

**Submittal Material
for the
nomination of
Gary O. Robinette
for the
Jot Carpenter Medal
by the
American Society of Landscape Architects**

Introduction

Gary O. Robinette has been an educator, in one form or another, since he entered Northwestern College in Minneapolis, Minnesota in the autumn of 1950. He majored in education at Northwestern but was drafted into the U.S. Army during the Korean War. While in the service he was trained in Fire Direction Control in the Army artillery and was eventually transferred to Fort Sill, Oklahoma where he continued to be involved in education and training. Upon discharge from the Army in 1956 he moved to Lansing, Michigan to enroll as a student in landscape architecture at Michigan State University. In 1962 he graduated with a B.S. degree (with high honors) and in 1963 received a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from the same university. After three years of employment in a professional office in New York City Gary joined the faculty of landscape architecture at the University of Wisconsin in Madison and taught there for a three year period. At which time he was asked to join the staff of A.S.L.A., as the Associate Executive Director, in Washington, D.C. as the first full time educator to become a full time staff member of A.S.L.A. In 1970 he was designated as the Associate Executive Director for Education and Research and was also designated as the first Executive Director of the A.S.L.A. Foundation. Because of the limited resources of all of these organization he was also named as the first staff member of the newly formed Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards.

After leaving A.S.L.A. in 1976 Gary became the Executive Director of the Center for Landscape Architectural Education and Research and President of the Environmental Design Press where he continued to be involved with energy and water conservation research. In 1982 he became the Director of Marketing for the Dallas, Texas landscape architectural firm, Myrick, Newman, Dahlberg and Partners and in 1988 he joined the staff of the University of Texas at Arlington where he was the Director and has taught for the past eighteen years. Gary has contributed to A.S.L.A. and to landscape architectural in a number of ways that no one in the profession has ever done in the past. He has been involved in teaching, in research and scholarship, in administration, through publications and through direct service to the Society for the past forty years.

Teaching

His teaching career, in landscape architecture, began at the University of Wisconsin, in 1965 when he was hired by the late George Longenecker to teaching planting design and professional practice on the Madison campus. While there he realized that there was a shortage of textbooks in planting design, so he put together his first reference book, **Off the Board, Into the Ground**, for use by students in his class. Shortly thereafter he assembled, with his students, the book, **Plant Form Studies**, once again for use by his students. In 1988 he returned to teaching in the landscape architecture program at the University of Texas at Arlington, from 1989 to 1991 he was the Director of the program and carried a full-time teaching load with classes in Contemporary History, Design Studio, Research Methods and Plant Material identification. While Director has initiated the first accreditation visits to the program since its founding in 1976. When he stepped down as Director he continued to teach classes in Planting Design, Design Communication and Landscape Architecture and Environmental Art.

In 2005 he was given an award by the students at U.T.A. as "Outstanding Educator" and later in that same year he was given a similar award by the Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (C.E.L.A.). Gary has initiated a number of new classes wherever he has taught and has lectured widely at more than 20 other schools of landscape architecture. Through the eyes of his students Prof. Robinette's teaching ability is confirmed, for instance, one of his students wrote the following:

"As a landscape architectural history professor, Robinette is a walking library of information. He has lived through a large portion of modern history of the profession and generously shares his experiences and perspective on the modern history of landscape architecture as it ties in with other cultural, political and economic factors of this period in history. He encourages students to find topics of their own interest for further exploration and research and creates an atmosphere of fun in learning and developing a desire to learn more about history."

Education through Administration:

In 1968, Gary was asked by A.B. LaGasse, the new Executive Director of A.S.L.A. to join the staff of the Society, as the first full-time educator to ever be on the staff of the professional society. At the same time he was asked to become the first staff member of the Council of Landscape Architectural Registration Boards (C.L.A.R.B.) since they had limited funds to support their own staff at that time. By 1969 the need had become so great for additional landscape architects in the field that Theodore Osmondson and Campbell E. Miller, the President and President-elect of the Society felt that the only answer to the problem was to double the number of accredited schools. In order to accomplish that, Gary was assigned as staff to the A.S.L.A. Committee on Education to help Prof. Wayne Wilson, Chairman of the Department at Penn State, who was then the Chairman of the Committee on Education with the additional workload. Working together with the Society and the Committee the number of accredited program was doubled from 18 to 36 in the five year program from 1969 to 1974, considerably increasing the landscape architects available in the workforce. As a part of that effort a large number of education-related publications were developed and distributed. In 1971, Gary did much of the staff work necessary for A.S.L.A. to receive recognition from the U.S. Office of Education which was necessary in order for graduates be recognized by the Federal civil service system.

In 1970, Gary was asked to become the first Executive Director of the A.S.L.A. Foundation, which had been formed at Independence Hall in Philadelphia on July 4, 1966. The Foundation had little money, no literature and no comprehensive work or research program at that time but Gary was encouraged to seek support from foundations, from government agencies and from private corporations to sustain and build the resources, visibility and viability of the Foundation. He undertook this work in addition to his continuing his work with the A.S.L.A. Committee on Education. As Executive Director of the Foundation he worked with Theodore Osmondson (F.A.S.L.A.), who was then the Past President of A.S.L.A. and President of the Foundation to develop proposals for funding to submit to government agencies and non-profit foundations. As a result of those efforts grants were received from the National Park Service, Educational Facilities Laboratories, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Department of Housing and Urban Development and the Ford Foundation. An endowment was established in order to sustain the Foundation over time. During the same period a publications program was undertaken and books were published which are still in print, which never would have been published if it was not done by the Foundation. One of these was edited by the late Jot Carpenter, the **Handbook of Landscape Architectural Construction** and he encouraged the printing of another classic which is still used by students all over the world, **GradeEasy**, by Richard Unterman.

When he joined the staff of A.S.L.A. in 1968, Gary was paid \$12,500 per year, which was ten percent of the total A.S.L.A. budget of \$125,000 per year. In 1975, the last year he was on the staff his salary for himself and his secretary was \$2,500 from the A.S.L.A. budget. The rest of his salary and expenses for his staff were cov-

ered by income from grants and contracts. This helped to reduce the costs to A.S.L.A. at a time when the late Jot Carpenter was the Treasurer of the Society.

Education through Research and Scholarship:

The third way that Gary impacted landscape architectural education was through research and scholarship. This began at the University of Wisconsin in Madison when he received a grant from the Graduate School and from the College of Education for a study of **Planting Design Computer Graphics**. One of the first grants to the A.S.L.A. Foundation was from the National Park Service to support research on the book **Plants, People and Environmental Quality**, which was published by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office. This book was widely distributed and has been translated into Japanese. A second edition of that book is now in development and will be published shortly. Working with the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Gary worked with Richard K. Dee F.A.S.L.A. to develop one of the first research studies of site design to accommodate the disabled. Theodore Osmundson F.A.S.L.A. initiated a grant from Educational Facilities Laboratories to research the essential of urban school site design. The Foundation was the recipient of a grant from the Ford Foundation, initiated by Charles Ward Harris F.A.S.L.A., for a study of the profession of landscape architecture. Both the **Handbook of Landscape Architectural Construction** and the **Landscape Architect's Handbook of Professional Practice** were initiated by Prof. Robinette after he joined the Foundation and he was responsible for writing proposals to the National Endowment for the Arts to seek partial support for both of these projects. He then worked with the leadership of the Society, the Foundation and the Associated Landscape Contractors of America to develop and publish both of these books. Working with Jay Jorgenson and the late Prof. Allen Winslow of Virginia Polytechnic University to seek support from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development for a study of design guidelines to accommodate disabled and handicapped persons in the outdoor environment. This resulted in four publications, including the popular **Barrier Free Site Design**, which were published by H.U.D. and widely disseminated. Further support from the U.S. Architecture and Transportation Barriers Compliance Board expanded this basic study. Additional support was solicited by Gary from various other studies of recruitment of minorities into the profession, the environmental impact of trees and forests and the development of environmental design instructional modules.

All of this significantly added to both the literature available to the profession and it significantly added to the visibility and credibility of the profession at a very important time in its history. All of this at no cost to the dues paying members of the Society and the profession. It significantly leveraged the limited resources of the Society and its members.

Education through Publications:

One of the jokes which Jot Carpenter used to make was that after a morning meeting a group of members of the Society or the Foundation they would break for lunch. They found that when they returned after the break that Gary had published their morning deliberations. This illustrated the fact that Gary did a great deal in the way of developing necessary publications during his career. In order to illustrate the scope and character of professional education he was responsible to developing the A.S.L.A. Committee on Education documents:

A.S.L.A. Bulletins - June 1968 to March 1970
The Landscape Architect and Federal Agencies
Landscape Architectural Education
Goals for Landscape Architectural Education
Training Landscape Architects for Urban and Government Service
The Black Landscape Architect

Landscape Architectural Research

A.S.L.A. Council of Education publications

- 1970 Enrollment and Statistics
- 1970 Roster of Teachers of Landscape Architecture
- Compendium of Landscape Architectural Curricula
- Compendium of Landscape Architectural Education Facilities
- History of Schools of Landscape Architecture
- Administration of Schools of Landscape Architecture
- The Administration of Schools of Landscape Architecture
- The Economics of Landscape Architectural Education
- 1972-1973 Roster of Teachers of Landscape Architecture
- 1972-1973 Enrollment Statistics in Schools of Landscape Architecture
- Financial Aid Available to Students of Landscape Architecture

Gary was also responsible for writing articles in more than 100 publications and made professional presentations to groups throughout the United States. Among the books which Prof. Robinette has either written or edited are the following:

- Off the Board/Into the Ground
- Plant Form Studies
- The Environmental Impact of Trees and Forests
- Plants, People and Environmental Quality
- Anyone Can Go Anywhere
- Energy Efficient Site Design
- Site and Neighborhood Design for Energy Conservation
- Energy Conservation in Managing Urban Parks
- Landscape Design and Management for Water Conservation
- Planting Design
- Site Construction Details
- Planting Design Computer Graphics
- The Functional Spectrum of Plant Materials
- Landscape Architectural Education - Vol. 1 & 2
- Energy and Environment
- Parking Lot Landscape Development
- Evergreen Form Studies
- Trees of the South
- Energy Efficient Site Design
- Landscape Planning for Energy Conservation
- Local Landscape Ordinances
- Energy Conservation Concepts in Managing Urban Parks

In addition, he has developed a series of plant form posters showing the size, shape and character of a number of plants commonly used in landscape architectural projects, these include:

- Landscape Trees of Texas
- Landscape Trees of Colorado
- Oaks
- Deciduous Conifers
- Spruces and Firs
- Palms
- Cypresses & Cedars
- Evergreen Silhouettes
- Deciduous Conifers

Awards & Recognition:

As a result of his work Gary has received numerous awards and honors, including the following:

Member and Past President of **Beta Alpha Sigma**, the Honor Society in the School of Urban Planning and Landscape Architecture at Michigan State University

Member of **Tau Sigma**, the Honor Society in the College of Science and the Arts at Michigan State University

Member of **Phi Kappa Phi**, the National Honor Society

Recipient of the Outstanding Junior Award at Michigan State University

Recipient of the Distinguished Graduate Award at Michigan State University
(both awards given by the Michigan Chapter of A.S.L.A.)

A.S.L.A. National Professional Awards Program

Merit Award - Research/Communications - Barrier Free Site Design - 1974

Merit Award - Research - Energy Efficient Site Design - 1978

Merit Award - Research - Landscape Planning for Energy Conservation - 1978

Texas Chapter A.S.L.A. Awards Program

Merit Award - Research - Energy Conservation in Managing Urban Parks - 1983

Merit Award - Communications - Landscape Plant Form Posters - 1983

Honor Award - Research - Local Landscape Ordinances

Merit Award - Planning & Analysis - Wills Point Landscape Master Plan - 1988

Merit Award - Communications - Texas Ecological Communities - 1993

Merit Award - Design(Unrealized) - Dallas County Plaza Master Plan - 1993

Future:

In the autumn of 2007 Gary will be involved in landscape architecture as he has been for the past 50 years when he first enrolled in the Landscape Architectural Program at Michigan State University. He will still tell his students that if he were 18 years old again, the first thing he would do would be to enroll in a landscape architectural education program and go for the "ride of his life" all over again. This is certainly what Jot Carpenter would do if he were still with us.