

THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTS



March 10, 2004

Norman L. Koonce, FAIA
*Executive Vice President/
Chief Executive Officer*

Susan L.B. Jacobson, FASLA
President
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Susan:

On behalf of the 72,000 members of The American Institute of Architects, I am writing to express strong support for the nomination of The Honorable Joseph P. Riley, an honorary member of both the ASLA and the AIA, to receive the 2004 ASLA Olmsted Medal.

I know our organizations share great admiration for the incredible leadership Mayor Riley has provided the City of Charleston since his election in 1975. His accomplishments are the envy of many mayors: revitalizing the city's downtown area to the delight of residents, business owners, and tourists alike; preserving and restoring the city's rich design heritage for generations to come; and, at the same time, carefully planning for future development to ensure protection of the built and natural environments.

During his nearly thirty years as its chief executive, Mayor Riley has paid special attention to creating and protecting Charleston's extraordinary parks and public spaces. Providing his "generation's gift to the future," the wonderful Waterfront Park opened in May 1990 and serves as a joyous public gathering place for thousands of Charleston residents and visitors. Citing the waterfront as "the birthright of the people of Charleston," 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 renovated many parks and playgrounds, including the historic 54-acre Hampton Park. He used abandoned railroad rights-of-way to create the West Ashley Bikeway and the West Ashley Greenway. In addition to the Aquarium, other major new parks include the West Ashley Park and the Dill Tract.

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His influence reaches far beyond his city's borders. In founding the Mayors' Institute for City Design, Mayor Riley recognized that the mayor is really the city's chief arbiter of design and created a forum to provide design education and support for mayors across the country. The Mayors' Institute reinforces the value of good design with these public officials, and shows them how to work with landscape architects, architects, and planners, to help them shape their public realms.

Thank you for your kind consideration of our recommendation to present the 2004 ASLA Olmsted Medal to Mayor Riley. He is certainly deserving of this fine honor and we look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely,



Norman L. Koonce, FAIA
Executive Vice President/CEO

Cc: Jeffrey Lofton, APR, Public Relations Manager, American Society of Landscape Architects