

6 February 2020

**American Society of Landscape Architects
Olmsted Medal Nominations**

c/o Honors and Awards
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

2020 Olmsted Medal nomination of The Garden Conservancy

Dear Colleagues,

It is my pleasure and honor to nominate **The Garden Conservancy** for the 2020 Olmsted Medal.

The mission of the Garden Conservancy is to preserve, share, and celebrate America's gardens and diverse gardening traditions for the education and inspiration of the public. The Garden Conservancy champions the vital role that gardens play in American history, culture, and quality of life. The Garden Conservancy partners with gardeners, community organizers, horticulturists, landscape architects and garden professionals, designers, and historians across the United States. Through their work and advocacy they not only preserve the physical form and spirit of a garden but also seek to share more about each garden's place in its environment, its impact on its community, and its value to our greater society. I have been involved with this organization for 17 years in many ways from being a volunteer in gardens they share through their Open Days program, to sharing my own garden and those of my clients, to organizing and participating in garden tours for donors and supporters, to serving on their Board of Directors. I truly believe this organization is deserving of this prestigious award at this time.

BACKGROUND:

In 1988, renowned plantsman and garden maker Frank Cabot and his wife Anne visited Ruth Bancroft, a dedicated plant collector and pioneer of drought-tolerant gardening, at her three-acre garden in Walnut Creek, California with its extensive collection of rare and mature succulents and cacti. During their visit the Cabots were

astonished by the plant collection and Ruth's passion for it. When asked what would become of her garden after her lifetime, 80 year old Ruth told the Cabots that there were no plans and that her family was not interested in continuing her work. Upon leaving the garden, Anne Cabot asked her husband, "Why don't you start a garden conservancy?" Within a year, his enthusiasm for her suggestion - along with Frank's awareness that countless great American gardens had been destroyed by development and time - awakened a positive preservation force that became the Garden Conservancy.

The newly formed Garden Conservancy worked with Ruth to raise awareness of and support for her garden. They developed a conservation easement which Ruth granted to the Garden Conservancy. This easement was the first to protect not only the land but also the garden itself and has ensured its survival.

The Ruth Bancroft Garden opened its gates to the public in 1992 and officially became a nonprofit in 1994. Ruth lived to be 109, well long enough to see her garden go from a personal, private expression of her creativity and imagination to a beloved and treasured public garden visited by thousands. This first preservation project became a highly successful model for the new organization.

PRESERVATION:

Since its founding in 1989 the Garden Conservancy has helped preserve more than 80 gardens in 26 states. These gardens, from the smallest to the largest, manifest the artistic spirits of their creators, and showcase the broad diversity of climate, soil conditions, environmental challenges, garden styles, and design traditions found in the United States.

Through its **Preservation Program**, the organization assists garden owners, landscape architects and garden professionals, managers, and community organizations to address a wide variety of challenges from historic rehabilitation and organizational development to collections management and documentation. Many newer challenges have arisen since the Conservancy's founding, including the ever-increasing impacts of climate change on our designed and built spaces.

Notable gardens that have been saved or aided by the Garden Conservancy include:

- **The Gardens on Alcatraz Island** in San Francisco, California - While much is known about the prison, little is known about the gardens. With limited resources and fresh water only collected by rain or fog, the gardens were cultivated and tended by soldiers and guards and later became a respite and source of rehabilitation for some of the inmates who also tended them. For ten years, the Garden Conservancy worked with the National Park Service, the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy, and an

incredibly dedicated team of volunteers to restore the gardens. Visitors today are able to see the role that gardens and plants played in the harsh environment of 'The Rock'.

- **Longue Vue House & Gardens** in New Orleans, Louisiana - the National Historic Landmark Ellen Biddle Shipman designed gardens were decimated by Hurricane Katrina in 2005. The gardens were under brackish seawater long enough to cause extensive damage and death to mature plantings. The Garden Conservancy sent a team of volunteers and horticultural experts to assist with the clean up and to assess the extent of the damage. They funded a landscape renewal plan and worked to raise funds to produce a long-term plan to restore Ellen Biddle Shipman's original landscape design intent. Today the gardens are thriving.

- **The Cummer Museum** in Jacksonville, Florida - listed on the National Register of Historic Places the gardens were ravaged by Hurricane Irma in 2017. The Garden Conservancy stepped in with funds and assistance to bring the gardens back.

- **Hollister House Garden** in Washington, Connecticut – represents an American interpretation of a classic English cottage garden. Hollister House dates from 1760 but the gardens are inspired by twentieth century gardens in England, notably Sissinghurst. Owner George Schoellkopf's desire to preserve his garden is based on his belief that American gardens, with their unique style and plant combinations reflective of local soils and conditions, can inspire and educate visitors in the same way classic English gardens have inspired him and countless others. Hollister House Garden has been part of the Garden Conservancy's Open Days program almost since its inception in 1995, became a preservation partner in 2004, and then a non-profit corporation. With the help and guidance of the Garden Conservancy, Hollister House will eventually become a public garden and house museum.

- **Greenwood Gardens** in Short Hills, New Jersey - an elegant garden in the eclectic Beaux-Arts style of the early 20th century. The garden is 28 acres of designed and naturalistic landscape that includes formal Italianate water gardens, rustic stone summerhouses, long allées of majestic plane trees, wildflower meadows, and pristine woodlands. Greenwood is surrounded by 2,100 acres of preserved parkland, set in one of the most densely populated regions of the country. The property was a private estate until 2002, when the owners began collaborating with the Garden Conservancy to create a public garden that would foster an appreciation of the property and promote an understanding of conservation and stewardship of the land. This successful partnership resulted in a great public garden and horticultural resource for the New York metropolitan area.

- **The Oakland Museum of California (OMCA)** in Oakland, California - designed to "tell the extraordinary story of California" combining museum and landscape design, architect Kevin Roche and landscape architect Dan Kiley worked to create an urban community campus, featuring a 24,600-square-foot, terraced roof garden that extends

the museum's exhibition space and offers numerous spaces for public gatherings. Kiley engaged Geraldine Knight Scott, landscape architect and founder of the California Horticultural Society, to select the plantings for his modern-day "hanging gardens of Babylon." Walter Hood has been chosen to renovate the campus and revitalize the gardens and the Garden Conservancy and OMCA have begun a five-year partnership in support of the renovation of the museum campus and grounds.

DOCUMENTATION:

Recently, the Garden Conservancy has embarked on an effort to preserve gardens in other ways beyond the mere physical. Their new **Documentation Program** captures and shares the essence of something that is largely experiential—the beauty and stories of a garden. This presents unique challenges and requires an innovative and layered approach to create a multi-dimensional portrait of a garden, a living work of art. Using words and pictures, letters and notebooks, drawings and plant lists, along with stories, sounds, and experiences that have inspired garden creators, the goal is to build, over time, an online resource that brings gardens to life in a new way in an educational tool that will continue to provide important insights for years to come.

One of the first gardens selected for the Documentation Program was the **John P. Humes Japanese Stroll Garden**, in Mill Neck, New York. Created for Ambassador John Humes in the 1960's and designed by Douglas and Joan DeFaya, the Humes Garden is a seamless integration of Japanese landscape design with the woodland terrain of Long Island's North Shore. The Garden Conservancy was instrumental in saving the garden from closing in 1993 and managed the garden on behalf of the Humes Japanese Garden Foundation for twenty years. In 2017, the North Shore Land Alliance purchased the gardens and now operates the property as a public garden. The short film produced about the Humes Garden as part of this Documentation Program can be seen at www.tinyurl.com/humesgarden.

The Garden Conservancy is researching and collecting a wide variety of materials, interviewing individuals who have played key roles in the evolution of each garden, and engaging professional archivists, film makers, photographers, and others to assist in crafting as complete a story as possible. The potential for this reimagined way of preserving gardens and landscapes and sharing them is immeasurable.

SHARING:

While the Garden Conservancy's Preservation and Documentation Programs are the key ways that they address the 'preserving' part of their mission, the most visible way that the Garden Conservancy tackles the 'sharing' of gardens is through its **Open Days Program**. Since the program's inception in 1995 by Page Dickey and Pepe Maynard, Open Days has welcomed more than one million visitors into thousands of

inspired private landscapes – from urban rooftops to organic farms, historic estates to innovative suburban lots – in 41 states across the country. Healthy gardens thrive on diversity and our nation’s gardening traditions are no different. Through Open Days and the hundreds of passionate and engaged volunteers who drive the program the Garden Conservancy is able to showcase regional horticultural and stylistic expressions in a national context, celebrating the rich diversity of American gardens.

Other programs include: **Digging Deeper** events where small groups of visitors come together for informative yet informal talks and demonstrations with experts from every facet of the garden world: landscape architects, garden writers, plant collectors, artists, and more; and a **Garden Masters Series**, connoisseur-level educational and social opportunities at gardens not otherwise available through Open Days. These events provide a chance for deep learning, inspiration, and a unique experience with like-minded friends and fellow serious garden enthusiasts.

I have had the pleasure and honor of opening my own garden and those of many of my clients over the past seventeen years through Open Days and recently through the Digging Deeper program. I encourage any and all landscape architects and garden designers I meet to share their work through Open Days and the Garden Conservancy. Gardens help shape our identity and define our place in the world. As we share our work with the public we advance our profession, and the wide range of talent in American designers, while also furthering the greater public’s appreciation of it.

Through all of their programs and outreach, the Garden Conservancy champions the vital role that gardens and landscapes play in our history, our culture, and our quality of life. The work that has been achieved in the first 30 years of this organization’s history is profound. The Garden Conservancy all the while has not only been preserving, sharing, and celebrating America’s gardens but has in fact been rescuing and saving some of this country’s most historic, iconic, diverse, and culturally significant national treasures.

I proudly submit the following recommendations and supporting materials for your consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joseph Marek', written in a cursive style.

Joseph Marek, ASLA

**The American Society of Landscape Architects
2020 Olmsted Medal Nomination**

Contact info for The Garden Conservancy

The Garden Conservancy
P.O. Box 608
Garrison, NY 10524

845-424-6500 phone
845-424-6501 fax
info@gardenconservancy.org

President & CEO: James Brayton Hall, jbraytonhall@gardenconservancy.org

Website: www.gardenconservancy.org

Facebook: The.Garden.Conservancy

Instagram: thegardenconservancy



ASLA Olmsted Medal Nominations
c/o Honors and Awards
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Selection Committee,

Since its founding, almost 30 years ago, The Garden Conservancy has overwhelmingly demonstrated its commitment to the ASLA's core values of environmental leadership, vision and stewardship. I believe it is time to honor their excellent work, and I enthusiastically support their nomination for the Olmsted Medal.

I first became aware of the Garden Conservancy in the early 1990's after they stepped in to save the Ruth Bancroft Garden near San Francisco. The Conservancy founders recognized the incredible aesthetic and horticultural importance of Ruth's garden, which celebrates the unique beauty of the arid landscape. Thanks to their efforts, Ruth's dry garden popularized the use of succulents, and helped to promote sustainable and water sensitive garden design practices. Over the years, the garden has inspired generations of landscape architects, horticulturalists and garden enthusiasts – and it is just one example of the Conservancy's efforts to preserve important works of landscape design.

As a member of the Garden Conservancy's West Coast Council for over 10 years, I've seen the impact of their work first hand. The council raised the public's awareness of culturally and horticulturally significant landscapes in the west, both public and private, while supporting the Conservancy's larger mission of preserving significant gardens all over the United States. Their work restoring the gardens of Alcatraz is a great example of this; through collaboration with the National Parks Service, Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy and many volunteers, they help to reclaim the forgotten landscape history of the island and elevate the role of landscape design at this iconic Bay-Area landmark.

In addition to assisting with the preservation of significant landscapes, the Garden Conservancy also plays an important role in fostering connections between diverse audiences that include landscape architectural professionals, horticulturalists, garden enthusiasts and the general public. It sponsors lectures all over the country by prominent landscape architects, garden designers and botanist from around the world, bringing their expertise to many communities that would seldom have exposure or access to the work of these important figures. These lectures and events celebrate diverse gardening traditions and shine a light on the values which link the landscape architecture profession to the broader environmental community.

In closing, I hope you will share my enthusiasm in supporting the nomination of the Garden Conservancy for the Olmsted Medal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Andrea Cochran". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Andrea Cochran, FASLA

January 31, 2020

Olmsted Medal Nominations
c/o Honors and Awards
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Executive Committee and Board of Trustees,

It is with great enthusiasm that I write in support of the Garden Conservancy for the Olmsted Medal. I see immense benefit in the important work of the Conservancy and their role in helping preserve exceptional and culturally significant gardens for future generations. Throughout the past quarter century, they have helped more than 80 outstanding American gardens flourish while ensuring public access and outreach and educational initiatives. The Conservancy's commitment to connecting people to the transformative power of gardens has resulted in access for over a million visitors to some 3,000 private gardens across the country. The Conservancy's lecture and Garden Master Series and site-specific programs likewise provide in-depth education to the general public through informal talks, tours, and demonstrations with experts of every stripe.

In my work as Owner and Principal of Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects (NBW), I have connected with people positively influenced by the Conservancy and have experienced first-hand their work with gardens, including at Olana where my firm has been involved since 2013. Throughout, I have been continually impressed by the magnitude of positive impact the organization has on these important cultural landscapes and on allied professionals alike. The Garden Conservancy has consistently proven to be a tremendous champion for the cultural, historical, and ecological value of gardens on a national scale.

The work of NBW centers on research driven design that honors and reveals the local history and natural context of a site, very much in the way that the Garden Conservancy approaches each of the gardens they collaborate with. Their approach allows gardens to reach their full potential by responding to the surrounding community while maintaining the historic and cultural integrity of the original vision. Varied in typology, scale, and context, the Conservancy celebrates and protects each garden as uniquely valuable, while simultaneously expanding the accessibility of the space and public awareness of the narratives at play.

Through the range of gardens they support and the network of horticulturists, historians, and citizens that they educate and mobilize, the Garden Conservancy has effected a remarkable foundation of support for cultural landscapes and public spaces at times when it is needed the most. The Garden Conservancy's role in unifying communities around preservation efforts has been and continues to be invaluable, and for this reason I wholeheartedly support them for the Olmsted Medal.

If I can be of any further assistance, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas L. Woltz". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right from the end of the name.

Thomas Woltz
Owner and Principal
Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects

January 27, 2020

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

Re: Olmsted Medal – Letter of Support for the Garden Conservancy

Dear Colleagues:

It is my pleasure to fully support the nomination of The Garden Conservancy for the 2020 Olmsted Medal.

For over 30 years, The Garden Conservancy has played a vital role in the preservation of nearly 100 extraordinary American gardens. Their mission, *“to preserve, share, and celebrate America’s gardens and diverse gardening traditions for the education and inspiration of the public,”* is accomplished through a robust program that provides assistance in fundraising, historic preservation, operational challenges, and documentation. The Garden Conservancy has played a vital role in the preservation of the Gardens on Alcatraz Island in San Francisco, Longue Vue House & Gardens in New Orleans and, following Hurricane Irma in 2017, the Cummer Museum in Jacksonville, FL.

In addition to safeguarding such treasures, the Garden Conservancy consistently raises awareness of the beauty and diversity of American gardens through a touchstone program called Open Days. For 25 years, this program has opened the gates of thousands of private gardens to the public, providing a unique opportunity to learn about and gain inspiration from the most exciting, creative, and innovative exclusive gardens. Spanning 41 states, Open Days has offered over 1 million visitors a chance to engage with rooftop gardens, organic farms, historic estates, and urban landscapes.

Through their outreach, the Garden Conservancy has led efforts to preserve, share, and rescue some of the most iconic and vital landscapes in the United States. As a Fellow of both the American Society of Landscape Architects and Garden Conservancy, I enthusiastically support the consideration of these true garden stewards for the Olmsted Medal.

Sincerely,



SHEILA A. BRADY, FASLA
Principal and Vice President

Susan Cohen Landscape Architect FASLA

199 Sound Beach Avenue, Old Greenwich, Connecticut 06870
email: scohenla@aol.com • telephone: (203) 554-7536

Dear ASLA Executive Committee and Board of Trustees,

For their mission and their achievements, I enthusiastically support the nomination of the Garden Conservancy for the ASLA's 2020 Olmsted Medal. As a practicing landscape architect, garden writer and long-time member of the Conservancy, I know what a *gift* it is to visit gardens.

Through their extraordinary Open Days program, the Garden Conservancy has made it possible for over a million people to visit private gardens throughout the United States. The organization makes it easy, with a terrific website, lushly-illustrated reminder emails and a well-produced annual book – the Open Days Directory. Also, this program supports and promotes the work of our profession, by noting the landscape architects who design many of these gardens.

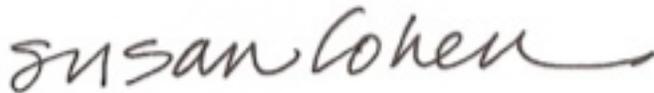
My association with the Garden Conservancy began in the early days, when founding president Antonia Adezio invited me to open my own Connecticut garden. My husband and I enjoyed that occasion enormously, and we have repeated it since. We also have visited open gardens year after year – a highlight of *our* gardening season, as it is for so many others across the country.

Having taught for decades at the New York Botanical Garden and also in the MLA program at City College, I have advised my students that the best way to learn about design is by visiting gardens – to inhabit their spaces, to understand how they function and to appreciate the inventiveness of their designs. I always recommend that they make use of the opportunities offered by the Garden Conservancy's Open Days program.

Last March, as a Garden Conservancy "Digging Deeper" speaker, I gave a talk about my book, *The Inspired Landscape*. As expected, this event was well publicized and well run, and the promotional materials were beautiful.

I urge the presentation of this year's Olmsted Medal to the Garden Conservancy, which meets the criteria for "environmental leadership, vision, and stewardship." It is fitting and appropriate that the 2020 Olmsted Medal should honor Frank Cabot's vision – so ably carried out by the Garden Conservancy he founded – of preserving, promoting and sharing gardens as an inspiration to designers and an invaluable part of our cultural heritage.

Sincerely,



January 29, 2020



J. Barclay Collins II
Chairman

January 31, 2020

Olmsted Medal Nominations
C/o Honors and Awards
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, D.C. 2001-3736

Dear Executive Committee and Board of Trustees,

It gives me great pleasure to endorse, most enthusiastically, the nomination of The Garden Conservancy for the Olmsted Medal. I am Chairman of the Board of The New York Botanical Garden, a member of the Board of the Cary Institute for Ecosystem Studies, and a member of the Board of The Garden Conservancy. I write in my individual capacity, but from the perspective of these roles.

The Olmsted Medal recognizes environmental leadership, vision and stewardship. Since its founding some 30 years ago, the Garden Conservancy has been devoted to protecting and sharing with the public the special natural environments that gardens create, and, alongside these preservation programs, to promoting public interest in gardening and garden environments through its Open Days program.

Inspired by the vision of Frank Cabot, the Conservancy has worked, through a professional and dedicated staff, and a supportive and philanthropic board, to sustain American gardens, which might otherwise have fallen into desuetude, and disappeared from the environment of their communities. The Garden Conservancy's vibrant preservation programs, including the use of conservation easements, are documented in the nomination. These programs have turned private gardens into public gardens, accessible to the public, which showcase not only beautiful garden design and landscape architecture, but also tell important stories about plant adaptability to climate change, local ecosystems and biodiversity on the community level.

The Garden Conservancy's Open Days program goes even further. For 25 years, the Open Days program has opened thousands of private gardens and landscapes, large and small, to over 1 million visitors, inspiring new gardeners, experienced gardeners, even non-gardeners, with the adaptability and beauty of a built environment within the local landscape. These days occur in communities across the continent, and have had an incalculable impact on the nurturing of budding gardeners, and the further education of experienced gardeners.

Olmsted Medal Nominations

January 31, 2020

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To the Chinese, the making of a garden is the effort of the individual to attain unity with the universe: they believe that unless one has a garden, one scarcely grasps the reason for existence. What I believe connects every garden, large or small, designed or not, is the continued activity of people in its maintenance and cultivation, and in its enjoyment and use as a place of repose and sociability, and sensibility for the glory of nature.

Over the years, through its preservation, documentation, education, and public accessibility programs, The Garden Conservancy has promoted these ideals with vision, leadership and philanthropy, and I believe its impact on the preservation and sustainability of our environment is profound.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "J. Barclay Collins II". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

J. Barclay Collins II









