

825 Babcock Court
Raleigh, North Carolina 27609

ASLA Medal Nominations
c/o Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

To the ASLA Executive Committee:

I am pleased to nominate Richard C. (Dick) Bell, FASLA, FAAR, for the ASLA Medal. Dick has had a long, distinguished and award-winning career. Along with Ed Daugherty, Ed Stone, Jr., and Robert Marvin, Dick was one of the first landscape architects to make a career in the South. Dick made it his mission to grow the profession in the Southeast generally, and in North Carolina specifically. His vision for our profession, his political savvy, his ability to transform a landscape while working with what was already there, his deep knowledge and passion for plant materials, and his commitment to excellence set a standard for practice throughout the Southeast. Dick built the foundation; the profession's evolution is a direct result of Dick's life work.

A multi-award-winning designer, Dick Bell graduated from the NCSU School of Design (now College of Design) in 1950 as part of Dean Henry Kamphoefner's first class. He apprenticed under Simonds & Simonds of Pittsburgh, PA, and Frederick B. Stresau of Fort Lauderdale, Fla. At the age of 21, he was the youngest person to receive the *Prix de Rome*, which allowed him to travel and study in Europe for two years. He has been a member of the American Society of Landscape architects since 1954 and was elected to Fellowship in 1980. He is also a Fellow of the American Academy in Rome, was the first recipient of the North Carolina Chapter's Award for Distinguished Professional Achievement, and was one of three to receive the Chapter's inaugural *Legacy Award*. He was inducted into the Raleigh Hall of Fame in 2008.

Leadership

When Dick established his practice in Raleigh, NC in 1955, North Carolina was part of the Southeastern Chapter of the ASLA, which was comprised of six states: Georgia, Florida, Alabama, Tennessee, North and South Carolina. After Florida and Georgia pulled out to start their own chapters, Dick's aspiration, as reported in "A History of Landscape Architecture in North Carolina", was "to bring my friends and practitioners in the four remaining states – Alabama, Tennessee, South and North Carolina – into the "statehood" of landscape architecture."

Dick's first task was to convince his fellow landscape architects about the vision of growing the profession. He noted, "In all of the Southeastern Chapter's meetings, it was very common to hear, 'We must each protect our territories and keep other firms out!' I espoused a new concept: Move as many apprentices as possible through our offices and encourage them to open their own offices as soon as possible, thus increasing our presence through extensive practice throughout the state. This would help us politically when we were seeking registration." Ultimately, through perseverance and passion, his vision prevailed.

Over the next decade, Dick led the effort to grow the profession and build credibility among allies and adversaries alike. He was particularly astute at winning over those who might feel threatened by an emerging profession of landscape architects, at that time the nurserymen and growers who saw this as direct competition for their services. He became an affiliate member of NCAIA to engage architects, and he courted contractors and engineers to gain their support and endorsement. As the plan unfolded, Dick

organized chapter members (at that time there were only a few, but wide spread), led the discussions about the goals and objectives, developed the political strategy, and raised money to hire a lobbyist to go before the General Assembly. Ultimately he helped put into place the legislation which created a title act in North Carolina. With the new title act in place, the Governor made Dick the first appointment to the new North Carolina Board of Landscape Architects.

The Southeastern Chapter, recognizing the success of Dick's efforts, elected him as president, along with two other North Carolinians to be Chapter Trustee and Secretary/Treasurer. Dick's first official decision as president was to disband the Southeastern Chapter in order to create four distinct chapters – NC, SC, Alabama, and Tennessee. Working with the Chapter Trustee and Secretary/Treasurer he helped prepare the paperwork for ASLA to accept the four new chapters, a task completed in thirty days. He worked closely with Harry McLeod in Tennessee, Ed Pinckney and Robert Marvin in South Carolina, and Gene Brock in Alabama to ensure the successful launch of their new chapters.

To complete his vision for North Carolina's landscape professionals, Dick worked with the NC nurserymen to help them gain "certified nurseryman" status that required examinations based on competence. He also worked with the landscape contractors to help them achieve registration. Thus, Dick's advocacy for the profession of landscape architecture led not only to the growth and acceptance of our profession but also to the development of higher standards and a better overall "green industry".

Dick's leadership in landscape architecture manifested itself in other ways. He was an outspoken advocate for environmentally conscious practice and policy long before it became popular nationally. He pushed for the first stormwater management standards in Wake County (North Carolina's capital county), and helped draft the policy language which became a model for the state. He was willing to go to court to protect land and water quality, and was frequently the person legislators and political leaders went to in order to understand best practices. In response to a client plea, he went head to head with the NC Department of Transportation over the placement of a highway corridor. His plan, which was more environmentally benign and less destructive to cultural resources, was ultimately selected.

Throughout his career Dick has been a leader in advancing public understanding of our profession. He created a blog, "Pebbles in the Pond: News and Musings by Landscape Architect Dick Bell", to increase awareness of professional developments. He wrote a column for a weekly news journal on environmental and design issues and he is currently writing a trilogy on his life and the profession. The first book, *The Bridge Builders*, was released in 2011.

Practice

Dick Bell has completed over 2000 projects in his career. He was a proponent of Modernism, eschewing the traditional formal approaches most common in the profession. He introduced an entire generation of budding landscape architects to a new way of thinking about site analysis and design. Equally important, Dick was one who tested ideas, experimented with plants and materials, and explored new techniques and technologies, all as a means to advance our knowledge and improve our results. Dick continually expanded the role of the landscape architect and in the process expanded our collective practice.

His best known work is "the Brickyard" (University Plaza) on the campus of North Carolina State University, a drawing of which was on the cover of the January 1970 issue of *Landscape Architecture Magazine* and was also included in the October 2010 Centennial issue of *LAM* (see attached). This is the most iconic space on campus and the site of rallies, celebrations, protests and memorial services. It was for those reasons and more that it was highlighted in the Spring 2006 edition of the *NC State Alumni Magazine*. Completed in 1970, the Brickyard "exemplifies the modern aesthetic in landscape architecture" and is as important today as it was at its unveiling.

Early in his career, Dick worked with architect Morris Lapidus on the design for the Fontainebleau Hotel in Miami Beach. Other projects of note include the City of Raleigh's Pullen Park, the Amphitheatre at Meredith College, the NC Legislative Building grounds where he worked with architect Edward Durell Stone, and the serpentine wall at St. Mary's School. Dick's work ranged from major city and highway corridors to city parks, campus master plans and projects, mixed-use beachfront developments, and individual residences.

One of his most personal, and also, most significant projects was "Water Garden", an 11-acre home, office, cultural center, and living laboratory where he spent 50 years experimenting with plant materials and landscape design techniques. This mixed use project was ahead of its time and gave Dick the setting to not only try out ideas but, in the Olmsted tradition at "Fairstead", provided an opportunity to showcase best practices to potential clients and other designers. Dick was given the "Judges Award" from the American Association of Nurserymen in 1981 for Water Garden and the site was featured in *Landscape Architecture Magazine* in February 2006.

Philosophy

Like most landscape architects, Dick built his career around values and a personal ethic. What may distinguish him is that he often wrote his views down to be shared with a broader audience, so that they, too, might better understand the depth of design thinking. These were what he called his design epistles:

...We must tread lightly upon the land, enhancing its natural characteristics, protecting its natural vegetation, utilizing its existing trees, and treating all areas left over after construction as open space...

...Wherever possible, natural systems should be utilized as educational devices in which children can play and come to understand that they are as important to human survival as they are to biological diversity and runoff mitigation...

...Understanding nature creates an appreciation of beauty, which in turn creates an appreciation of art. Think of the Holy Trinity not only as God, Son, and Holy Spirit but also as Nature, Beauty, and Art.

Dick's personal edict has always been, "I want to leave a little beauty behind wherever I go." And in naming his blog, "Pebbles in the Pond", Dick was in effect describing his ultimate philosophy. He wrote:

"'Pebbles in the pond' describes the effect and affect of a pebble striking a pond's surface and the radiating concentric circles that occur afterwards. It is my metaphor for my life's work — dreaming up ideas (the pebbles) and throwing them into society (the pond).

Mahatma Ghandi once said "You must be the change you want to see in the world". That change starts from within and ripples outwards — like a pebble in a pond."

I've been throwing pebbles in the pond throughout my career."

Summary

Dick Bell's work and career are not easily summarized, but it can be easily argued that landscape architecture in the Southeast and in North Carolina would be vastly different today were it not for his leadership and efforts. He effectively established the profession in this region; he changed the mindset of practitioners, allied professionals, and legislators as to what this profession might be; he led the charge to create licensure. Through his practice Dick expanded the reach of modernism in landscape architecture to the Southeast, and he brought a whole generation of young people into practice. His influence is still felt

across the state and region by both the profession and the public who experience his landscapes on daily basis by the thousands.

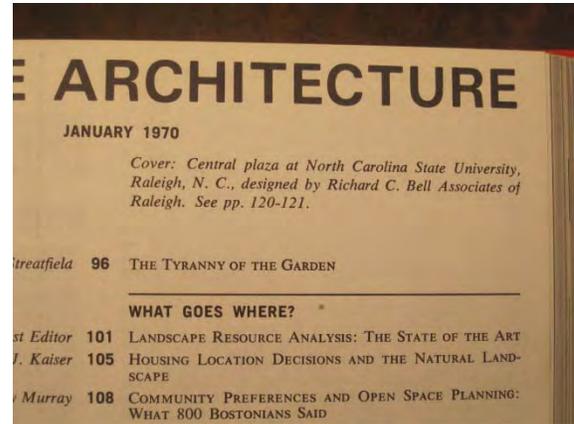
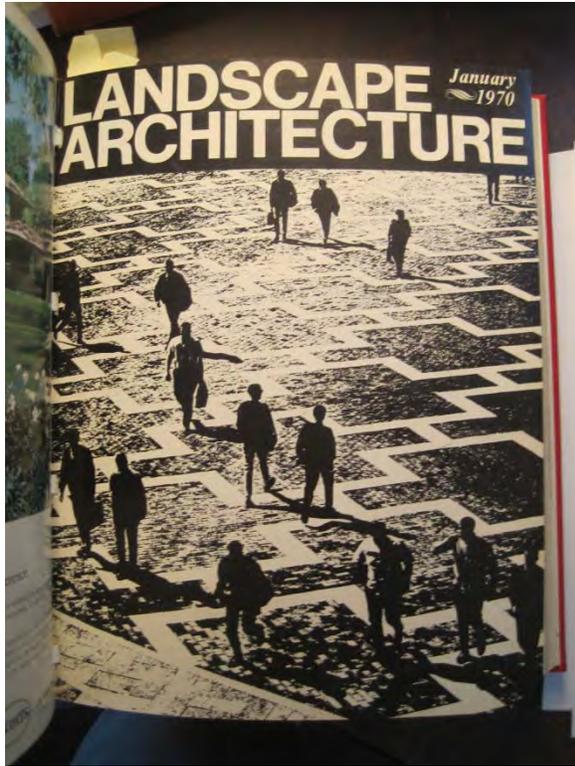
Dick Bell was honored by NCASLA with the first Legacy Award because we all have come to understand that everything we do is built upon his pioneering efforts. They are greater than we fully understand, perhaps greater than this nomination can explain. But Dick Bell is worthy of consideration for the ASLA Medal as a leader in the development of the profession of landscape architecture in this country. I hope that you will recognize his significant contributions to the development of our profession and award him the 2014 ASLA Medal.

Thank you for your consideration.

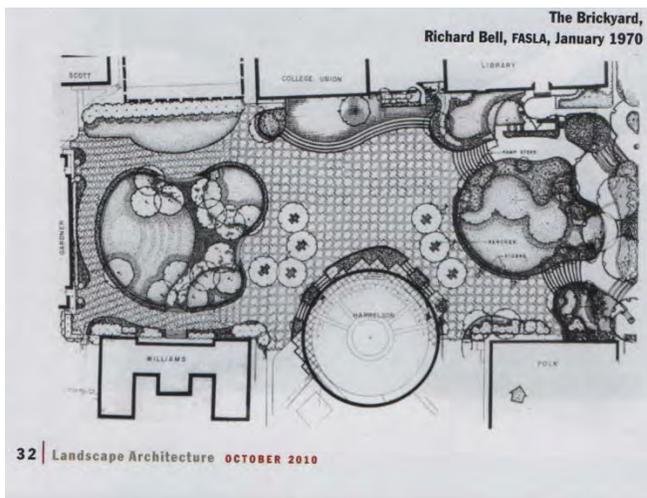
Sincerely;

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rodney L. Swink". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Rodney L. Swink, FASLA, PLA



North Carolina State University's "The Brickyard" on the cover of LAM, Jan. 1970.



"The Brickyard" in LAM, Oct. 2010



Bell's Water Garden featured in LAM, Feb. 2006

ASLA Medal Nomination: Richard C. "Dick" Bell



ASLA Medal Nominations
c/o Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

To the ASLA Executive Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I submit this enthusiastic letter in support for Richard C. (“Dick”) Bell, FASLA, FAAR, for the ASLA Medal.

I first became aware of Dick as a Rome Prize recipient in 2004 – much to my astonishment he had won the prize more than a half century earlier in 1951. At the time I reached out to introduce myself, wanting to know more about the Academy in its earlier days. What I would soon witness was the remarkable level of cultural amnesia for Dick’s contributions to landscape architecture that had penetrated my generation. Having a couple of phone conversations with Dick I would very quickly become astonished at his myriad accomplishments for the profession in the region and his extraordinary built legacy – with many of these projects still loved today.

In my initial conversations with Dick, I would learn that he secured the Rome Prize with support from his then-boss, John Simonds. Dick referred to John as “a Zen Buddhist Master” and noted that “like the Buddhists, John was always searching for *harmony* in his work.” Since that initial conversation, I have had the good fortune to visit the Raleigh area on several occasions where I was able to visit many of Dick’s most celebrated projects including the Brickyard on the campus of North Carolina State University, the Amphitheatre at Meredith College, and the North Carolina Legislative Building grounds where Dick collaborated with architect Edward Durell Stone. What is remarkable to me is how Dick’s work, like Simonds, possess a *harmony* with places – from its surroundings, to its natural, cultural and ecological values. Equally surprising, the work does not have a recognizable style, and ranges from Modernist to Picturesque or Naturalistic. The fact that many of these public landscapes are well maintained today speaks to both their durability and the value the public places on them.

Five years after these initial conversations, Dick spoke at a conference that the Cultural Landscape Foundation had organized at the Andy Warhol Museum (with the Pittsburgh Parks Conservancy), in honor of John Simonds’ Pittsburgh legacy. Dick had not been back to Pittsburgh in decades, and his charge was to recount his brief tenure in the Simonds’ office. In preparing this letter of support I went back to my notes from that day to discover that



upon reflecting on Simonds' contributions Dick noted that "John was a natural leader and a world traveler who respected God, nature, and people. He was truly knowledgeable about our profession and diligently pursued it in his work ethic. He was learning all the time **and this trait he taught to me.** . . John was a true environmentalist long before any others began to grasp this concept. Time and again he impressed upon me that, as landscape architects, we must be the masters of environmental design, and this would be our true value on design teams of artists, architects, and engineers, which would culminate in superior, actual design solutions on the ground."

Today, reflecting back on Dick's recollections of John Simonds, we can now bracket Dick's own career -- ignited, inspired, and given direction by his mentor. In doing this, we can re-appraise and measure Dick's legacy and influence from the thousands of graduates and practitioners that the profession has grown in North Carolina, to an unrivaled regional legacy of built work, that has stood the test of time and reminds us all of his unique and person vision.

Simonds would be proud, and I am honored to submit this letter. I urge the Medals committee to remind us of this astonishing man and his unrivaled legacy by honoring Dick Bell with the ASLA Medal.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, consisting of a stylized 'C' and 'B' followed by a long horizontal line.

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR
Founder + President

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ASLA Board of Trustees
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors and Awards Coordinator
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Nomination of Dick Bell for the ASLA Medal

Dear Trustees,

When you look over the list of past recipients of the ASLA Medal, you find a who's who of the greats of our profession. This is to be expected since this is the ultimate honor bestowed by ASLA, an acknowledgement of the career of a landscape architect "whose lifetime achievements and contributions to the profession have had a unique and lasting impact on the welfare of the public and the environment." This is not meant to honor the most famous but, rather, those who have contributed significantly to our profession and to the broader world. As is described so well in his nomination letter, Dick Bell is just such a person.

Dick is by all accounts a great designer – a modernist genius with an impressive portfolio filled with important work. But that, in my view, is not what makes him a worthy recipient of this honor. I am supporting his nomination because he has been a transformative leader within ASLA and the profession. He did a lot of hard work – creating and strengthening ASLA chapters, helping to build viable practices, and promoting landscape architecture in a region where indifference to what we do had been the norm – to makes things easy for landscape architects working today.

Dick is an icon in the NC design world, but his influence extends far beyond our state. In a lot of ways, ASLA is only as strong as its chapters, and each chapter is elevated by the success of others. His efforts in assuring a strong presence for ASLA and landscape architecture in the Southeast have made our entire profession stronger. To me, his is precisely the type of career this honor is designed to recognize, which is why I ask you to consider Dick Bell for the ASLA Medal.

Sincerely,



Mark Hough, ASLA
Campus Landscape Architect

Susan Hatchell

Landscape Architecture, PLLC

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ASLA Executive Committee
ASLA Board of Trustees
American Society of Landscape Architects
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Dear Executive Committee and Board of Trustees:

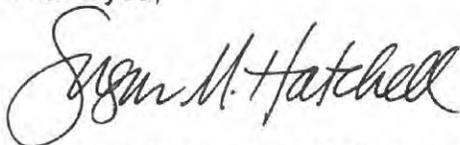
It is without hesitation that I write this letter in support of Richard C. (Dick) Bell, FASLA for the ASLA Medal.

Dick Bell is a founding father of landscape architecture in the south, and one of the most highly decorated landscape architects in North Carolina. His tireless promotion of the profession and dedication to growing, licensing and promoting landscape architecture set the stage for the growth of the profession in our region. Dick has never stepped away from partnering with allied professions, advocating with the legislature, working to help students, or to inform and educate the public about landscape architecture.

Rather than exclude other firms from competition, Dick always understood that the profession would grow and prosper fastest with more and more landscape architects owning firms, and infiltrating as many positions of authority as possible. Growing the profession, and giving it credibility, and raising its voice has been one of his highest and most successful professional achievements. Add to that a prolific record of thousands of projects and dozens of awards, prizes and honors over the years, and you realize how significant his contribution has been.

Dick has been an outspoken and devoted proponent and leader who paved the way for hundreds and hundreds of us who have followed after him. I hope you agree that he is so deserving of this special tribute and honor to be the ASLA Medal recipient.

Thank you,



Susan M. Hatchell, FASLA, PLA, LEED AP
President
Past President, American Society of Landscape Architects



City Of Raleigh *North Carolina*

To Whom It May Concern:

Richard Chevalier "Dick" Bell has been described as kind, curmudgeonly, brilliant, determined, sensitive. He's been called an artist, a trend-setter, a teacher, pioneer and a pain. I have personally known Dick for essentially all of my thirty years here in the Research Triangle area, and I still come across landscapes with Dick's hands on them that I have always felt a particular wonder about, but never knew he'd designed them until recently.

Dick, with Gil Thurlow, Lewis Clarke and a few others, defined the Modernist movement in Landscape Architecture in the state and this region. He inserted himself into a world dominated by architects and engineers to give depth and respect to the profession of landscape architecture – he never let go, and the respect he demanded blossomed as our allied professionals grew to know his work over the years.

His mark is everywhere. The beautiful Meredith College Amphitheatre set among the pine trees looks as fresh and relevant today as it did when it was installed. I personally remember the impact the recently lost Water Garden complex had on me as a student. Dick's brilliantly embedded quiet buildings looked grown from the site rather than placed in it. The oasis in the fast-developing US 70 corridor was filled with green-barked maples, strange berried shrubs and many other surprises and marvels brought back to the Water Garden from Dick's many travels around the world.

Like FL Olmsted, Sr., Dick's education came from his travels primarily...to Greece, Rome, Egypt, Spain. Because he grew up in a coastal environment he was particularly attracted to our Southern Appalachians – everything he did seems to capture the rich diversity, the rounded forms, the essence of stone that he extracted from his connection to the mountains. I've seen Dick's beautifully crafted watercolors that capture the feeling that is clearly so special to him.

He and his wife Mary Jo established an art gallery at the Water Garden, a gathering place to allow the intersection of communities of artists and landscape architects that swirled around the couple.

But Dick's contributions to his community transcend simply the landscapes he designs. He served on the Raleigh Appearance Commission and the Raleigh Planning Commission, on

multiple awards juries, task forces and committees. He never hesitated when asked to serve his adopted community here in Raleigh and he never failed, with his trademark quips, determination and candid analysis, to turn the ship away from the normal course toward a different, and invariably better, direction. All who worked with Dick on these committees grew to love him.

Because we are home to a prestigious College of Design, enjoy a healthy economy and an enviable quality of life, a good number of landscape architecture graduates fall close to the tree. We have a broad, very talented landscape architecture community here, but I would venture to say all of them...all...would point to Dick Bell as North Carolina's Designer Emeritus. All lines seem to flow from his starting point – several firms were spawned by his interns, dozens of professionals mentored by him at the College of Design, many important policies that have shaped our community were developed with his influence.

Dick has changed forever his state, his community, every person who has enjoyed his laugh. We all feel so strongly about him that he was honored with a named lecture every year as part of the Landscape Architecture Lecture Series at NC State. There is no one I can imagine who has done more, influenced more, given more to his community of landscape architects in North Carolina than Dick. I heartily support his nomination for the ASLA Medal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Howe', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Daniel A. Howe, ASLA, AICP
Assistant City Manager
City of Raleigh, North Carolina