



City of New York  
Parks & Recreation

Adrian Benepe  
Commissioner

The Arsenal  
Central Park  
New York, New York 10021

Capital Projects

Olmsted Center  
Flushing Meadows-Corona Park  
Flushing, New York 11368

Amy L. Freitag, Deputy Commissioner  
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March 10, 2005

Mr. Patrick A. Miller, Ph.D., FASLA, President  
ASLA  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Mr. Miller:

It is my honor to recommend Elizabeth Barlow Rogers as this year's recipient of the LaGasse Medal. As an author, practitioner, educator and innovator, Betsy is among the most important figures in 20th and 21st century landscape design, restoration and the urban park movement.

Most noted for her extraordinary efforts that saved Central Park, Betsy's work far exceeds that accomplishment. Her early writings on Frederick Law Olmsted and the hidden natural landscapes of New York City fueled a new thinking about urban open space at a time when these resources were at greatest risk. These writings remain an important contribution to the corpus of New York and Olmsted writings.

Her audacious suggestion that Central Park could and would be saved in the 1970's brought Betsy to the attention of city leaders. She simply refused to concede to the accelerating downward spiral that had made the park the brunt of negative jokes and symbol of the city's decline.

Her triumph is well known to all who visit Central Park. What is less well understood is the systemic impact on park management and vision that has reached very corner of the globe. If Central Park could be saved, then so, too could parks around the world that had suffered similar decline. Her model and message fueled a renaissance of parks from Philadelphia to San Francisco, from Paris to Asia. Her specific innovations, including public/private partnership and zone management, have been borrowed and adapted by countless public and private managers. For Betsy, the art of landscape design is both in the larger vision and the details. Her creation of an elite capital design team established a high level of design and construction quality that remains the gold standard.

Betsy took her experiences to the task of transforming parks and cityscapes across the city. Her Cityscapes Institute continues to advocate for environmental justice and improved public design.

Betsy's recent accomplishments at the Bard Graduate Program highlight her talents as writer, educator and promoter of landscape history, theory and discourse. She constantly seeks new technologies to explore landscape, from her digital archives of images of villas to her spatial data inventory of her ranch land in central Texas. In each of these efforts, Betsy brings along the next generation of students and scholars whom she mentors and encourages to be as inquisitive and fearless as she was in Central Park in the 1970s. Her generosity as a role model and mentor distinguishes her and ensures her influence will be felt far beyond her practice.

There could be no more deserving a recipient of this award. By honoring Betsy, you will be demonstrating the power of the individual to transform both our physical and cultural landscape.

Please do not hesitate to contact me to provide you with additional information.

Sincerely,



Amy L. Freitag