

March 16, 2004

Medals Committee  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736  
[medals@asla.org](mailto:medals@asla.org)

**Re: Renata von Tscharnner, Charles River Conservancy  
Lagasse Medal Nomination 2004**

Dear ASLA Medals Committee:

This is a letter of support for the Boston Society of Landscape Architect's nomination of Renata von Tscharnner as a candidate for the 2004 LaGasse medal in the non-landscape architect category. As a Past President of the BSLA, Boston Society of Landscape Architects (2000-2001), and a practicing landscape architect, I am very familiar with the energetic and accomplished work of Renata von Tscharnner and the Charles River Conservancy, (CRC). Our firm, Halvorson Design Partnership, has been involved in several projects along the Charles River, the Master Plan of the Charles River Basin that was given an Honor Award in Planning from the ASLA in 2000 and the new Nashua Street Park in the New Basin area as part of the Central Artery Big Dig project mitigation. Renata von Tscharnner, as President of the Charles River Conservancy, has been a strong advocate of the Charles River parkland and so I am delighted with the Boston Chapter's nomination.

The editorial writer of the Boston Globe writing about the proposed skatepark spearheaded by the Charles River Conservancy said on March 15, 2004 "... vision is what the conservancy has in spades". That is not only true about the proposed skatepark but the general stewardship approach brought forward by this relatively new organization that Renata founded. As a not for profit public-private partnership during a time when public funds have been seriously reduced, Renata has continued to build on the visions of Charles Eliot and Fredrick Law Olmsted by re-investing in these important parklands and inspiring others to get involved in their river.

As a landscape architect, I am painfully aware that the best designs are useless if not properly maintained. While some of the newer parklands have maintenance plans incorporated (though not necessarily designated budgets), older parts of the river shoreline like the eight (8) miles upriver from the Esplanade have insufficient maintenance provisions and funding. The hundreds of volunteers that have worked with the CRC's professional coordinator have not only accomplished important tasks like shoreline restoration, invasive control and brush cutting, these Conservancy Volunteers have become parkland advocates. It is the physical work in a beautiful setting that makes there volunteers come again and again. The volunteer program is an important part of Renata's vision for the Conservancy where the volunteer work simultaneously builds-in advocacy for the Charles River parklands at the same time.

Renata von Tscharnner created the Conservancy to bring not one but many visions to the parklands and all of these visions help the stewardship of these public parklands. Her tireless energy,

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breadth of creative thinking, and myriad of approaches to advocacy including the visually powerful poster she helped create, the MIT Press book "Inventing the Charles River", the bridge lighting with music and dance, the educational programs with service learning, and the hundreds of volunteers that she has organized are just a few of her accomplishments.

As Landscape Architects we need organizations like the Conservancy to help create new parks and then to provide stewardship for older ones. I am pleased to write this letter in support of Renata von Tscharnner, and the Charles River Conservancy for the Lagasse Medal. She is an outstanding candidate for this medal and fits the criteria outlined by our ASLA organization. Should you have any questions regarding the candidate and her qualifications, please do not hesitate to call me at 617-536-0380 x 3043.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Cynthia W. Smith". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Cynthia" being larger and more prominent than the last name "Smith".

Cynthia W. Smith, ASLA  
Principal, Halvorson Design Partnership

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