing its tendrils into the visual and philosophical landscape of the region. Here in his home ground, those influence outfalls are perhaps not surprising, but as I travel globally, the impact of his work, particularly his built masterworks at Gas Works Park and Bloedel Reserve is impossible to overstate.

From Peter Latz's Duisberg Nord Park in Germany, to Cultuurpark Westergasfabriek in Amsterdam to Seattle's Olympic Sculpture Park, the precedent that Gas Works provides speaks toward an integration of existing on-site infrastructures to highlight, not hide, the unkind scars of the past. With his rather delicate plan for the Park—"dig a hole, make a mound" he would often opine—the "non-striving" nature of his Eastern influences were given physical voice on a public proscenium, thrusting out into the waters of Lake Washington. What could have been a denuded, blank-slate of public park banalities was instead transformed into a much-loved and imminently magical space that reflects back on the City of Seattle.

The second of Haag's masterworks, Bloedel Reserve, is equally powerful, but where Gas Works is explicitly public, the gardens at Bloedel Reserve are intensely personal. Here the "dialectical landscape"—a pairing of reciprocal opposites—is on display and fuses the major tension of Haag's life—a balancing of Eastern and Western culture—into an unfurling sequence of synthesized spaces that reveals a number of pairings that I point out in the essay "The Zen of Garden Design: Richard Haag's Three Linked Gardens at Bloedel." From the garden of the planes, to the moss garden to the reflection garden, the reciprocity of ideas like "object/space, symbol/type, immutable concept/ephemeral matter, beautiful/sublime, light/dark, and human order/natural chaos" is artfully engaged across a range of spatial expressions.

In the essay referenced above, I note that the reflection garden "is a powerful statement that humans and nature can be immersed in each other and can be richer for it." This concept, a fusion between traditional dialectical opposites, is an apt description of Rich's life's work and career. An extraordinary plantsman with the capability of creating the most-transcendent of spatial forms, his work—as did his career as a professor—seeks to demarcate and describe an approach to the natural world that seems all the more relevant today than it was when these projects were constructed.

I urge you to bestow this honor upon Richard Haag. His passionate advocacy for the power of the profession of landscape architecture, the legacy of his mentorship to countless generations of students and his ability to shape spaces that—as only he could say it—"get down into that reptilian brain stem" recommend him for this honor.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Kindest regards,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Patrick M. Condon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Professor Patrick M. Condon  
University of British Columbia  
James Taylor Chair in Landscape and Liveable Environments  
Landscape Architecture Program  
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**The Cultural Landscape Foundation** Preserving our landscape legacy through partnerships in education and stewardship

1 March 2007

Board of Trustees  
C/O Carolyn Mitchell, Honors & Awards Coordinator  
**American Society of Landscape Architects**  
636 Eye St., NW  
Washington, DC 20001



Dear Trustees:

It is with great enthusiasm that I support the nomination of Richard Haag for ASLA's Design Medal.

For the past fifteen years as the series editor of *Pioneers of American Landscape Design*, I have been afforded the tremendous opportunity to gain a broad understanding of the evolution of the profession of landscape architecture and those practitioners who have made a lasting impact on design and practice.

Rich Haag is one such towering figure that does not easily fit categorization. Unlike other post-war designers, Haag did not hail from the northeast. He was born in Louisville, Kentucky in 1923 and his introduction to landscape architecture was a direct result of his childhood spent in his father's nursery. As with his origins, and early life experience, his design philosophy and practice does not meet conventional norms.

Educated at the University of Illinois, University of California at Berkeley, and Harvard's Graduate School of Design, Haag was mentored by Stanley White and Hideo Sasaki. In 1951, fresh from Harvard he worked for Dan Kiley. Soon thereafter, Rich was awarded a Fulbright in 1954 and studied Japanese Gardens for two years based in Tokyo. Upon his return to the U.S. he worked for Lawrence Halprin for two years. In 1958, Haag relocated to Seattle and established the Landscape Architecture Department at the University of Washington.

That same year, Haag began a small practice – still in operation today with over 500 projects to his credit. Laurie Olin, a “sometime employee” of Haag, who penned our forthcoming essay about Haag for *Pioneers of American Landscape Design II* (University of Virginia Press, 2008), describes the office as “an intense and lively studio enterprise, scraping along economically, but with a steady stream of projects.”

During the 1970s and 80s Rich created two projects that historians and designers today often refer to as iconic: Gas Works Park on Lake Union in Seattle and the Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island in Puget Sound. It is no surprise that both of these projects were awarded the President's Award of Excellence by the Society.

At Gas Works, when the future of the former industrial operations was under discussion in the 1960s, the preservation of commercial archaeology and brownfield sites were not part of public consciousness as it is today. In fact, the agenda at the time was to demolish the gas refinery and create a traditional Olmstedian park design in the spirit of the parks designed by John Charles Olmsted along Lake Washington. Instead, Haag



pioneered soil remediation techniques using plants and natural biological practices, and “thinned the forest” of the old industrial ruins – integrating the gritty hulking ironworks into his park design. Unlike other Modern park designs up until that time, Haag did not approach the landscape as a tabula rasa (clean slate). Instead he forged a conversation with the city’s industrial past. This aspect of Haag’s approach is a first-ever in the United States and perhaps internationally. If only more recent waterfront park projects in Newark, Pittsburgh, Cleveland or Providence had explored such a powerful interface.

At Bloedel, another formerly ravaged landscape -- the result of years of clear-cutting and logging was transformed into a sequence of outdoor rooms and events. Working with a second-growth woodland as his palette, Haag choreographed a landscape experience that takes visitors on a journey that is both physical and spiritual. In one area for example, ancient stumps, with fresh new growth eternally sprouting, serve as witnesses to the violent past of this cultural landscape, just as the abandoned, graffiti-laden and rusting ruins had at Gas Works Park.

At both Gas Works Park and the Bloedel Reserve, Rich Haag not only created modern masterworks of landscape architecture, he also articulated a nature-culture ethic that confronts -- and recons with -- the complex past of these cultural landscapes. Acting as a story teller, philosopher and healer, Haag’s work transcends other works of this period and those that have followed. I encourage the Board of Trustees to look favorably upon this nomination.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chab", followed by a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR  
Founding President



## UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

COLLEGE OF ARCHITECTURE & URBAN PLANNING  
*Department of Landscape Architecture*

Board of Trustees  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors & Awards Coordinator  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Trustees:

I am writing today to support the nomination of Richard Haag, FASLA, for receipt of the ASLA Design Medal.

In addition to all of the design encomiums heaped upon him, Rich is also fondly remembered here as the founder of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Washington. Beginning as a Bachelor's degree program in 1969, the program has since grown to encompass both bachelors and masters level education, and is a feeder toward higher-degree programs at the University of Washington, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the Harvard's Graduate School of Design.

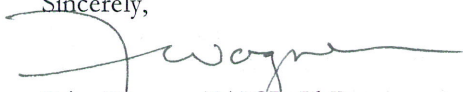
As the current Chair of the department, I am acutely aware of the impact the Richard Haag has had over the region's landscape design community. The number of alumni who continue to speak to Rich's influence on them as a teacher and mentor is astonishing. Among the many who owe debts to Rich's influence include current design luminaries including Laurie Olin, FASLA; Charles Anderson, FASLA; Grant Jones, FASLA; and Ilze Jones FASLA. But his influence over the local community and the design professions is significantly broader than just those who were privileged enough to study under his tutelage.

At Gas Works Park, Bloedel Reserve and his other design commissions, Rich's built work has affected a palpable shift in the ways that we experience nature, both publicly and personally. It is his passion for strengthening that most fundamental of connections between society and nature that has lead him to be such an astonishing teacher and passionate advocate for democratic green spaces, ecological understanding, and superior design.

I whole-heartedly endorse the nomination and look forward to congratulating Richard on his receipt of the ASLA's Design Medal. There is no other practitioner living today who deserves this honor more.

Thank you for your consideration in this matter.

Sincerely,



Fritz Wagner, FAICP, PhD  
Chair, Department of Landscape Architecture