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The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees
The American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street NW
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March 14, 2004

Dear Committee Members and Trustees:

It is my delight to lend my enthusiastic support to Peter Walker's nomination for the ASLA medal. Because Walker's design work has been evaluated extensively through awards and publications, I will speak primarily to his contributions to education and my personal knowledge of his commitment to the profession. Before 1985 I knew Pete only from his widely published built works and his reputation for strong opinions.

Consequently, I was delighted to discover, when I worked with him at both Harvard (1985-1991) and at U.C. Berkeley (1997-2000) that he was a team player committed to investigating and promoting the breadth of our discipline. My admiration for his ability to listen to many opinions and creatively respond to merge his own ideas with the concerns of others grew continuously during these years. I was also able to see first hand his intellect, creativity, teaching skills and his tireless commitment to the profession.

Pete's ability to listen carefully and then quickly respond with sharp insights makes him an excellent teacher. He is the single best critic of student projects that I have ever known. In a few quick paragraphs, he can cover all aspects of a student's proposal – from its intellectual underpinnings to the challenges of how to build it or the politics of its implementation. This unusual talent allows him to challenge the strongest student while also supporting the least adept ones. Students and faculty alike are often surprised by his openness to a broad range of approaches to a problem, particularly when he praises a thorough and thoughtful ecologically based, but formally subtle or awkward scheme, rather than a more graphically engaging, but poorly conceived, one. When he does praise a scheme, he always emphasizes the experience of the user and the practicalities of comfortable places to sit, walk and understand a landscape, thus reminding students of the basic issues that all landscape architects must address. But Pete is more than just an excellent teacher, he is also an educator who is willing to dig into the complexities of curriculum development, the mentoring of young faculty, the endless paperwork and the development of special events and lectures that bring students in contact with practice.

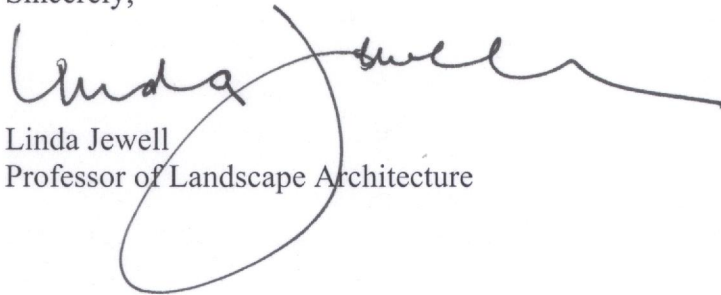
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Perhaps, most importantly, Pete has educated the public about Landscape Architecture. Through the creation of Spacemaker Press, his position on the editorial board of Landscape Architecture magazine and his own writing, he has influenced the views of public officials and other decision makers, including many high profile architects, on landscape architecture's unique contribution to the design of the environment. He has given his time to these publications because he sees them as a mechanism for the profession to increase its visibility. And it has worked. Although I recognize that not every Landscape Architect agrees with every publication choice, the entire profession has benefited from Spacemaker's provocative images and the increased visibility that it has provided for our field.

Unlike many high profile designers, Pete has remained committed to ASLA. He arranges his busy schedule around the national meeting and, once there, he actively attends both informational and social events. He is genuinely interested in knowing what is going on with everyone in the profession – in meeting them, talking about their work and trying to understand the full breadth of the accomplishments and concerns of other Landscape Architects. He is interested in meeting people that are “doing things” by pursuing any aspect of the profession with passion – whether experimenting with ecological restoration, running a planning office, writing about historical landscapes or building evocative new ones. He wants to learn about such work, promote it to others through publications and have it debated. It is this affinity for provocative debate that sometimes engenders criticism from those who know Pete only casually. From personal experience, I know that he can debate a myriad of professional issues for hours. And we often disagree, but I always leave such discussions with new knowledge and greater clarity for my own positions. Pete sees such debate as crucial to our growth as a discipline and it is this desire for our profession's growth that has been the driving force behind every challenge he has attacked – his practice, his teaching, and his efforts to expand the publications on Landscape Architecture.

Pete's life, perhaps more than any Landscape Architect that I have known – has been uncompromisingly dedicated to our profession - he sleeps, eats and lives Landscape Architecture – and we all have benefited from his dedication. It therefore seems only appropriate that we, as a profession, return the favor by recognizing him with the ASLA Medal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Linda Jewell", with a large, sweeping flourish that loops back under the name.

Linda Jewell
Professor of Landscape Architecture