

## Honorary Membership

**Nominee:** Ed McMahon, ULI/Charles Fraser Senior Fellow  
Urban Land Institute  
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW, Suite 500 West  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 624-7000

**Nominator:** Sadik Artunc, FASLA  
Vice President of Membership

It is my honor to nominate Ed McMahon, a nationally renowned authority on sustainable development, land conservation, and urban design, for honorary membership in ASLA.

Ed has recently joined the staff of the Urban Land Institute (ULI) as the ULI/Charles Fraser Senior Resident Fellow for Sustainable Development. The position honors the late Charles E. Fraser, Honorary ASLA, the legendary developer of Hilton Head Island, SC, who devoted his career to environmentally conscious development.

As the Senior Resident Fellow for Sustainable Development, Ed's responsibilities include leading ULI's efforts to conduct research and educational activities related to green and sustainable development practices. Making the business case for green and sustainable development is part of ULI's ongoing efforts to promote responsible land use and smart growth—and is certainly in sync with ASLA's goal to commission a study on the economic value of landscape architecture.

Ed was formerly the vice president and director of land use programs at The Conservation Fund. He is also the co-founder and former president of Scenic America, a national non-profit organization devoted to protecting America's scenic landscapes. Ed is an attorney, community planner, lecturer, author and expert on the topics of sustainable development, land conservation, urban design, and historic preservation.

He is a talented and prolific writer and many of us have read his articles, columns, and books on land use planning, sustainable development, and green infrastructure. Ed is co-author of *Balancing Nature and Commerce in Gateway Communities* and his column appears regularly in the *Planning Commissioners Journal*. His latest books are *Land Conservation Finance* and *Better Models for Commercial Development*. He has organized successful efforts to acquire and protect urban parkland, wilderness areas, and other conservation properties, and he has made countless presentations on the topics of tourism, conservation, land use planning, and historic preservation.

Ed has an M.A. in Urban Studies from the University of Alabama and a J.D. from Georgetown University Law School, where he taught law and public policy from 1976-1985.

Along with raising awareness of the benefits of green and sustainable development, another ULI priority is to improve development patterns on the urban fringe. Last year, Ed participated in a forum sponsored by ULI to examine the role of master-planned communities in fostering more efficient development in suburban areas. At the forum, he described the need to preserve green infrastructure:

Smart conservation is just as important as smart growth. Smart conservation is proactive, large-scale, and coordinated. We need to think of open space as a form of infrastructure just as we think of roads as infrastructure. It must be viewed as a necessity, not an amenity.

It must be preserved through a public investment, not leftover money. And, it must be preserved as a connected, contiguous system, not fragmented and preserved in isolation.

The following is an excerpt from one of his many presentations on green infrastructure—it certainly demonstrates that we share many of the same goals:

Great shifts in public climate are often marked by changes in the nomenclature. This is one reason why we are hearing the term "green infrastructure" more and more often. For decades people who were deaf, blind or confined to a wheelchair were referred to as "handicapped." It was understood that they couldn't do what other people could. In the 1970's this perception began to change. Instead of focusing solely on the "handicap," people began to think about the "person with the disabilities" rather than the disability itself. We came to understand that they could pretty much do what anybody else could do – with accommodation. The results of a simple shift in perception are all around us. Today the economy is lagging and budgets are tight. Open space funding is on the chopping block. This is because the public and local officials think open space is a luxury they can no longer afford. They think of it as an amenity, something that is nice to have. We view infrastructure as a primary public investment, not something we pay for with leftover money. Likewise, public officials understand that infrastructure must be constantly upgraded and maintained. It is not something we just buy and forget. Finally, we all know that infrastructure must be developed as a system, not as isolated parts.

One way to change this perception of open space as an amenity is to change the nomenclature. Webster's New World Dictionary defines infrastructure as "the substructure or underlying foundation, especially the basic installations or facilities upon which the continuance and growth of a community depends." People understand the need to invest in infrastructure—even in an era of deficits. Next to national defense, funding for roads, bridges, sewers, airports, and other forms of capital infrastructure is always at the top of the list. However, just as we must carefully plan for and invest in our environmental or green infrastructure. Green infrastructure is the ecological framework needed for environmental, social, and economic sustainability. It is our nation's natural life support system. Green infrastructure is an interconnected network of green space that conserves natural ecosystem values and functions and provides a wide array of benefits to people, wildlife, and communities. For example, green infrastructure reduces a community's susceptibility to floods, fires, and other natural disasters. Documenting these public benefits is a key step toward securing adequate funding. Words matter. I believe a shift in nomenclature from talking about open space to talking about green infrastructure will help communities understand that green space is a basic necessity that should be planned and developed as an integrated system. A popular bumper sticker says, "If you think education is expensive, try ignorance." Well, if you think green space is expensive, just imagine the future costs for clean air, clean water, and healthy natural systems if we don't invest in green infrastructure today.

While Ed is an attorney by training, he is probably a landscape architect in his heart. He has advocated for our profession and our goals for many years and it would be entirely appropriate to recognize his accomplishments through honorary membership in ASLA.



**North Carolina**  
**Department of Commerce**  
*Division of Community Assistance*

**Michael F. Easley, Governor**  
**James T. Fain III, Secretary**

**Gloria Nance-Sims, Director**

August 17, 2004

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

Dear President Jacobson:

I strongly support the nomination of Ed McMahon for Honorary Membership in ASLA. City after city and town after town across the nation have benefited greatly from his efforts. He has been very generous with his time in North Carolina, frequently visiting our area to help us build a case for better land management, scenic protection and conservation, and I for one greatly appreciate and admire his work.

Ed is an articulate and persuasive speaker who presents a dynamite program that manages to both inform and inspire. Furthermore he is a powerful writer who has educated many throughout the country on planning, conservation and protecting community values. I know that the planning and design professions have been fortunate to have Ed's help in making the case for better community standards for development and for helping all of us understand how to expect more from those who wish to come into our towns.

Ed has been an advocate for the work that landscape architects do and he has helped raise our visibility in state after state. He deserves our greatest thanks and he is worthy of our recognition as Honorary ASLA. I hope that he will be so considered by our colleagues.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Rodney L. Swink".

Rodney L. Swink, FASLA, Director  
North Carolina Office of Urban Development

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**To:** Susan L. B. Jacobson, FASLA  
President ASLA

**From:** Elizabeth E Fischer, ASLA  
Potomac Chapter Trustee

**Subject:** **Honorary Membership Nominee:**  
Ed McMahon, ULI/Charles Fraser Senior Fellow  
Urban Land Institute  
1025 Thomas Jefferson Street, NW, Suite 500 West  
Washington, DC 20007  
(202) 624-7000

**Date:** 30 August 2004

It is a distinct pleasure to give my support to Ed McMahon as an Honorary Member of ASLA. Few people with whom I have worked have the unique ability to bridge the realms of landscape architecture, land use planning, urban design, resource conservation, and transportation planning within the volatile political environment of Washington as successfully as he.

I have known Ed for over 15 years from the days before ISTEA when he worked to ensure that language of importance to environmentalists and landscape architects alike was incorporated into that landmark transportation to the present. His dry sense of humour and quiet wisdom sets everyone who meets him at ease, no matter how controversial the issue. With Ed in a meeting, you know consensus will be reached, if not full accord. This, packaged with the breadth of his professional knowledge, makes him quite special.

During my earliest days in Washington, Ed freely opened his doors as a mentor to help me, as he has with many others, gain a better understanding of the unique pathways of this city's political machinations. He understands how best to press forward agendas supportive of the environment and communities and shares that knowledge generously.

For ASLA, Ed served on the 2001 ASLA Professional Awards jury for Planning. Watching him bring his vast knowledge of our profession to those closed rooms was a delight. His planning knowledge is vast as was expected. To see the depth of and his appreciation for outstanding design in the other categories was magnificent; more so, when others not knowing his range appreciatively accepted his observations.

Having Ed as a professional friend, mentor, and resource is a personal honor. Recognizing Ed's gifts – direct and indirect – to the profession of landscape architecture is a must.

Please confer upon him the distinction of Honorable Member ASLA.



## THE CONSERVATION FUND

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August 30, 2004

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

Dear Ms. Jacobson,

We at The Conservation Fund heartily endorse the nomination of Ed McMahon for Honorary Membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects.

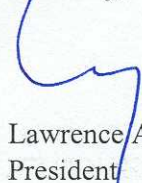
Ed worked with The Conservation Fund for more than 15 years and served as our Vice President of Sustainable Programs and Land Use Programs. During that time, he became the nation's leading expert on green space infrastructure and planning, and played a key role in promoting the importance of greenways and open space throughout the nation.

Throughout his career, Ed has worked tirelessly with community planners and real estate developers around country, proving to them that environmentally appropriate planning is not only good for people and neighborhoods, but good for business and the bottom lines as well. Ed has not only traveled far and wide to spread the gospel of conservation development, so to speak, he has provided professionals with the tools necessary to see their projects realized in a practical, cost effective manner. He has not only provided the vision, but the road map to a greener and more hospitable human environment.

Ed has only recently joined the staff of the Urban Land Institute as the first Charles Fraser Senior Resident Fellow for Sustainable Development and Environmental Policy. We at The Conservation Fund continue to seek his guidance and expertise on all land use matters, and we will always value his friendship and partnership.

I can think of no other land use expert in the country today more deserving of membership than Ed McMahon.

Sincerely,



Lawrence A. Selzer  
President

LAS/vo

