

## Honorary Membership

**Nominee:** Bette Midler, Founder  
New York Restoration Project  
31 West 56th Street  
New York, NY 10019  
(212) 333-2552



**Nominating Trustee:** Sadik Artunc, FASLA

When Bette Midler moved back to New York in the early 90's, she saw the decay of its parks, roadways, and open spaces—especially in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods. She learned that the city's budget for parks had been decimated and saw that many of the city's most important public amenities were filled with trash, graffiti, broken infrastructure, and hopelessness. The effect darkened the lives of nearby communities and issued a challenge to New Yorkers' collective civic pride.

As a longtime advocate of public/private partnerships, the notion of private citizens stepping up to the plate, either to help government get a job done or to do a job on their own, made sense to Bette Midler. So in 1995, she created the New York Restoration Project (NYRP).

Since then, NYRP has shown what individual action organized around a unified effort can achieve. Under Ms. Midler's leadership, NYRP has forged partnerships with city and state agencies to allow cleanup and reclamation projects bringing hundreds of acres of parks back to pristine condition. It has worked with small businesses and large corporations, like Rodale and Tiffany & Co., to direct resources into community gardens and parks. Most importantly, NYRP has forged connections with private citizens in dozens of neighborhoods to create leadership around parks and community gardens.

I would like to list just a few of NYRP's accomplishments under the leadership of Ms. Midler:

- Raised over \$18 million dollars for the restoration and development of under-resourced parks, community gardens, and open space in economically disadvantaged communities throughout New York City.
- Removed over 80,000 tons of garbage and debris—cars, construction materials, garbage, litter, and 3,000 tires—from project sites.
- Transformed an illegal dumping ground into Swindler Cove, a brand new public park on the Harlem River, which is home to NYRP's Riley-Levin Children's Garden and Peter Jay Sharp Boathouse, offering free recreational and environmental education programs for at-risk youth.
- Helped save scores of community gardens throughout New York City from commercial development and established the New York Garden Trust to maintain, preserve, and develop 60 gardens in perpetuity.

- Cleaned and made safe more than 375 acres in historic Fort Tryon, Fort Washington, and Highbridge Parks, including reclaiming 119 abandoned and overgrown acres after more than two decades of non-use.
- Served over 5,000 economically disadvantaged youngsters with free environmental education programming, including bicycling, canoeing, gardening, parks ecology, boat building, and rowing programs.
- Opened the New Leaf Café in Fort Tryon Park, a unique entrepreneurial endeavor in park concessions, where all net restaurant profits are redirected back into the beautification and maintenance of the park.
- Commissioned and funded an economic revitalization plan for upper Manhattan and the Harlem River waterfront.
- Implemented a new set of standards for the Adopt-A-Highway program along the Henry Hudson Parkway.

Now that many of the parks have been cleaned up, NYRP is working with Vollmer Associates to identify locations for new facilities throughout Northern Manhattan, the Bronx, and the Harlem River Valley. Ken Smith, ASLA, is working with NYRP to create a community garden in the Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn. And NYRP restoration specialists are working together with city and state parks and other government agencies to eradicate harmful invasive plant species and gradually transform landscapes into thriving native habitats that will support wildlife for generations to come.

Ms. Midler has leveraged her passion and energy for this project to recruit and inspire thousands of volunteers and millions of dollars in contributions. Nearly ten years after founding NYRP, she remains extremely committed to this cause and personally involved in its activities and programs. In 2002, Ms. Midler received the prestigious Governor's Award for Parks and Preservation from New York Governor George E. Pataki.

Leadership often comes across as a highbrow concept, but it is sometimes as simple as standing up, looking around, envisioning the change you'd like to see, and offering your time, toil, or treasure to make it happen. Bette Midler has shown great leadership as a steward of the urban environment and we should recognize her efforts with honorary membership in ASLA.

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August 26, 2004

Susan Jacobson, FASLA  
President  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 I Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Bette Midler honorary ASLA nomination

Dear Susan:

It is with great pleasure that I endorse the nomination of Bette Midler to an Honorary Membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Ms. Midler is a leader in our community whose efforts should be lauded. She has donated time and energy to reclaim our parks and green spaces. The New York Restoration Project (NYRP) is a great example of the kind of public private partnership we would like in each of our cities. Ms. Midler's accomplishments with the NYRP exemplify her personal commitment to the Parks.

The vast number of parks that have been cleaned up is impressive; when you add community gardens, and reclaiming open space, her contribution is outstanding. Ms. Midler uses her prestige to engage young people, government agencies and businesses in the conservation of open space in a way that is truly inspiring.

On a recent appearance on the Actor's Studio, Ms. Midler told of her commitment to New York City's greenspace and enlightened many viewers on what citizens can do to save their parks. Ms. Midler's comment at the end of the program in answer to what she would do if she were not an actor, was to be an "urban planner." A remarkable answer from a remarkable woman.

Best regards,



Barbara Faga, FASLA  
Chair of the Board

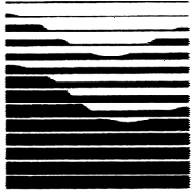
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DESIGN, PLANNING AND ENVIRONMENTS WORLDWIDE



New York Chapter  
AMERICAN SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS  
536 LaGuardia Place  
New York, NY 10012

August 24, 2004

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Ms. Susan L.B. Jacobson, FASLA

Dear Ms. Jacobson:

ASLA National has just informed our Chapter that Bette Midler is being considered by the ASLA for an Honorary Membership because of the wonderful work she has done through her organization, The New York Restoration Project. The New York Chapter of the ASLA strongly supports this proposal.

Bette Midler and the New York Restoration Project have contributed so much to our area's green spaces by raising awareness about the importance of green and open space in New York City's five boroughs, giving much needed support to the City Community Garden movement, and rescuing some of our most endangered parks from neglect. Two examples, demonstrating particular tenacity and commitment, are the new boathouse at Swindler's Cove which is helping to bring back sculling and rowing to the portion of the Harlem River known as "Scullers Row" and the cleaning of "litter-ly" tons of trash from historic Highbridge Park.

Please let us know if there is anything further we can do to show our support for this initiative.

Cordially,

Ed Hollander  
President  
New York Chapter of the ASLA

# WORKSHOP

KEN SMITH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT

August 23, 2004

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

Dear Susan,

It is my honor to support the nomination of Bette Midler as Honorary Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects. Bette has contributed immeasurably to the quality of life and renewal of open space in New York City through her preservation and redevelopment work. When the grass-root's community gardens of the city were threatened, Bette personally stepped in and purchased many of them for preservation. She then set up the non-profit group, The New York Restoration Project, to assist community groups in the management and maintenance of the gardens. She has also dedicated herself to restoration of neglected open space treasures such as Fort Tryon Park and its beautiful Heath and Heather gardens, Highbridge Park, Swindler Cover and other places, often in the city's disadvantaged neighborhoods. Her work in these gardens and open spaces is a small part of her considerable effort. She is patron, fundraiser and committed activist.

Sincerely,



Ken Smith



# Oculus

A Publication of the American Institute of Architects New York Chapter

August 23, 2004

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

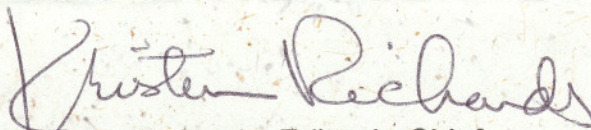
Dear President Jacobson:

I heartily support the nomination of Bette Midler for Honorary Membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects. Ms. Midler is a formidable talent in any arena, but her work as a community advocate, her single-handed mission to create the New York Restoration Project (NYRP), and her tireless efforts to see New York City revitalized is her best performance thus far.

In my "Letter from the Editor" in the summer issue of *Oculus*, I write, "A boathouse in Harlem takes us 'Around the Corner,' where Bette Midler is a potent but uncharacteristically silent star of another endeavor to bring people to the water." In the article, columnist David Sokol notes, "The efforts of groups like the NYRP founded by Bette Midler, are working to reverse the tide. . ."

Thank you for this opportunity to recognize a true star.

Sincerely,



Kristen Richards, Editor-in-Chief  
ArchNewsNow.com  
*Oculus* / e-*Oculus*



September 9, 2004

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

Dear President Jacobson:

Working with the New York Restoration Project on the Harlem River Waterfront Study, I have gained an understanding and appreciation for the tremendous contribution NYRP has made toward cleaning up parks, creating community gardens and reclaiming public spaces.

Through the tireless effort of Bette Midler, NYRP's founder and her entire staff, neglected parks are being restored, vacant lots have been transformed into green gardens and educational programs have been established and funded to teach children about their environment.

Although I have not had the pleasure of working directly with Ms. Midler, our firm has, through its work with NYRP, seen the impact her organization has made on reclaiming open space. In appreciation for her organization's work and her continued commitment to New York City, I am pleased and privileged to recommend Bette Midler for Honorary Membership in ASLA.

Cordially,

Fred J. Correale, FASLA

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