



SCASLA

March 17, 2004

Mr. Rodney Swink, FASLA
Chair, Honors and Awards Advisory Committee
C/O ASLA
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

SOUTH CAROLINA
CHAPTER

AMERICAN
SOCIETY OF
LANDSCAPE
ARCHITECTS

RE: OLMSTED MEDAL

Dear Rodney,

It is both an honor and a privilege, on behalf of the South Carolina Chapter of ASLA to nominate Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. of Charleston, South Carolina for the ASLA Olmsted Medal. As a Landscape Architect I am very appreciative of what this man has done to advance our profession and as a citizen of the City of Charleston, I am proud of the fact that he is not only an Honorary Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects but he is **my** Mayor and I know that my quality of life has been greatly enhanced due to his tireless efforts and his many accomplishments during his tenure as Mayor of the great City of Charleston. Mayor Riley has demonstrated unparalleled environmental leadership, vision, and stewardship. He is an example for all mayors to emulate.

Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. is widely considered one of the most visionary and highly effective governmental leaders in America. First elected Mayor in December 1975, Mayor Riley is serving an unprecedented eighth term. Under his leadership, Charleston has increased its commitment to racial harmony and progress, achieved a substantial decrease in crime, experienced a remarkable revitalization of its historic downtown business district, seen the creation and growth of Spoleto Festival U.S.A., built the beautiful Waterfront Park, developed nationally-acclaimed affordable housing, and experienced unprecedented growth in Charleston's size and population.

Mayor Riley has led a city government with an impressive record of innovation in public safety, housing, arts and culture, children's issues, the creation of park and other public spaces, and economic revitalization and development. The City of Charleston is recognized as one of the most livable and progressive cities in the United States.

Mayor Riley has held numerous national leadership positions and received many awards and distinctions. He served as President of the U.S. Conference of Mayors 1986-87 and currently serves on the USCM's Executive Committee.

He served as Chairman of the Cities Task Force of the Southern Growth Policies Board and served as President of the National Association of Democratic Mayors (1988-92). He was given the Outstanding Mayors Award by the National Urban Coalition, the Distinguished Citizen Award by the National Association of Realtors and named the 1991 Municipal Leader of the Year by American City & County. Mayor Riley has received the Order of the Palmetto, been named South Carolinian of the Year, and given the 1982 Verner Award by the South Carolina Arts Commission for outstanding contributions to the arts. Mayor Riley received many commendations for his leadership of the Charleston community before, during and after Hurricane Hugo in 1989. In June 2000, he was awarded the first President's Award from the U.S. Conference of Mayors for outstanding leadership. In July 2000, he was honored as the first recipient of the Urban Land Institute J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionary Urban Development. In February 2002, he was given the Keystone Award, given for exemplary leadership to those who use architecture to transform their communities, by the American Architectural Foundation.

Mayor Riley's vision, leadership, and impressive list of accomplishments have brought him and the City of Charleston national and international acclaim. Washington Post columnist David S. Broder said, "...what has been achieved here under his leadership is extraordinary," adding "...it is mainly the way that Charleston treats the social problems that old cities share that has made Riley's long reign so remarkable." Conde Nast, in its August, 1997 issue, said, "... of America's colonial cities, Charleston is the most dramatically reborn." The article further noted, "Charleston's revival is a story of shared pride and work..." An issue of Newsweek named Mayor Riley one of the twenty-five most dynamic mayors in America. The City of Charleston has also been named an All-America City.

Through his lifetime of experience in Charleston, Mayor Riley has become a leading expert on urban design and livability issues and is a frequent speaker across the country on these topics. He was a founder of the Mayors' Institute for City Design (MICD) and has provided critical urban design support to mayors across America. Mayor Riley received the 1994 Thomas Jefferson Award from the American Institute of Architects for Public Architecture for "his exceptional leadership and 'Jeffersonian vision' in redefining the promise and, ultimately the future, of our nation and its cities." In 1997, he received the Seaside Prize from the Seaside Institute for exemplary leadership and contributions to high-quality urban design throughout America. The American Society of Landscape Architect named him an Honorary Member for his leadership and vision. He has also been a speaker at several ASLA Chapter Meetings, an ASLA Annual Meeting and most recently at the CELA Conference, which was held in Charleston.

Mayor Riley has always stressed the importance of giving Charlestonians avenues for participation and input into city government and constantly searched for new ways to provide increased access. Early in his administration, he created the Office of the Ombudsman and Citizen Participation and an Office of Neighborhood Services, which has fostered the creation of ninety-two very active neighborhood associations. These neighborhood associations serve as a conduit for information from the city to

neighborhoods and neighborhoods to the city. The mayor meets monthly with small groups of presidents to share information and discuss neighborhood concerns. In the spring of 1999, the Mayor established an annual Neighborhood Presidents Roundtable, which brings all of the neighborhood presidents together to share success stories and to receive leadership training as well as information on city projects. Through Mayor's Night In, a monthly period set aside for citizens to have an opportunity to meet with the Mayor in his office, every citizen knows that they have the opportunity, at least once a month, to share their concerns and ideas with the Mayor personally.

Mayor Riley has actively used public-private partnerships to leverage all of the city's resources to stimulate new development and restoration in historic downtown Charleston. Restoring the "heart" of the City of Charleston, Mayor Riley has helped create one of the most vibrant and productive downtowns in America, including the dramatic rebirth of King Street, Charleston's main street. From Saks Fifth Avenue on King Street to the development of Charleston Place, a major hotel and retail shopping complex, to the creation of the award-winning Visitor Reception and Transportation Center (VRTC), Mayor Riley has provided the leadership and incentives necessary to make Charleston a great place to work, live, and visit.

Recognizing that the economic well being of Charleston is dependent on a diverse and expandable tax base, Mayor Riley has successfully pursued an aggressive annexation strategy. The physical size of Charleston has increased from 16.7 square miles to almost 90 square miles today. Daniel Island, annexed in 1991, is well on its way to becoming a diverse and high quality new urbanist development and includes the Family Circle Tennis Complex, the Charleston Battery Soccer Facility, Blackbaud's new corporate headquarters and several new commercial areas, neighborhoods and award winning parks.

Coupled with the annexation policy are a strong Department of Planning and Neighborhoods and a very strong Parks Department. The Commercial Corridor Design Review Board (CCDRB), Board of Architectural Review (BAR), and Technical Review Committee (TRC) help ensure the quality of development within Charleston and innovative programs like the Office of Neighborhood Services, Livability Court and the Mayor's "Pothole Hotline" further protect the citizen's quality of life.

Mayor Riley has paid special attention to the creation and protection of Charleston's very special parks and public spaces. Providing his "generation's gift to the future," the wonderful Waterfront Park opened in May, 1990 and serves as joyous, public gathering place for thousands of Charleston residents and visitors. Citing the waterfront as "the birthright of the people of Charleston," The Waterfront Park was honored by the ASLA by the presentation of a Centennial Medallion.

Mayor Riley has pursued an ambitious plan to give the public access to the water's edge: from the South Carolina Aquarium to the Charleston Maritime Center to the Waterfront Park to the Battery to the Ashley River Walk to the Joseph P. Riley, Jr. Baseball Park, the public will one day have access to nearly every foot of Charleston's precious waterfront resource. Mayor Riley has

also renovated many parks and playgrounds, including the gorgeous 54-acre Hampton Park. He used abandoned railroad right-of-ways to create the West Ashley Bikeway and the West Ashley Greenway. In addition to the aquarium, major new parks include the West Ashley Park and the Dill Tract.

Mayor Riley's accomplishments are many but it is attitude toward the public's access to parks and open space that set him apart in my mind and make him most worthy of an honor such as the Olmsted Medal. In a meeting one night in my neighborhood (Byrnes Downs) Mayor Riley related to the group my own story of coming to Charleston to live. He told the group how I came to Charleston on vacation and was so impressed with the beauty and the incredible quality of life that I had to make Charleston my home. He went on to say that he believed the most beautiful places in the City should belong to all of its residents, not just a privileged few. That will be his legacy to this wonderful, beautiful, historic city.

Because of his vision and his leadership over the past thirty years and because of the national prominence he has brought to the City of Charleston and for his support of the profession of landscape architecture, I believe Mayor Joseph P. Riley, Jr. is very deserving of the honor of receiving the Olmsted Medal and I wholeheartedly put forth this nomination on behalf of the South Carolina Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William T. Eubanks" with a stylized flourish at the end.

William T. Eubanks, ASLA
Trustee, South Carolina Chapter