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RE: LaGasse Medal: Recommendation of Virginia Anderson

Dear Mr. Swink:

We enthusiastically recommend Virginia Anderson for the LaGasse Medal. Our relationship with Virginia spans a number of years and involves a diverse collection of important civic projects. From the WASLA-award-winning Kreielsheimer Promenade at the new Seattle opera house to a master plan to revitalize Seattle's eight-block Theater District, Virginia's vision, energy, and leadership has fostered an inspiring context for outstanding landscape design.

During her term as President of Seattle Center, Virginia has wondrously transformed the Seattle Center campus from a rather isolated monument into a vibrant, active setting that is fully integrated into the daily life of its surrounding neighborhood and region. Virginia has made the Seattle Center Campus into a place that universally welcomes families, youth, the full spectrum of socio-economic groups of the Pacific Northwest, and visiting tourists from around the world. Though Virginia has made the campus more welcoming to all people, she has simultaneously encouraged landscape designers to create innovative and site-specific pieces in the original tradition of this 1962 World's Fair campus. These accomplishments express Virginia's powerful ability to merge the ideals of accessibility and design innovation.

One example of this is the Kreielsheimer Promenade at Seattle Center. The focus of the Promenade is a fully accessible, yet aesthetically unconventional, water feature. Throughout the design process, as the team explored various ways to incorporate water into this rooftop plaza, Virginia both supported and challenged the team to find a solution that would be dramatic and contemporary but fully welcoming to all types of users. Virginia's unwavering vision was one of a landscape that would be equally elegant for opera patrons in the evenings as it would be playful and bright for families visiting the Center during the day. The final result, which was awarded a Design Merit Award by the Washington Chapter of the ASLA, demonstrates a successful merging of Virginia's goals. True to her vision of a modern, integrated civic campus, the days bring families with young children, including many on wheelchairs, to play at the Promenade, and the nights bring tuxedo-clad opera patrons to linger in the serene space during intermissions. Virginia's acute understanding of both types of experiences was instrumental in the project's design and construction processes.

In closing, we reiterate our strong support for Virginia Anderson's nomination for the LaGasse Medal. Her example as an inspired client and a community leader should be known and applauded by our national community of landscape architects.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Gustafson, Partner



Shannon Nichol, Partner

cc: Sherrie Boyer, Seattle Center Foundation