



Prairie Gateway Chapter

ASLA

American Society of Landscape Architects

104 W 9th Street Suite 100
Kansas City, MO 64105
(816) 421-1054

March 14, 2008

American Society of Landscape Architects
Honors and Awards
Jot D. Carpenter Nominations
c/o Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye St., NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

RE: Nomination of Professor Dennis J. Day, FASLA for the Jot D. Carpenter Medal

Dear Executive Committee and Board of Trustees,

There are several people recognized to have made significant contributions to the profession of landscape architecture. There are a select few such as Olmsted, Church, Eckbo, Sasaki, Halprin.... whom, with the mere mention of their name, foster images of truly notable executed works that have inspired generations of landscape architects during and since their time. Within the halls of academia, in pursuit of the education of future professionals in landscape architecture, is Professor Dennis J. Day - a name not nearly as familiar as those icons previously mentioned, yet equally as significant.

Professor Day is a leading educator of the profession, specifically in the subject area of landscape architecture construction. Professor Day has been teaching the subject for over 40 years with an unequalled command of the subject area and unfailing sense of purpose, insight, and integrity. Nearly every student having had the privilege of Professor Day in the classroom and studio would not be where they are today in terms of professional, as well as personal growth, without Professor Day's enlightening courses, his mentorship, insight, and friendship.

Professor Day's philosophy on teaching is simple, and very effective. He believes that people learn more from their mistakes than from their successes - and students are no exception to that observation. As a student gets into the reality of construction documentation, they soon realize that poor choices made during the early stages of design carry major consequences to the ultimate success of the project. Self discovery and self realization, which evolves as the student progresses through course work, is by far the most effective means to make the critical connection between design and construction decision-making throughout the design process - a distinguishing characteristic of his courses.

The effectiveness of Professor Day's teaching philosophy, methodology, and his knowledge of the subject he teaches is validated by the respect of the abilities of K-State Landscape Architecture students, particularly in the subject area of landscape construction, throughout the country - and for the last several years recognized specifically in the *Design Intelligence®* survey of the design professions. Even more important to Professor Day, are the successful careers, achievements and personal contributions that his former students have been able to forge.

A key to Professor Day's success is due to his conviction that a college education is a privilege that should not be taken lightly. Professor Day communicates this message to his students the first day they walk into his classroom. I can summarize Professor Day's teaching philosophy and mentorship by recalling a conversation we had many years ago when I, as a young teacher, was growing weary of the tendency of the students to be immature about their priorities and with their work lacking in quality. I was beginning to convince myself that by just teaching the subject material in the classroom and to not get involved in dealing with or attempting to correct the immaturity and complacency of the students would be the best course of action. I was looking for sympathy in my thoughts and confirmation of my proposed solution to the problem. So, I sought the advice of Professor Day and asked him, ".... what are we here for as teachers..... are we to teach the course and transfer the knowledge of the subject to the student, or are we to act as their surrogate parents to teach the students a proper perspective and way of life?". Professor Day's response was, ".... both". He went on to carefully explain to me that it is our job to help the students become knowledgeable of the subjects that we teach.... and it is our obligation to help those young people to become true professionals with a proper understanding of ethic, principle and integrity. Professor Day advocates that as educators we owe it to the students, the profession, and to society to do our best to help make this world a better place in which to live.

Professor Day practices this philosophy daily - in working with the students in classes, with the clients he has had in professional practice, the local government officials and state legislators that he has made presentations to, and the numerous youth baseball and basketball teams that he has coached. The list of those people that Professor Day has had a positive influence is long and wide-ranging. It continues to grow because he is tireless in his efforts to influence people to make the world better place in which to live, and serving as a positive role model to those around him.

By having Professor Day as a teacher and mentor, his students believe they have had the best education possible in the subject of landscape construction.... one that employers actively seek. Through the experience of Professor Day's teaching methodology his students understand with much greater depth and wisdom how all of the various components of a comprehensive site plan fit into the "big picture". This enables them to contribute to a project in a way few of their peers can. As a mentor for many years, Professor Day has encouraged students to attend graduate

school to further their knowledge, exposure to additional perspectives of the profession, and to think about teaching as way to return that knowledge and experience. Most importantly however, of all the influences Professor Day has in students under his instruction, I would venture to say that all value the sense of principle, integrity, and ethic that he has instilled in them. Those values continue throughout their lives long after K-State.

Landscape architecture is most fortunate to have Professor Dennis J. Day as a representative of the profession. Professor Day has dedicated himself to the education of the profession throughout his career, by his teaching at Kansas State University for over 40 years, through his past involvement as a member of the ASLA Council on Education, and as a member of the Roster of Visiting Evaluators for accreditation of landscape architecture university programs.

The enclosed material is a small sample of information that could be collected as evidence of Professor Day's dedication to teaching. Letters of support substantiate his exemplary teaching career and wide range positive influence on the profession. The samples of student work illustrate the high quality of work under Professor Day's instruction, and are very close to professional work standards. Furthermore, the course syllabus, student project assignment statements, and related student project evaluation criteria are comprehensive, incorporate a "real-life" professional situation and are unique in the landscape architecture education community. In fact, over the years, several faculty from other universities have tried to duplicate Professor Day's landscape construction course instruction methodology. In my estimation, some may consider themselves successful. However, I would contend that none could sustain such dedication and success for even a short-term - let alone for the four decades Professor Day has taught.

Professor Day's full-time teaching responsibilities will advance to full retirement effective this spring. In the past few years, to keep current in the evolving strategies and methods in the subject area, and to have meaningful and relevant contributions to pursue in his retirement, he has undertaken applied research in storm water issues. As such, Professor Day continues his efforts to keep in contact with students and to provide some real-world experience for them by involving the students in his research work.

This nomination will not be complete without including an excerpt from a former student's letter regarding Professor Day's impact on his students and their subsequent impact on society as a whole. Dennis Scheer (KSU - MLA 1981) wrote, "It would not be an exaggeration to say that millions of people who have never personally met Dennis, but have experienced the work of his former students as colleagues, clients, or project users also bear his influence in their lives through the effect he has on those former students".

The distinction of becoming an ASLA Jot D. Carpenter Medal recipient is an honor bestowed to an individual that has distinguished themselves through their excellence in teaching. To those individuals whose lives Professor Day has touched, there would be unanimous concurrence. The membership of the Prairie Gateway Chapter and hundreds of former students practicing throughout the world trust the award selection committee will commend Professor Day's contributions to the education of landscape architecture professionals by honoring him with the Jot D. Carpenter Medal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Winslow III", with a stylized flourish at the end.

William P. Winslow III, FASLA
Trustee – Prairie Gateway Chapter / ASLA
Professor of Landscape Architecture
Kansas State University