Honorary Membership Nomination Narrative

Nominee: Ann Elizabeth Breen

2101 Connecticut Ave. NW #33
Washington DC 20008
202 337 0356

Nominator: Steve Durrant, FASLA
Vice President, Alta Planning + Design

For over 40 years, Ann Breen has tirelessly advocated for urban waterways as one of the most dynamic, resource sensitive and fertile areas for protection, planning and community development. The emphasis on waterways as a primary value in enhancing the quality of life in cities was an ethos she committed to in the late seventies while Waterfront Coordinator of NOAA’s Office of Coastal Management in New York City.

Unresolved issues of industrial contamination, wasted valuable urban space, lack of public access to waterways and a general disinterest in the waterfront as a significant urban resource compelled her to found The Waterfront Center in 1981 with co-founder Dick Rigby (nominated separately). Since then, she has, through The Center, focused on educating key interests and the public about the value of waterways at every community scale, prompting their use and protection to benefit environmental, recreation, cultural, commercial, residential, or industrial development resources. As a result, The Center has grown into an international voice that characterizes waterways as a community’s ‘front door’, and as a natural and cultural infrastructure opening tremendous opportunities for improving citizens’ quality of life and a community’s long-term health.

As an urban and regional planner, Ann has developed The Center as an organization of professional services and programs designed to promote waterfront protection and use at various levels. She has given hundreds of public presentations, co-authored several books and articles on waterfront conservation and revitalization, conducted public community workshops, and consulted with well over 100 communities around the world. She convenes an annual waterfront conference with community planners, landscape architects and other design professionals, government interests and regulators, citizens, and other non-profit and environmental interests. The consultations and conferences have resulted in a rich national and international network of advocates who continue to share projects, ideas and solutions.

In 1987 the co-founders created The Excellence on the Waterfront Awards – a yearly juried program that recognizes outstanding international achievements in waterfront design, landscape architecture, planning and advocacy. The Awards have become a coveted fellowship among awardees, with the projects
recognized for their creativity and quality in rebuilding waterfronts as resources fundamental to community environmental health, economic prosperity, aesthetic quality and citizen welfare.

All of these services have resulted in the Center’s unique 35+ year ‘diary’ of international waterfront influence, issues and projects. This visual record accurately highlights the successes, challenges and possibilities waterfront projects afford, underscores their vital importance to diverse communities around the world, and documents The Waterfront Center’s decades long and persistent commitment to them.

**International Influence**

Ann was prescient in the early 90’s in predicting the US would become more urban as economies change and as city development and infrastructure investments concentrated on improvements in air and water quality, land uses and on enhancing landscape esthetics. Given her vision, her influence in building an international network of waterfront community and political interests over time, is huge.

Ann has been a recognizable player in initiating global public awareness of urban waterfronts as underused public spaces that can provide rich visual, recreation, economic and cultural opportunities. Given her longstanding interest in and skill with waterfront issues, she understands the diversity and complexity of the coalitions required to facilitate their evolution into accessible community resources. As a result she is a strategic spokesperson and catalyst for landscape architecture, waterfront protection, community use and most importantly, public access. She is unique in understanding the long view as she articulates their vital significance to the urban and community landscape.

**Benefit to Landscape Architecture**

In addition to The Waterfront Center’s complimentary mission, Ann has long promoted landscape architecture as the profession with the breadth of thinking and skill sets required to successfully undertake and manage complex projects of this kind. As result she deserves much credit for helping landscape architects gravitate toward waterfront projects, and continually acknowledges their global work through the Center’s Excellence on the Waterfront Award Program. In response, ASLA Members and Fellows have firmly integrated waterfront projects into their own practices and continue to actively support The Center’s work through membership on its advisory board, expert panels, annual conference and the Excellence on the Waterfront Awards program.

It is my distinct honor to nominate Ann Breen as an Honorary Member of ASLA, recognizing her longstanding dedication to the principals we hold dear and the value that landscape architects bring to protecting, revitalizing and providing access to urban waterfronts around the globe.
January 29, 2018

Honorary Membership Committee
Terry Poltrack
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street NW
Washington DC, 20001

Re: Ann Breen Nomination for Honorary ASLA

Dear Members of the Honorary ASLA Review Committee:

I am pleased to recommend Ms. Ann Breen for Honorary Membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects. I am a landscape architect and partner of Mayer/Reed, a multi-disciplinary design firm that has been established in Portland, Oregon for over forty years. Our work is focused on large public and private projects in the Pacific Northwest, including a number of waterfronts. I have known Ann for about 30 years through her work in establishing and operating a non-profit organization, The Waterfront Center, headquartered in Washington DC.

The Waterfront Center, since its inception, has been instrumental in assisting local jurisdictions, non-profits and consulting firms tackle the many challenges of re-inventing waterfronts throughout our country and the world. The center offers resources, newsletters, advice, and conferences on waterfronts. Topics range from recovery of urban brownfields, transportation and access, economic development, community-building, amenities, trails and social gathering places to water quality and ecology. The center continues to keep pace with current issues and is increasingly focused on challenges of resiliency, water shortages, flooding and other effects of climate change.

The center offers an annual juried awards program of exemplary work on waterfronts. The program, commenced in 1987, was modeled after the one that ASLA offers. Numerous landscape architects have been jury members and numerous landscape architecture firms have benefited by having their works recognized and featured in the awards program.

Ann Breen is co-director and co-founder of the Waterfront Center, along with Dick Rigby. Her life work has been dedicated to advocacy, leadership and activities through the organization. With a background in urban and regional planning, she has worked tirelessly over 36 years to lead, connect and inspire people to improve their urban waterfronts. She has continued to expand the center’s visibility and community outreach and her ability to understand the urban planning, design, development and environmental communities has been effective over decades. She further recognizes that preservation of the natural environment is a critical component that contributes to the quality of life within the built environment.

Ann possesses a keen sense for the importance of design and specifically contributions of landscape architects as leaders and a key component of teams that design and build successful waterfronts. She understands and respects the many forces and points of view that bring projects to successful completion. In this way, I feel that Ann has made a significant contribution to the quality of our built environment and our profession as a whole.
Thank you for your consideration of Ann Breen’s Honorary Membership of the ASLA. Please contact me if you would like additional information. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Mayer/Reed, Inc.

Carol Mayer-Reed, FASLA
Principal and Landscape Architect
Honorary Membership Nomination
c/o Terry Poltrack
ASLA
636 Eye Street, NW,
Washington, DC 20001-3736

RE: Letter of Support for ASLA Honorary Membership

Dear Committee:

Ann E. Breen
I am pleased to support the nomination of Ann Breen for honorary membership in ASLA. My career as a landscape architect and planner has focused on the renewal and redevelopment of waterfront places.

Ann has provided significant influence to me as landscape architect through her work as Co-Founder of the Waterfront Center with Dick Rigby. Since the early 1980s she and Dick have lead the non-profit organization dedicated to educating communities, decision makers, and design professionals on best practices for revitalizing waterfronts to provide access to the public.

With a foundation in Urban and Regional Planning, she has contributed to the waterfront redevelopment phenomenon through several vehicles including a consulting practice, publications, workshops and annual international conference on waterfront development. Ann has delivered relevant, inspiring and educational speeches and presentations throughout the world including New Zealand, Canada, South Africa, as well as throughout the United States.

It has been an honor and a pleasure to have Ann as a colleague and source of inspiration.

Very truly yours,

James A. Brennan, ASLA
Principal
J.A. Brennan Associates, PLLC
RE: Honorary Membership Nomination Support for Ms. Ann Breen

Dear Members of the Selection Committee:

I’m delighted to have the opportunity to support the nomination of Ann Breen for Honorary ASLA Membership. I’ve known Ann for more than 20 years, as the co-founder (in 1981) and co-director of the Waterfront Center (the Center), a nonprofit organization based in Washington, DC. Ann is being nominated for honorary membership along with Dick Rigby, the Center’s co-director. She continues in her role as co-director today.

Waterfronts are “unique, finite resources… (that) often represent the best opportunity for community enhancement, (and that) can be… a force for community enrichment… which is essential for community environmental, economic, and social advancement.”

— from The Waterfront Center website mission statement, http://www.waterfrontcenter.org

Ann has been a long-time supporter of waterfronts (and urban revitalization in general) through her ongoing advocacy, preparation of publications, public charrettes to raise awareness of urban water resources, and the Center’s awards and education programs.

The Center’s broadly based group of supporters and advocates features landscape architects prominently, as well as engineers, architects, and other design professionals. Importantly, the Center’s support extends beyond the design professions to include public agencies, nonprofits, environmental organizations, and citizen activists. The Center has an international reach, with its annual awards program drawing submittals from across the globe. It has been a long time champion of the professional work of landscape architects, as evidenced by the Center’s December 2017 newsletter, which highlights the work of Carol Mayer Reed, FASLA, an award winner in the Center’s 2017 annual design awards program.

For over 30 years Ann, together with Dick Rigby, has:

• organized and conducted an annual Excellence on the Waterfront Design Awards program;
• organized an annual International Conference on Urban Waterfront Planning;
• published two books on waterfronts, both of which highlight U.S. and international case studies of successful waterfronts;
• published a book on trends in urban living, which highlights revitalization of the urban centers of multiple American and Canadian cities; and
• published An Excellence in Waterfronts series, which highlights the Waterfront Center award-winning projects from 2004 to 2016.
A current project of the Center includes planning for the production of an hour-long documentary on the waterfront phenomenon of the last 35 years, and organization of almost 30 years of award-winning Waterfront Center projects into a searchable database.

Ann is a committed urbanist that has been committed to the preservation and revitalization of our cities, and to the preservation and revitalization of waterfronts and urban water resources. She has been a champion of landscape architects and our professional work. Recognition of her work and commitment to creating a better world is long overdue. I urge you to recognize her efforts by honoring her as an Honorary ASLA Member.

Respectfully yours,

William E Wenk, FASLA
January 26, 2018

Honorary Membership Nomination
c/o Terry Poltrack
ASLA
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Mr. Poltrack,

It is my privilege to offer enthusiastic support to the nomination of Ann Breen for Honorary Membership in the ASLA. Ann’s life has been dedicated to the promotion of one of a community’s most important landscapes: its waterfront. Her devotion to waterfronts can be measured in decades of leadership and commitment. Ann’s efforts have had a lasting and consequential impact on how the profession and local leaders think about their waterfronts. Her many advocacy efforts through the Waterfront Center helped change the negative narrative concerning many waterfronts and led to revitalization efforts that featured new waterfront developments all over the world.

Ann’s countless contributions to practice include a host of activities. She authored or co-authored many of the important early guides on waterfront revitalization that helped change perceptions about their value for community leaders. She has provided advisory services to dozens of communities around the world about improvements to their waterfronts, leaving a lasting impression on waterfront landscapes and our collective thinking about them. Her Urban Waterfronts conference has brought leaders and professionals from around the world to gather annually for decades and celebrate accomplishments and innovations on waterfronts. In addition, the Excellence on the Waterfront Awards have inspired thousands of communities to improve their waterfronts and learn from the best projects globally. Ann’s work has been an important and inspirational model for waterfront designers all over the world.

Over the years, the Waterfront Center has been an important partner for the AIA’s Center for Communities by Design in its own work on waterfronts around the world. It is my privilege and honor to support this nomination.

Sincerely,

Joel Mills
Senior Director
Center for Communities by Design
joelmills@aia.org
January 28, 2018

Honorary Membership Nomination
c/o Terry Poltrack, ASLA
636 Eye Street, NW, Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: Strong Professional Endorsement of Nomination of Ann E. Breen, Co-Director, and President, of The Waterfront Center, For Honorary Membership in ASLA

Dear ASLA Jury:

I am pleased to be in a position to provide the subject strong professional endorsement for Ann E. Breen, by personal knowledge of, and directly working with, Ms. Breen many times since we met in 1979. (Let me emphasize here that I am also writing a similar letter on behalf of strongly endorsing Richard Rigby as well. Please consider that Ann and Dick are a Team—like the Wright Brothers and other two-person teams, and as I hope you will come to agree, both very much deserve such recognition). In 1979, Ann was working, with Dick Rigby, at NOAA’s Office of Coastal Zone Management in Washington, DC. Ann then served as its Waterfront Coordinator. I and a few of my team from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey’s Waterfront Redevelopment Study, met them there for a “brown bag” lunch presenting our interest in promoting mixed used redevelopment of now obsolete waterfront rail, industrial, and railroad properties along the urban waterfronts of our Bi-State region.

In particular, we reviewed our work and plans for redeveloping the, by then, obsolete breakbulk cargo Hoboken Marine Terminal, and adjacent properties into a mixed-use waterfront development featuring public access as a defining component. Ann had more than just a general interest in Hoboken, since she had earlier done a graduate paper on Hoboken’s waterfront.

Ann and Dick sensitized us from that first meeting to including landscape architects in our planning and development teams—to enhance the quality of public space and access components of our waterfront developments. I went on to spend the rest of my career at the Port Authority and thereafter as well, focusing on promoting balanced waterfront redevelopment, and regional
development projects that reflected the input and participation of landscape architects in such work.

This career included direct oversight of large scale waterfront developments from concept through planning, development, and operations, and management of other regional economic development projects as well, until my retiring from the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey in 1996. Thus, about 25 years of my career involved working with/overseeing work done by architects, including landscape architects, engineers and others. Thereafter, I soon served as Special Waterfront Counsel to the City of Hoboken until 2000, and in 2000 began serving as Special Waterfront Adviser to Hon. Mayor Keimi Harada, Minato-Ku, Tokyo until 2003.

I was fortunate to have agreed to serve on the Board of Advisors of The Waterfront Center (“the Center”) since its founding by Ann and Dick in 1981, participating and speaking at many of The Waterfront Center’s International Waterfront Conferences, encouraging the establishment, under Ann and Dick’s leadership, of the Excellence on the Waterfront Awards Program, serving as a member of its first Jury, along with for example, the late David Wallace, founding partner of Wallace, Roberts and Todd.

Over time, I found an increased focus on landscape architecture at these conferences and in the awards which also included recognition of international projects. I am thankful having been a part of The Waterfront Center’s promotion of balanced waterfront development worldwide and to be part of supporting Ann and Dick’s educational work, including emphasizing the importance of including landscape architectural elements in waterfront planning and development and sensitivity to maintenance issues as well, and dealing with the challenges from climate change and storm damages.

Ann’s contributions include her having given many, many presentations nationally and internationally, providing consulting to numerous cities and communities over the years, as summarized on The Waterfront Center’s website, and with Dick Rigby, writing many pieces and two major books aimed at providing a font of information for use in understanding good and “not so good” waterfront public space planning and development.

My decades long involvement with Ann and Dick helped in enhancing my abilities to teach others as well. For example, in 1990, on behalf of the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey, I represented the USA in speaking on waterfront redevelopment in Yokohama and Tokyo, Japan. In 1993, I served as a Juror for the International Academy of Architecture (“IAI”) and International Forum for Young Architects in Kobe, Japan. My co-Jurors included famed Japanese Architect Kiyonori Kikutake—the champion and architect of the Edo Tokyo Museum.
the French architect who designed the Imperial Hotel in Tokyo, and architect Boris Stolov, also a former Mayor of Sophia, Bulgaria, among others I was proud to serve with.

When then Hon. Mayor Keimi Harada, a noted Japanese architect, who served as Secretariat at the 1993 IAI Forum, requested my service as waterfront adviser in 2000, he knew of my involvement with Ann and Dick’s work, and himself became more involved in the work of The Waterfront Center as well.

More recently, The Waterfront Center co-sponsored the 2016 “Water Edge Symposium for Waterfront Development Leaders,” in Auckland, New Zealand—based upon the Auckland’s waterfront leaders being so impressed with the work of Ann and Dick and their influence on other professionals in the field. In Auckland, I spoke and participated, as did Ann and Dick. Among our contributions there included our work as part of teams to advise a community faced with a proposal for a regional transportation corridor that would literally block the waterfront. Each of the teams came up with ideas for the local community that would address transportation objectives of the regional agency, but in a way to include landscape architectural, and public access, sensitivity, and components, as part of possible alternative implementation options.

I would hope by this point, I have convinced you to recognize Ann—and Dick in my similar letter—as an Honorary Member of ASLA. But, just in case, the following should “put the icing on the cake” as they say. What follows is a true story of how the Region and Hoboken came to be blessed by the preservation of an old marine cargo FIVE ACRE pier over water, as a public largely passive type park area—strongly influenced by the work of Ann Breen and Dick Rigby—and contrary to fairly advanced other governmental plans for Hoboken Pier A!

Working under a grant from the NJDEP, Ann and Dick advised on public space goals relating to the Hoboken Waterfront Development before implementation of fairly advanced plans. I was in charge of that this Development for the Port Authority at the time. Ann and Dick took the position opposing any buildings for office or housing on Pier A, which was a major part of plan arrived at through a thorough public participation process—and what City Officials wanted to assure enough revenue producing uses as part a well thought out plan including ample public access and parks areas, including on Pier A itself too.

The issue was their view that the entire Pier A—about 5 acres—must be preserved as open space/passive park type activities. Needless to say, while Ann and Dick were good friends and colleagues of mine at that time for over ten years, as I served on The Waterfront Center Board, I was not happy with their position, at least initially—it further delayed the project and from a Regional Planning perspective did not respect the fact that the immediately adjacent rail/bus and
ferry facilities along with then planned, now in existence “light rail,” made Pier A the most logical place to concentrate the needed revenue producing uses of the development and would have allowed a larger development with less proportional local transportation impacts.

Some, not all to be clear, of Hoboken’s citizens did not want taller buildings and densities like those found acceptable in the adjacent City of Jersey City—so achieving enough revenue producing development on the remainder of the site was challenging. In the end, we changed the plan and Pier A today sits as a public park area surrounded by water. I came to feel that we were all fortunate, even though it was painful at the time for me professionally, to have a rare five-acre park area on a pier for posterity! Dick and Ann both contributed to forces that lead to this result. I point this out to buttress that my recommendation of each of them for Honorary Membership in ASLA is “unbiased,” even though I certainly count Ann and Dick as good friends, and yes, I have known them for all these years. As a professional, I respected their view then and now, and have come to appreciate how they helped contribute to a wonderful urban park result. (Not just Hoboken residents benefit from the Hoboken Pier A park—it is adjacent to that major regional transportation center, so folks from all over our region benefit!)

Of interest, the “South Waterfront” in Hoboken is reported by The Port Authority of NY and NJ as one of its successful financial investments, and has been cited by many as including very well-designed waterfront public access and waterfront landscape architecture components.

So, based on the above “cake with icing,” I would hope you would agree to make Ann Breen an Honorary Member of ASLA. If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact me at 201-291-0700, ext. 106.

Thank you for this opportunity to share with you my basis for strongly endorsing Ann E. Breen, and Dick Rigby, for recognition as an Honorary Member of ASLA.

Very Truly Yours,

L. Michael Krieger

L. Michael Krieger, Esq., J.D., M.B.A.
**Retired General Manager, Regional & Economic Development
Port Authority of New York and New Jersey;
**Balanced Waterfront Development Advocate/Adviser