

## **Honorary Membership Nomination Narrative**

Nominee: Carol Ross Barney, FAIA

Nominee's Address: Ross Barney Architects, 10 West Hubbard Street

City / State / Zip: Chicago, Illinois 60654

Phone: 312-897-0600

Nominator: Terry Warriner Ryan, FASLA

Carol Ross Barney, FAIA, has been in the vanguard of civic space design since founding Ross Barney Architects in 1981. With a career that spans over 40 years, Carol has made significant contributions to the built environment, the profession, and architectural education. As an architect, urbanist, mentor, and educator, she has relentlessly advocated that excellent design is a right, not a privilege. Her body of work represents this ethos and occupies a unique place within the panorama of contemporary architecture, being exclusively composed of work in the public realm.

Attending the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign, Carol received a Bachelor of Architecture degree in 1971. A week after graduation, Carol and her husband, Alan Barney, a botanist, embarked on their assignment with the United States Peace Corps. Working with the fledgling Costa Rican National Park Service, their mission was to assist in the protection and preservation of Costa Rica's amazingly diverse and threatened ecology. Carol's projects included a master plan for coral reef protection at Parque Nacional Cahuita, restoration of the historic hacienda at Parque Nacional Santa Rosa, and worker housing at Parque Nacional Volcan Poas.

Following her service in the Peace Corps, Carol joined a few notable Chicago firms before venturing out on her own. Here is where Carol was able to uphold a deep commitment to the role the built environment plays in life quality. With projects that vary in type and scale, she has integrated a collaborative process of design with Landscape Architects and a wide range of disciplines. These ventures have produced some of the most compelling results where the integration of building and landscape blend to create a cohesive user experience. Additionally, they have included some of the field's most talented studios, such as: Jacobs / Ryan Associates, Sasaki, Oslund Associates, Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Turenscape, and Olin, to name a few.

As early as 1993 and 1994, these collaborations were honored with awards from the Illinois Chapter of ASLA, with a Merit Award for an addition to the Barrington Area Library and an Honor Award for the Gurnee Remote Switching Station. At Gurnee, the metaphorical landscape that was conceived out of their discussions evoked the cosmic power of communications through the use of seven boulders of diminishing size making the approach at once modern, geometric, minimalist, and in context. This early work was featured on the cover of Architectural Record magazine and the cover of landscape architect Steven L. Cantor's book, *Contemporary Trends in Landscape Architecture* (c. 1997).

The Oklahoma City Federal Building broke new ground for the design of a new building and landscape after the devastation that was witnessed on April 19, 1995. 168 people perished in the aftermath of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building. Collaborating with Sasaki as the Landscape Architect, Carol was selected as the Lead Designer by the General Services Administration to replace the facility.

The building site is a transition zone between the Central Business District and the North Downtown neighborhood. Security design is paramount to the Federal employees and its neighbors. Building mass, glazing inside the courtyard, and bollards help to maintain a sense of security. This new facility is about the future, seeking to reunite the federal community and stand as a symbol of freedom.

The University of Minnesota Duluth became the next local to feature collaboration between Carol and a Landscape Architect, this time Tom Oslund, FASLA, FAAR '92. The results are two buildings that have become contextual icons on campus. The James I Swenson Science building, completed in 2007, received three awards from the Minnesota Chapter of ASLA and a national honor for its integration of natural plantings that provided a deeper layer of education to students on campus. Additionally, the James I Swenson Civil Engineering building, completed in 2010, received an Honor Award from the Minnesota Chapter of ASLA.

In 2010, Carol joined an esteemed jury to select the team that would transform one of America's first urban national park sites, the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial, which includes the iconic Gateway Arch in St. Louis. Jury

members included Laurie Olin, RLA, FASLA (*Partner, Olin*), Robert Campbell (*Boston Globe Architecture Critic*), Gerald Early (*Professor, Washington University in St. Louis*), Denis P. Galvin (*former Deputy Director of the National Park Service*), Alex Krieger (*Founding Principal, Chan Krieger Sieniewicz*), David C. Leland (*Managing Director, Leland Consulting Group*) and Cara McCarty (*Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum Curator*). The jury interviewed five teams, which included Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, PWP Landscape Architecture, Skidmore Owings and Merrill, Hargraves, and Bjarke Ingels Group; eventually selecting MVVA for the commission.

Built in 2014, the Bloomingdale Trail removed busy freight traffic from the street and became an essential element to establishing Chicago as the Midwest's industrial capital. Raised 16 feet, the rail was slowly decommissioned until Friends of the Bloomingdale Trail began advocating for its reuse. In 2012, Carol's studio collaborated with Michael Van Valkenburgh and Arup to envision a framework for the rail. Located North West of Chicago's Loop, the three mile long park literally and metaphorically bridges neighborhoods and weaves diverse communities together. A robust public participation process included more than 650 community members that participated in a four-day long charrette. Engaging the economic and socially diverse residents in a unified process of visioning created a solid foundation on which the prospective park could breathe new life. Opened in 2015, with MVVA leading the framework realization, the park has been effortlessly embraced by the community and city at large; providing much needed green, open, and recreation space to residents. The project has gone on to win the National Planning Excellence Award for Urban Design from the APA, the Burnham Award for Excellence in Planning from the Metropolitan Planning Council and the Daniel Burnham Award for Planning from AIA Illinois.

For over 15 years, Carol has been building a strong backing of support for the regeneration of the main branch of the Chicago River. Throughout the process, Carol has worked with the city to think beyond conventions of what civic space can and should look like, designing a progressive urban park that will play host to residents and visitors for at least the next century. This collaboration has taken place with Jacobs / Ryan Associates and Sasaki. Designing for this unknown future has allowed for the exploration of new relations between city and river; an interwoven coexistence of nature and man. The space has won numerous awards, including a Global Excellence Award from the Urban Land Institute and an AIA Honor Award for Urbanism and Planning, and has been the topic of various case-studies by cities worldwide. When the final phase opened in 2016, the culmination of a plan drafted by Daniel Burnham in 1909 had been realized in the contemporary context of Carol's, and her collaborator's, urban thinking. *Metropolis Magazine* might have said it best: "Over the past decade, the architect has moved beyond the design of buildings toward stewardship and restoration of urban ecology", dubbing her "Chicago's New Daniel Burnham".

Most recently, Carol has continued her commitment to urban waterways through her work with the Metropolitan Planning Council, City of Chicago, and Friends of the Chicago River. In 2016, these organizations, with the assistance of Carol's studio, released a vision to unlock the potential of the Chicago, Calumet, and Des Plaines River and riverfronts. The vision focused on a series of place-based examinations and identified a series of typologies that occur throughout the river system. From suburban context where the connection between office park, transportation, and forest preserve is knit together by a riverfront trail to the Post-industrial south canal that has seen decades of misuse and now flows through thriving residential neighborhoods that offer a unique relationship between river, production, and commerce. System wide in its scope and recommendations, *Great Rivers Chicago* is the start of an evolving perception and deep appreciation of Chicago's second shoreline, and this early conceptual planning will undoubtedly lead to many projects for landscape architects in the future.

Carol's ideas and projects have been recognized by entities and publications from around the world. Her portfolio of work has been exhibited in Chicago, New York, Washington D.C. and San Francisco, and has received more than 60 major awards, including 8 ASLA honors. In her words "My dreams are for the future of cities... places where we live together. I want to help us understand the transformative effect space has on human interaction. Good design is a right, not a privilege."

I have known and worked with Carol for more than thirty years. I know her to be an architect of vision and determination, while at the same time knowing that through collaboration with knowledgeable landscape architects, her work takes on increased meaning and vibrancy. For all that she does for our profession, it is my great pleasure to nominate Carol Ross Barney FAIA for Honorary Membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects.



**OFFICE OF THE MAYOR**

**CITY OF CHICAGO**

**RAHM EMANUEL**  
MAYOR

January 6, 2017

ASLA Board of Trustees  
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors Coordinator  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

**Re: Support letter for Honorary Membership: Carol Ross Barney**

Dear ASLA Board of Trustees:

As Mayor, and on behalf of the City of Chicago – a City known for its history of innovative public architecture – I am pleased to offer my support to Carol Ross Barney for Honorary Membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Chicago is home to people of all backgrounds and faiths and thanks to Carol's enduring architectural leadership, Chicago has witnessed impressive architectural improvements in a variety of multi-use areas. Today, residents can take advantage of functional urban open spaces and transit stations as well as interact differently in places of learning and worship because of her efforts. She has worked tirelessly to provide Chicagoans and visitors alike with exceptional public architecture.

Her contributions as an Architect on Landscape oriented projects such as the Chicago Riverwalk and 606 / Bloomingdale Trail have bolstered communities across the city. Both of these civic spaces have created opportunities for residents and neighborhoods to come together and enjoy open space. From providing opportunities for cycling, walking, and kayaking to moments of quiet reflection, both projects are transformative and highlight our City's commitment to conservation, stewardship, and planning.

In 2015, I appointed Carol to the Great Rivers Chicago Leadership Commission tasked with creating an action agenda on the future of the Chicago, Calumet, and Des Plaines rivers. Great Rivers Chicago was an unprecedented effort to spur a coordinated long-term vision and plan for economic and community development along Chicago's riverfronts, hinged on the success of the Chicago Riverwalk expansion. When her studio joined the Metropolitan Planning Council and Friends of the Chicago River to draft a vision that outlines key opportunities for our rivers, we learned there are many ways to make our rivers an integral part of the City's fabric and strengthen the connections between our neighborhoods.

Carol Ross Barney's projects and designs have made such an indelible impact because she has long understood that for Chicago to be a global city, it must always honor its rich history as a city of neighborhoods. Carol is valued as a passionate and diligent individual who has contributed greatly to the City of Chicago and its residents by maintaining and building on the beauty and architectural heritage of our City. So, it is with great enthusiasm that I lend my support to this nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Rahm Emanuel".

Mayor

# PERKINS+WILL

December 19, 2016

ASLA Board of Trustees  
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors Coordinator  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

**Re: Support letter for Honorary Membership: Carol Ross Barney, FAIA**

Dear Ms. Mitchell and the ASLA Board of Trustees:

It is a great pleasure and honor for me to write this letter in support of Carol Ross Barney's nomination for Honorary Membership in the American Society of Landscape Architects. As an Honorary ASLA, I know Carol's achievements and influence are always centered on a holistic approach to design that includes the landscape that buildings occupy.

I have known and worked with Carol for over 20 years as a client and colleague. She is a pioneer that has produced a portfolio of lasting and meaningful influence in the public realm, bringing a unique design sensibility that blends architecture and the landscape. Carol's mindset expresses our humanistic values as a society, always looking forward, pushing boundaries, and representing how the built environment can positively impact our lives.

Carol served as a GSA Peer Professional from the very birth of the Design Excellence Program. Initiated to raise the quality of federal architecture, and by example, improve public buildings, and their landscapes, the program has formed the bedrock of innovation in federal building, and by extension, has allowed Carol to exercise her strong belief that design excellence is a right, not a privilege. Carol participated in every facet of the Program; serving as a private sector peer, juror for architect selections, panel member for the GSA Design Awards Program, and most honorably, as a Lead Designer.

Under the GSA's Design Excellence Program, Carol became the first woman architect to design a Federal Office Building. The Oklahoma City Federal Building is a striking icon that speaks of a positive future for the community and nation, in the shadow of great tragedy. With her skillful hand, this high profile project not only respected the profound nature of the commission but embraced the most current and forward thinking technology of the time. As one of the first buildings to integrate strict security measures, and actually had many secure features imbedded in the landscape and building design, Carol lead progressive conversations about architecture as defense; transparent and open, yet secure. The building incorporated some of the most ambitious sustainability objectives ever included in a federal project, pioneering a commitment to environmental stewardship before LEED Certification was a popular trend. The GSA has since articulated its own policies on minimum sustainability, partially inspired by Carol's ability to satisfy complex programmatic, diplomatic, and budgetary imperatives while still achieving a high level of success in aesthetics and sustainability.

What I find most remarkable is a nickname coined in a 2004 editorial on Carol's work, "the people's architect." I cannot think of a more fitting title. Her sensitivity, compassion, and process of inclusion create buildings and places that listen. These public spaces, in turn have, become gathering grounds for interaction, activism, and reflection; effortlessly embraced by the communities they serve.

PERKINS+WILL

I enthusiastically encourage the Trustees of the American Society of Landscape Architects to recognize Carol Ross Barney, FAIA as an Honorary member.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Edward A. Feiner". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, looping initial "E".

Edward A. Feiner, FAIA, Honorary ASLA  
Principal



# OLIN

ASLA Board of Trustees  
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors Coordinator  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

RE: Support letter for Honorary Membership

16 December 2016

Dear Colleagues,

I wish to support the Nomination of Carol Ross Barney to become an honorary member of the ASLA. She is a distinguished architect who cares about the broader environment and has been an ally and collaborator with landscape architects throughout her career. As a Peace Corps member fresh from architecture school she helped Costa Rica develop its fledgling national park system, contributing to three of their first and still highly important parks. In her teaching over the years she has instilled a concern for the environment and sustainability in architecture students that is complimented by her own award winning work. I can personally attest to her sensibility and collaborative nature having worked with her on an important landmark environmental project at the Ohio State University and as a fellow juror on the Jefferson Memorial (St Louis Arch) grounds competition few years ago. Her deep care and understanding of the urban and landscape issues, ranging from practical and technical to those of heritage and aesthetics were outstanding, as was her counsel in our deliberations. Most recently Carol and her firm have successfully concluded several phases of a truly remarkable landmark collaboration with one of our field's most distinguished firms and a number of outstanding engineers, that of the Chicago River walk that will surely garner a basket full of awards and the envy and admiration of cities across the country. The American Society of Landscape Architects should welcome Carol Ross Barney, a spirited and worthy colleague, as an honorary member of our Society.

Sincerely,

Laurie D. Olin, FASLA

January 6, 2017

ASLA Board of Trustees  
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors Coordinator  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

re: Support Letter for Membership: Carol Ross Barney, FAIA

To the ASLA Board of Trustees,

As a fellow of the ASLA, I am writing this letter in support of Carol Ross Barney, FAIA, for the ASLA honorary membership. I have worked together with Carol for more than a decade on notable projects such as the University of Minnesota-Duluth Swenson Science Building and the Civil Engineering Building and can attest to her exceptional collaborative skill and contribution to the field of Landscape Architecture.

Carol's practice with her firm Ross Barney Architects has consistently produced award winning design. Working together, we have received two national awards for work on the Swenson Science Building and a Honor Award winner for the Civil Engineering Building, both at the University of Minnesota – Duluth. She has served on highly regarded selection juries, including as the 2010 selection committee that would choose the team to transform the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial. As a practitioner for over 40 years, Carol has made an indelible mark on the profession of Landscape Architecture with her exceptional collaborative skill, her great respect for design, and as an advocate for the practice as a whole.

Because of these qualities and many others, it is my pleasure to recommend that Carol Ross Barney, FAIA, become an honorary ASLA member. I believe that she has demonstrated through her work and lifelong advocacy that she is a deserving candidate for this position.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Tom Oslund', with a large, stylized flourish at the end.

Tom Oslund, FASLA, FAAR '92  
Principal  
oslund.and.assoc.

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January 12, 2017

ASLA Board of Trustees  
**C/O Carolyn Mitchell, Honors Coordinator**  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001

**Re: Carol Ross-Barney Letter of Support - Honorary Membership**

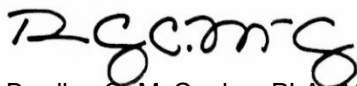
Fellow Board of Trustee Members:

It is with great enthusiasm, I, with the support of the Illinois Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ILASLA), strongly back the nomination of Carol Ross-Barney, FAIA and Founding Partner and President of Ross Barney Architects, for Honorary Membership within ASLA. Her 40+ year campaign for design excellence as an architect, urbanist, mentor, educator and global citizen, coupled with her unyielding commitment to the profession of Landscape Architecture, make her the ideal candidate for honorary membership.

Gaining an understanding of the role the built environment plays in life quality during her work with the Peace Corps, Carol forged a design foundation based on inclusion and collaboration that continues to benefit the communities in which her work resides. From the design and implementation of a new river walk in the heart of Chicago's downtown, working alongside Sasaki, or the reimagining of the abandoned Bloomingdale rail line in Chicago's northwest side with Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates, Carol and her team have continuously elevated the awareness of the profession by ensuring continued collaboration with Landscape Architects to make our world a better place to live!

I hope that this letter of support and nomination, coupled with Carol's proven track record, will help elevate our appreciation for all she has done for the profession. I strongly encourage the Board of Trustees to recognize Carol Ross-Barney with Honorary Membership to ASLA to thank her for a lifetime of dedication to our craft.

Sincerely,



Bradley C. McCauley, PLA, ASLA, CDT  
Trustee, ILASLA