

## Honorary Membership Nomination Narrative

**Nominee:** Charles Eliot Beveridge, Ph.D.  
Series Editor, Frederick Law Olmsted Papers  
Research Professor, Department of History  
American University  
Washington, DC

**Nominator:** Susan L.B. Jacobson, FASLA

It is with great pleasure that I nominate Dr. Charles Beveridge for Honorary Membership in ASLA. Dr. Beveridge is the leading authority on the work of Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm. Since 1986, he has been the series editor of the Olmsted Papers Project at American University, a twelve-volume series of Olmsted's writings published by Johns Hopkins University Press. He has presented more than one hundred lectures on Frederick Law Olmsted and his firm to public, professional, and academic audiences.

Dr. Beveridge has served as historical and design consultant on the restoration and rehabilitation of some forty Olmsted parks, public grounds, and other designs. He has worked with the staffs of numerous parks departments and with more than twenty landscape architecture firms nationwide on such projects, including the Boston "Emerald Necklace," Prospect Park in Brooklyn, Cadwalader Park in Trenton, NJ, Riverside Village in Illinois, the Midway Plaisance in Chicago, Branch Brook Park in Newark, NJ, Mount Royal Park in Montreal, the Muddy River, in Boston, Olmsted Walk at the National Zoo in Washington, DC, and the major parks in Rochester, NY, Atlanta, GA, and Louisville, KY. He has also advised on the application of Olmstedian design principles in such varied projects as Freedom Park in Atlanta and the new Inn at Biltmore Estate in North Carolina.

He has co-curated numerous exhibitions on Olmsted and advised and participated in several films on the subject. Dr. Beveridge is frequently interviewed on public radio and television.

A prolific writer, the landscape architecture profession has Dr. Beveridge and the Olmsted Papers Project to thank for producing *The Papers of Frederick Law Olmsted*, volumes one through six, and supplementary series volume one and *Frederick Law Olmsted: Designing the American Landscape* (with photographer Paul Rocheleau), published by Rizzoli International Publishers, 1995; revised paperbound edition, 1998, Universe Publishing.

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Beveridge nomination

Dr. Beveridge's efforts have been recognized frequently, receiving awards from the National Association for Olmsted Parks, the Georgia chapter of ASLA, the Illinois chapter of ASLA, the Boston Society of Landscape Architects, and the New York State Preservation League. He has received the Frederick Law Olmsted Award from Historic Massachusetts and the Garden Club of America medal for historic preservation.

He graduated *magna cum laude* in 1956 from Harvard College and earned his Ph.D. in history in 1966 from the University of Wisconsin with a dissertation entitled "Frederick Law Olmsted: The Formative Years, 1822-1865."

Dr. Beveridge's devotion to researching and sharing information about the founder of the American landscape architecture profession is invaluable in our efforts to increase the public's understanding of and appreciation for what we do. I hope that we will recognize his good work through honorary membership in ASLA.

September 9, 2004

Susan L.B. Jacobson, FASLA  
President  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Susan:

It is with great enthusiasm that I submit this letter of support for Dr. Charles Beveridge, for honorary ASLA membership. I have known Charlie for two decades and have worked with him in a diversity of capacities. Initially as a private consultant, I worked with Charlie on Olmsted-designed landscapes in Buffalo, Rochester, Boston and New York City. Initially, as a young practitioner, I learned much about the multidisciplinary interface between landscape architecture and landscape history, as did our clients and affected communities from Charlie. In all of these projects, Charlie not only brought steadfast professionalism and a passion for the Olmsted-landscape at hand, but through his patience and personal vision taught many how to "read" and "value" Olmsted's philosophies and surviving built works.

In addition, I have collaborated with Charlie or witnessed Charlie in dozens of professional venues. These presentations in concert with his astonishing written legacy has converted thousands as to the value and vision of Olmsted. Today we take for granted the profession of landscape history -- In fact, many university programs now offer PhD's in landscape history. Since 1986, as the series editor of the Olmsted papers, Charlie has established the standard for landscape research and critical writing. Research on other visionary landscape pioneers has been possible because of Charlie's longstanding commitment to the Frederick Law Olmsted, Sr., his successor firm and built legacy.

In sum, Charlie's outreach for Olmsted, his legacy, and the profession of landscape architecture in America is without peers. Today, practicing landscape architects from Portland, Me, to Atlanta, GA or Seattle, WA, can successfully revitalize historic parks and parks systems because of the research, knowledge and generosity of spirit of Charlie Beveridge. I urge

September 9, 2004

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the ASLA to enthusiastically support his nomination for honorary membership and thank Susan Jacobson, our president, for putting this nomination forward.

Yours sincerely,

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR  
Coordinator, Historic Landscape Initiative  
National Park Service, Preservation Initiatives  
1849 C Street, NW (2255)  
Washington DC 20240

202.354.2076  
202 371.1616 (fax)

August 29, 2004

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

Dear Susan:

I am delighted to be asked to right a letter of commendation for Dr. Charles E. Beveridge series editor of the Olmsted Papers Project at American University. There is no more fitting honor than to recognize the many contributions of Dr. Beveridge to the profession of landscape architecture than to award him with an honorary membership to the American Society of Landscape Architecture. His decades of scholarly work devoted to the written legacy of our founder and mentor Frederick Law Olmsted has provided a unique record of the philosophy and tireless efforts of Olmsted to conceive of a new and democratically enlightened profession to give shape to the American built environment through landscape design.

Dr. Beveridge is also recognized as the foremost consultant on any landscape project that involves the Olmsted design legacy. His own writings on the topic have provided insight and guidance to a generation of practitioners as well as to concerned community activists who recognize the inherent value of their historic built environment, without having the vocabulary to articulate its significance. He is the hero of many Olmsted residential communities and park neighbors for his ability to have those uneducated in the Olmstedian design principles, see the value of the built legacy present in their community and there by inspiring its protection.

In addition to my professional endorsement, I would like to add my highest personal regard. I have known Dr. Beveridge (Charlie) from my many years as a member of the board of the National Association for Olmsted Parks. His generosity and goodwill are felt by all who know him. Please feel free to contact me if there is anything else I can do. This is very exciting and I look forward to hearing the good news that Dr. Beveridge is our newest honorary member.

Sincerely yours,

Lucy Lawliss  
Lead, Park Cultural Landscapes Program



# United States Department of the Interior

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

1849 C Street, N.W.  
Washington, D.C. 20240

IN REPLY REFER TO:

August 29, 2004

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

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Sincerely yours,

Lucy Lawliss  
Lead, Park Cultural Landscapes Program

12 August 2004

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

**Re: Letter of Support for Dr. Charles E. Beveridge**

Dear Susan,

I am pleased to write in strong support of the nomination of Dr. Charles E. Beveridge for honorary membership in ASLA. Why did it take so long?

It is hard to imagine a debate about this nominee. For as long as I can remember, Dr. Beveridge has been one of our most tireless and dedicated activists in the skirmishes over preserving historic designed landscapes. In addition to his immense scholarly contribution, which is perhaps unparalleled on the subject of Olmsted Sr., his efforts as an advocate have empowered already knowledgeable supporters, enlightened hardened skeptics, and galvanized varied forces in numerous confrontations in many communities. How rare for a scholar to be a soldier in the trenches. Dr. Beveridge's convictions and his effectiveness go beyond his readership—they extend to the troops and the battlefield.

We must remember that for the entire first half of the twentieth century, landscape architects paid scant attention to the legacy and the real work of Olmsted. Today we take it for granted, but even before Albert Fein habitually insisted that landscape architects examine the importance of Olmsted's urban parks during the 1960s and seventies, a small handful of scholars in university history departments were investigating Olmsted as a reform figure—not so much for his landscapes as for his ideas and his writings on social customs, urban politics, public health, land conservation, and the abolition movement. In the fifties, Dr. Beveridge was one of these scholars, and he has remained dedicated to this cause ever since. More than that, his work has enabled us all to understand the relationships between these fundamental social issues and the physical expression of them in Olmsted's landscapes. This kind of complexity requires great skills that bridge between intellectual history and landscape realities. We have seen untold benefits. And Dr. Beveridge is directly responsible.

One more thing: I am sure his big coffee table book on Olmsted has reached a wider public than any book on Olmsted up to that point. That alone would qualify him for the recognition he so much deserves.

Thanks for allowing me to comment.

Sincerely,



**Gary R. Hilderbrand FASLA FAAR**  
**Principal**  
**Adjunct Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture, Harvard Design School**

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