

17 March 2004

Executive Committee
ASLA
636 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: Olmsted Medal Letter of Endorsement
Mayor Joseph Riley

Dear Members of the Executive Committee:

Mayor Joe Riley is perhaps the finest client I have ever worked with. When I started the project, I assumed that, as the Mayor, his interest in the design of Marion Square Park would be reduced to occasional reviews, but in fact, the Mayor was an extraordinarily engaged and brilliant client—mindful every step of the way of trying to respect my creative role in forming a vision for the park, but also knowing, as he does, a great deal about public open space, advocating for the kind of landscape that he knew was necessary. Every dialogue was inspired; every criticism was a good one; every requested design change made the design better.

I know from being in Charleston many years that the Mayor has brought this spirit of support and critique to all of his projects in the city and Joe's leadership on them is an extraordinary example of what every landscape architect could hope for in their own cities and with their own clients. It would be an extremely sound decision to confer this award on a mayor who has done so much for our profession and who also, through his work with the Mayor's Institute, has encouraged leaders of other cities to do the same. He would bring to this award an exceptionally fine record and I might close by saying that Joe is sophisticated, well-read in design, and a personal delight to work with.

Sincerely yours,


Michael Van Valkenburgh

/jg