

Honorary Membership Nomination Narrative

Nominee: J. Gregory Poole, Jr.

Nominee's Address: 2635 Askew Lane

City/State/Zip: Raleigh, NC 27608

Phone: 919-417-1026 (cell), 919-781-3383 (home)

Nominator: North Carolina Chapter Trustee Timothy Maloney, ASLA

Gregory Poole is a focused corporate executive and more recent urban design and conservation sensitive advocate. Initially he entered his family's business: Gregory Poole Equipment Company, a Caterpillar dealership. Thereafter he also became part owner of Waste Industries USA which, under his guidance, features landfill methane extraction and a compressed natural gas vehicle fleet. Eventually he became a passionate leader in the numerous community organizations he has served.

Perhaps the first illustration of his appreciation of the importance of a community's fabric was the repurposing of his family's "Oak View" homestead in Raleigh. In existence since 1829, it was owned by the Poole's since 1940. Seventy-two acres were sold to the County for use as a satellite office park in 1984. Concerns arose about the unique history of the site, and a lengthy review process began. Ultimately, twelve acres [home, pecan grove, outbuildings, road frontage, etc] were set aside as a public historic park, and listed on the National Registry in 1991. This was his first advocacy experience at the intersection of historic preservation, landscape conservation, and public activism.

Since 2006 he has been the founder, chief fundraiser, and Chairman of Dix Visionaries and their nonprofit mission: the Dix Park Initiative. The arc of this effort parallels similar examples across the country and centuries.

In 1848 the Dix property was authorized by the NC General Assembly to become a mental hospital campus. It grew to 2000+ acres, mostly for patient run agricultural operations, immediately south of the original planned Capital City limits. Over the past fifty years, most of its acreage had been transferred to other State purposes [Interstate Highway, NC State University Campus expansion, and State Farmers Market]. The outdated hospital and administrative buildings were closed and replaced by new facilities on another site, and the 300+ remaining acres were being decommissioned for future designation as State surplus.

Not unexpectedly, public interest emerged for conservation of the remaining Dix Hospital campus for continued public use as parkland. With his deep roots in a

multi-generational Raleigh family, Mr. Poole understood the opportunity's quality of life significance. He mined his business and social networks to create Dix Visionaries, negotiated a loose coalition with several like-minded interest groups, pursued City government priority for a "destination park", kept public interest engaged, lobbied the General Assembly, and negotiated with the Governor. Ultimately he saw the initiative succeed, and the City acquired the campus in 2015.

In the process his Dix Visionaries collaborated with other groups to host a Dix Celebration event in 2011 to keep the initiative focused. A key element of the program was screening of one of the PBS documentaries on Frederick Law Olmsted highlighting Central Park, as well as an NCASLA presentation. The audience of 250+ community leaders left the evening's program with a clearer vision of the possibility within their reach; and the roots of landscape architecture.

With the City now owning the Dix campus, Mr. Poole's attention has turned to the multi decade process of transitioning the former hospital facilities and campus into a park, and navigating the minefield of competing interests seeking to influence the process. Concurrently he is continuing to seek out pledges of private contributions to expedite the process. The City has begun a public visioning exercise, to be followed by formal planning and design processes, and more opportunities to refine the destination park vision.

Another Poole family business was the McGregor Development Company. In the '70s-'80s the company undertook a number of large residential and mixed use developments throughout the region, and utilized the services of landscape architects to accomplish their strategy. By offering superior design, seamlessly integrated amenities, and quality construction, a new market niche was created and satisfied. For example, greenway corridors were included within their projects before they were required as part of local government infrastructure. The resounding acceptance of these features gave local government officials confidence to adopt communitywide greenway system plans. This is a subtle, but critical example of the influence Mr. Poole has had, and leadership that has led to Raleigh and the Region being featured in the 2016 biennial Benchmarking Report on Biking and Walking in the United States", produced by the Alliance for Biking and Walking, and funded by the CDC.

In 2013 J. Gregory Poole, Jr. was inducted into the Raleigh Hall of Fame for his significant contributions to the City through his business and civic service. The examples reported herein document his personal and professional alignment with the principles and policies that are also held by the profession of landscape architecture. His commitment to the Dix Park concept and its coming to an orderly fruition is adding another example to the chapter about historic hospital campuses and their roles in the future of vibrant and functional urban areas. This and the other cited references to his leadership and outreach over time make him an excellent candidate for Honorary ASLA Membership.

Mike Mullis
President NCASLA
5201 Albemarle Drive
Oriental, NC 28571

Dear President Mullis:

It is a pleasure to support the nomination of J. Gregory Poole, Jr. as an Honorary Member in the ASLA. He is a long time member of this nonprofit organization, and currently serves on its Advisory Board.

In 1999 the Triangle Greenways Council addressed the importance of the 300+ acre Dix Hospital campus in the center of the Capital City. [An existing greenway corridor and public trail runs along a stream on the northern boundary of the campus.] The TGC's report: "Walnut Creek and Rocky Branch Greenway Loop" looked at the surrounding area, and drew attention to future greenway expansion opportunities. Thus, there was synergy several years later when it was clear that the 160 year old hospital would be closed, and the green gem of its campus might be in jeopardy.

Greg Poole is a native son of Raleigh and successful businessman who emerged as the creator and leader of Dix Visionaries, advocates for conservation of the campus and its most historic structures. In discussions with him in 2012, he agreed that a high visibility event would be advantageous at that time. After his separate appeals to the Triangle Greenways Council, NC Sierra Club, and NCASLA the four organizations agreed to jointly sponsor a Dix Park Celebration at the NC Museum of Art. The outcome of the event was positive, with almost two hundred community opinion shapers energized and better informed about the traditional concept of what might be considered a "destination park".

Thereafter, there was greater clarity and commitment to pursue acquisition of the property from the State. Complex negotiations followed with the Administration, followed by exhaustive lobbying of the Legislature, but the deal was finally done. The City acquired the Dix campus for \$52M in 2015. Now, everyone's attention is turning to related planning, design, etc exercises.

Long before the original greenway corridor system concept spread from Raleigh, throughout the Triangle region and beyond, Greg Poole had already embraced it. Through his McGregor Development Company, greenways were included in their large-scale projects. Integrating them along riparian corridors, the systems set the communities apart, providing multiple amenities including those identified by the more recent fields of nature's services and macro-scale green infrastructure; plus recreation and non-motorized transportation opportunities. These examples were endorsements, demystifying greenways and creating a positive demand. They

advanced the acceptance of greenways as a concept, reasonable land use pattern, and appropriate public policy. Thus, publically adopted greenway system plans became the standard expectation. His market-based decision to include greenway corridors in the design of his products has increased the rate at which continuous and interconnected greenway systems have attained a regional significance.

The success of the Dix Park initiative has been a multi year initiative, culminating a lifetime of leadership by Greg Poole. In the process he has exhibited an intrinsic consistency with the policies at the foundation of Landscape Architecture. His strategic and relentless efforts have resulted in the repurposing of an iconic feature of the city's core, without the loss of its inherent values to the urban landscape and population of the greater region. The sense of place will remain, in contrast to the outcome of too many other similar challenges across the country where opportunities were lost. Thanks to J. Gregory Poole, Jr., Raleigh's achievement is a significant example of note beyond its borders, and has been a service to the profession of landscape architecture.

Sincerely,

William L. Flournoy, Jr. FASLA
President

**The American Society of Landscape Architects
North Carolina Chapter**

5201 Blue Ridge Road #205
Raleigh, NC 27612

Attention: *R. Michael Mullis, PLA / ASLA
President / NC Chapter*

Reference: *Mr. Gregory Poole Jr.
Honorary ASLA Membership Nomination*

Mr. Mullis:

As Chairman of the Dix Visionaries, Mr. Gregory Poole Jr. led the fight to secure a 306 acre parcel of land with extraordinary beauty and a rich history, overlooking the City of Raleigh for future generations as a public space and destination park. This land, known as Dix Hill, was owned by the State of North Carolina and was being considered for sale to the highest bidder. His perseverance, energy and deep commitment to his community galvanized the public on a grassroots level, engaged business and community leaders and ultimately helped convince state lawmakers including Governor's Beverly Purdue and Pat McCrory to release this land from state control and allow it to become Raleigh's and North Carolina's Central Park.

His commitment to the idea that this land should be part of the public realm spanned over ten years and without his leadership it might have never happened.

Mr. Poole understands those attributes that are critical to the health of a community including the value of open space, the importance of history and the benefits of connectivity. Further, he understood that Dix Hill, as a public space, could contribute to making Raleigh a healthier community on a variety of levels.

For many of the same reasons Dorothea Dix, a nurse and advocate for the humane treatment of the mentally ill, selected this hilltop property for North Carolina's Psychiatric Hospital in 1848, Mr. Poole recognized that the conservation and careful development of this land could improve the health of the community. Dix Hill could provide residents access to the natural world as well as the history of their community, contribute to environmental quality, strengthen the urban fabric by connecting neighborhoods, North Carolina State University, the State Farmer's Market and downtown Raleigh and provide a place where residents of the city and the state could come together for events and interact with each other unencumbered by their particular place in society.

At a point when the outcome of the Dix Park initiative was very much in question a gathering of community opinion shapers was held at the NC Art Museum in December of 2012. Mr. Poole addressed the crowd who had come together to celebrate the vision for Dix Hill and said..."Through creative master planning and execution, Dix Park will deliver millions of visitors to experience what Dorothea Dix herself espoused", "There is power in nature." He went on to state that the future park would become an "economic engine" and as any good leader would, he acknowledged the commitment of many supporters and leaders throughout the community that contributed to the effort. However, Mr. Poole was the catalyst, the unwavering champion, the relentless visionary promoting and advocating for the conservation of this idyllic and pastoral land for future generations and the importance of it not getting gobbled up by speculative developers for short term gain and profits. He recognized that this was truly a once in a lifetime opportunity for his community and he understood the long term benefits and value that Dix Hill presented.

On that December evening in 2012, it was my pleasure as incoming President of the North Carolina Chapter of ASLA to present Mr. Poole and the Dix Visionaries Group a resolution from NCASLA supporting the vision of Dix Hill as a public park space. In doing so I cited several adopted policies of ASLA which guide our profession and that I felt had relevance to the future of Dix Hill. Among them were the following:

- Every state, regional and local government should continue to build on our legacy of parks to preserve **lands of significance** for future generations.
- The quality of a community's culture, buildings, monuments, infrastructure, and parks reflects on its civic pride and values. Projects that **contribute to the public realm** should have a lasting effect on both the community and the environment.
- Communities are more liveable when they strive for and provide places for **social equity**.
- The visual landscape's significance is its contribution to our spiritual enrichment, cognitive development, aesthetic experience and **psychological renewal**.

In 1848, here in Raleigh, North Carolina one woman's concern for the health and care of North Carolinians resulted in the facilities on Dix Hill. It wasn't just the hospital. Ms. Dix understood the importance of nature in healing and health and one can easily understand why she chose this land.

Over the last 10 years, one man has led the fight and consistently advocated for the future of this significant parcel of land and the contributions it can make to the public realm, improving livability and social equality, lifting up the spirit, providing opportunity for a variety of experiences and psychological renewal.

In his closing remarks in December of 2012, Mr. Poole quoted Ghandi, providing hope to the crowd as the deal with the state to secure the property was not yet complete and there were battles left in the fight for Dix Hill....."First they will ignore you, then they will laugh at you, then they will fight you, and then you will win." In the Spring of 2015, Mr. Poole's persistence paid off and the vision became secure with the sale of Dix Hill by the state to the City of Raleigh.

His spirit and strength of commitment to his community has fueled a vision for Dix Hill which is not yet physical but philosophical. This philosophy is consistent with what we believe in as Landscape Architects and Dix Hill will greatly influence the identity of the community and the lives of community residents whether that community is an adjacent neighborhood, the City of Raleigh, Wake County or the State of North Carolina.

Throughout the campaign for Dix Hill Mr. Poole involved NCASLA. The subject of Dix Hill became a part of NCASLA's legislative agenda and the profession received positive exposure in support of the Dix Visionaries mission.

For his persistence and vision on behalf of the future of his community, his leadership and his advocacy of and commitment to those principles and tenants that we hold dear as Landscape Architects, I propose that the American Society of Landscape Architects recognize Mr. Gregory Poole Jr. as an Honorary Member.

Respectfully submitted,



Brian H. Starkey, PLA / ASLA
Past President NCASLA



JERRY TURNER & ASSOCIATES, INC.

Landscape Architecture Land Planning Environmental Design

Principals:

Jerry M. Turner, FASLA
William B. Hood, ASLA

905 Jones Franklin Road
Raleigh, North Carolina 27606

Mr. R. Michael Mullis
President ASLA
5201 Blue Ridge Road
Suite 205
Raleigh, NC 27612

Dear Mr. Mullis:

It is my pleasure to nominate Mr. Gregory Poole to Honorary membership in the American Society of Landscape Architecture.

I have known and worked with Mr. Poole for many years and have completed numerous projects with him. The projects have ranged from Mr. Poole's private residence to master and land planning for multi-family properties.

Mr. Poole has always been hands on in the planning of his projects. As a developer, his attention to detail, both from an aesthetic and environmental standpoint is unsurpassed. Long before sustainability and conservation were required of developers he understood how well designed projects using these principles were a benefit to his customers as well as the larger community. His attention to both visual and environmental concerns was always in the forefront of the planning of his projects. His understanding of the importance of these design principles placed him on the leading edge of bringing new, contemporary subdivision design to the area, setting high standards for the region. Of the many developers I have worked with over the years he is one of the best.

I consider Mr. Poole to be one of the most honest and trustworthy of all our clients and would not hesitate to give him any recommendation.

Sincerely,

JERRY TURNER AND ASSOCIATES, INC.

Jerry M. Turner, FASLA
President



City Of Raleigh
North Carolina

Nancy McFarlane
Mayor

Mr. R. Michael Mullis, President ASLA
5201 Blue Ridge Road #205
Raleigh, NC 27612

Dear Mr. Mullis,

The establishment of Raleigh as a planned city is aligned around the importance of parks and open spaces. This dates back to the 1792 William Christmas plan and the City's original public squares. Our beginnings and foundation as a capital city is built around the idea of public spaces, common grounds for all to enjoy. Today Raleigh has one of the best Parks Systems in the country. We are proud of the exceptional experiences and opportunities we are able to provide. From our over 120 miles of greenways to our more than 10,000 acres of park land no single park acquisition may be more important to Raleigh than the recent purchase of the 308 acre Dorothea Dix Park on July 24th, 2015.

The City of Raleigh and various stakeholders from across the State of North Carolina have spent the last two decades collaboratively working on this extraordinary park opportunity. Many people have contributed to this effort but one person stands as a clear steward of the ongoing efforts, Greg Poole, Jr. Mr. Poole exemplifies a gentleman with passion, respect, vision and more. From the early dialogue and idea that there may be the potential for the City of Raleigh and the State of North Carolina to consider the sale of the Dorothea Dix campus to the recent completion of the acquisition, Greg Poole, Jr. remained an active voice and supporter.

Throughout our process Mr. Poole consistently had a presence at the State of NC Legislature to meet with leaders in both Chambers and all political parties to help establish mutual understanding of this important opportunity for the State of North Carolina, its capital city and the citizens across this great State. Greg Poole, Jr. is one of the founding members of the Dix Visionaries, a nonprofit 501c3 supporter, of the transition of the Dorothea Dix campus into a destination park. In addition to establishing the Dix Visionaries, Mr. Poole also collaborated with other nonprofit supporters on the efforts including the Dix 306 and the Friends of Dorothea Dix. His ability to bring

together community advocates, nonprofits and business leaders demonstrates an amazing commitment to Dorothea Dix Park and its future. Today Greg Poole, Jr. continues his efforts in the form of community support, fundraising, partnerships and the development of a common vision to create a great public park for all to enjoy.

The transformation of the Dorothea Dix Campus into a future destination park is an opportunity that will impact the quality of life for several generations of residents of Raleigh and the State of North Carolina. The future park will tie together Raleigh's downtown, North Carolina State University's Centennial Campus, adjoining neighborhoods, the State of NC's Farm Market, unique cultural and recreational opportunities and more. Greg Poole, Jr.'s contributions to tirelessly advocating, continuing a regional public dialogue and bringing multiple groups together were immeasurable in our efforts to acquire Dorothea Dix Park as a City. He represents a spirit of collaboration, values integrity and equity and most of all exemplifies a passion for public parks and all the benefits they provide to our City.

On behalf of the Raleigh City Council and our citizens I want to express my sincere support for Greg Poole, Jr. to be considered as an Honorable Member of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Nancy McFarlane". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Nancy McFarlane
Mayor