

## Honorary Membership Nomination Narrative

Nominee: The Hon. Tom Murphy  
Mayor, City of Pittsburgh  
512 City County Building  
414 Grant Street  
Pittsburgh, PA 15219  
412-255-2626

Nominator: Carl R. Kelemen, ASLA



Tom Murphy was born a son of a steelworker in 1944. Following graduation from John Carroll University in 1967, he worked as a chemical sales representative for Alcoa before joining the Peace Corps with his wife in 1970, to work in rural Paraguay. *“The couple embraced the Peace Corps ethic of self-sufficiency and community building which has become a trademark of his current leadership style.”* In 1973, Murphy completed a Masters degree with honors in Urban Studies from Hunter College and then returned to Pittsburgh to be elected as a State Representative for the 20<sup>th</sup> legislative district, serving from 1979 until he became Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh in 1994.

During his three terms as Mayor, Murphy has promoted “quality of life initiatives.” As noted in his biography on the City of Pittsburgh website ([www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/mayor/](http://www.city.pittsburgh.pa.us/mayor/)):

*When Tom Murphy first took office in January 1994, Pittsburgh was suffering from one of the worst inferiority complexes in its history...Even the physical environment reflected the economic and psychological depression running through the region. Land on both sides of the city’s three rivers, the defining boundary of downtown and the international symbol of the city, was an eyesore. The riverbanks were blighted by the rusting carcasses of abandoned steel mills and businesses that discouraged pedestrian access to the rivers.*

*The city had such a poor reputation for offering recreational opportunities that Bicycling Magazine rated Pittsburgh as one of the worst cities for bike riding in a metropolitan area.*

Now, ten years later, the brownfields are being converted into usable and aesthetically pleasing areas. An old slagheap has been turned into an exclusive housing development about to enter its second phase. During its remediation, new planting techniques were implemented in order to green the area. On the north shore between two new athletic venues – PNC Park and Heinz Field – a park was constructed with interactive water play areas and passive green open space. What a welcome addition to the Allegheny River side of the city. One of the old city mill sites along the Monongahela River has become a mixed-use development with trails running throughout. Mayor Murphy, being such a passionate runner and bicyclist, is a proponent of the national Rails-to-Trails movement and has promoted linking trails into a network encompassing 36 miles of riverfront. Pittsburgh no longer is the worst metropolitan area to bike, hike, or run, and there is now pedestrian access to the rivers.

In addition to riverfront development, Mayor Murphy instituted a \$16 million program to upgrade all 169 city playgrounds to stringent federal safety standards. For that, the Consumer Products Safety Commission awarded Pittsburgh the first safety award ever given to a public entity. Through his Neighborhood Needs Program, neighborhood infrastructure was improved including the upgrading of recreational fields and courts with new concession stands and lighting.

During his second term, the Mayor promoted a master planning effort for the four large regional parks in the city. From this a plan of renewal has been implemented with the help of a newly created Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy, the non-profit arm promoting Pittsburgh's four regional parks.

Overall, Mayor Tom Murphy has promoted landscape architecture throughout his initiatives in the City of Pittsburgh. From riverfront and trail development, to safe playgrounds in all 88 neighborhoods, to economic development reusing the various industrial brownfield sites, the City of Pittsburgh's quality of life has definitely improved since 1994...and so have the opportunities for landscape architects!

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August 26, 2004

ASLA Board of Trustees  
Honorary Membership Nomination  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

***RE: Honorary Membership Nomination: Mayor Tom Murphy***

Dear President Jacobson and Board of Trustees,

On behalf of the ASLA PA/DE Chapter, I strongly support the nomination of Mayor Tom Murphy for Honorary Membership in the ASLA. During Mayor Murphy's three terms as Mayor of the City of Pittsburgh, he has promoted various quality of life initiatives bringing forth the work of landscape architects in the Pittsburgh region. Most noteworthy are the many miles of riverfront trails developed along the three rivers, as well as the increase of riverfront green space with the construction of the North Shore Park between the two new athletic venues – PNC Park and Heinz Field. In addition, under Mayor Murphy a master planning effort was undertaken for all four regional parks within the city limits. In addition, all 169-city playgrounds were upgraded to stringent federal safety standards, setting the stage for an award from the Consumer Products Safety Commission, the first for a public entity.

Mayor Murphy received the PA/DE Chapter highest honor for a non-landscape architect in 2003. This award was in honor of his recognition of work and support he has given our profession in Pittsburgh.

We, the PA/DE ASLA Chapter wholeheartedly support the nomination of Mayor Tom Murphy for Honorary Membership in the ASLA.

Sincerely,

W. Michael Leigh, RLA, ASLA  
President of PA/DE Chapter ASLA

Board of Trustees  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001


Dear Trustees:

I am writing to strongly endorse the nomination of The Honorable Tom Murphy for honorary membership in ASLA.

In the traditions of Mayor Riley of Charleston and Mayor Daley of Chicago, Mayor Murphy of Pittsburgh understands the importance of the public realm, values our profession, and has used principles of good planning and landscape architecture to revitalize his city. The initiatives he has put in motion are attracting renewed private investment in the city, as well as thousands of new residents who are proud to call Pittsburgh home.

His example can inspire hundreds of mayors across our nation. Let us recognize his efforts and achievements with honorary membership in ASLA.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Susan L.B. Jacobson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letters of the first and last names being capitalized and prominent.

Susan L.B. Jacobson, FASLA  
President, American Society of Landscape Architects  
Owner, Bartells/Jacobson Design

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