

LETTER OF NOMINATION OF RANDOLPH HESTER, FASLA, FCELA

ASLA Community Service Award

Nominated by Richard S. Hawks, FASLA and Thaisa Way, ASLA

“To recognize an individual landscape architect, group of landscape architects, landscape architecture firms, landscape architecture education programs, or ASLA Chapters who have provided sustained, *pro bono* service to the community demonstrating sound principles or values of landscape architecture.”

RANDOLPH T. HESTER

Professor (retired 2010)

Department of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning
University of California, Berkeley

The landscape architecture profession emphasizes social responsibility but few of us consistently commit our careers and practices to doing so. Randy Hester has dedicated his career to the improvement of public landscapes for the underserved. Through his design and planning work, his teaching and his writing, he has challenged each of us to insure that our “*lasting impact on the welfare of the public and the environment*” includes everyone.

One of his longest colleagues Linda Jewel, FASLA, stated it succinctly when she wrote:

“More so than anyone practicing today, Hester’s pro bono work for communities as well as his teaching and professional practice has contributed to the nurturing of healthy communities.”

Randolph Hester was a Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning (retired 2010) at the University of California Berkeley, and is a partner in the firm Community Development by Design. A founder of the participatory design movement in landscape architecture, his work involves citizens directly in the creation of their landscapes and cities. Hester’s professional design work cannot be separated from his community service; to him, they are one and the same. His commitment to community planning and design is also exemplified through pro bono work, student projects and funded research ranging in scale from thousand-mile-long flyways to detailed bench designs and building fenestration. Hester has received numerous recognitions for his landscape architecture work and career achievements from a variety of sources. Hester is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects and has received the CELA Outstanding Educators Award and the EDRA Career Award for his research, writing, and testing of ideas in practice. His landscape design and planning projects have received four Honor and four Merit National ASLA awards. He was presented the 2006 ASLA Bradford Williams Medal and his 2006 book, “Design for Ecological Democracy,” received the Davidoff Award from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. In 2010, he received an honorary Doctor of Law from Dalhousie University in Nova Scotia. He is the recipient of MIT’s 2011 Kevin Lynch Award.

He has authored or co-authored 15 books and more than 160 articles and book chapters. His work and writings have been in numerous Landscape Architecture Magazine issues, including two cover features. His writing focuses on community design and participation, including *Community Goal Setting*, with Frank Smith; *Planning Neighborhood Space with People*; *Community Design Primer* (also in Chinese and Japanese); and *The Meaning of Gardens*, with Mark Francis. His first book, *Neighborhood Space*, was declared a landmark research project on participatory design by *Landscape Architecture*. His 2010 book, *Design for Ecological Democracy*, proposes principles and case studies for restructuring the city.

In many ways, Hester's work and scholarly accomplishments exemplify the role of community service in the profession. Hester's work spans and connects the practice of participatory design in the context of inner-city communities to regional approaches of environmental planning and ecological conservation. With a career of achievements in both coasts of the United States, Hester further brings his experiences and passion to planning and environmental advocacy in the Pacific Rim through involvements in projects in Japan, South Korea and Taiwan.

In Raleigh, North Carolina Hester established a citywide citizen participation program that became the basis for the City's comprehensive plan. This work included the implementation of a multimillion-dollar open space plan to rectify past class and racial discrimination in the provision of public parks. He organized a grassroots effort to create an alternative, low-cost transportation plan for the city and worked for ten years to realize a rehabilitation plan for the Chavis Heights neighborhood. The plan prevented scheduled urban renewal clearance and created a uniquely African-American landscape. His work won the All-America City Award for Raleigh.

Hester's community plan for Manteo, North Carolina developed a framework to attract cultural tourism, provide needed jobs, and yet preserve the community's sacred structure. The plan created a living/learning open space system by utilizing underused waterfront spaces that now feature hands-on exhibits to teach visitors about the everyday environment and the area's history. This project has received many honors, including the Virginia Dare Award and an ASLA Honor Award. Of the 60 specific projects recommended in this plan, the town has implemented 58. *The Manteo Way of Building* completed in 2003 provides another twenty-year plan for the town.

In 1998, Hester brought together leading participatory planning scholars and practitioners in the Pacific Rim in a working conference at University of California, Berkeley. Titled "Coastal Echoes: Democratic Design in the Pacific Rim," the conference led to the establishment of the Pacific Rim Participatory Community Design Network. Through conferences and joint projects, the network has provided a vehicle for collaboration and mutual support, as well as a forum for comparative understanding of participatory planning in the fast changing political and social context of the Pacific Rim.

As a visiting professor at Kyoto University in 2001, Hester worked with leading Japanese scholars in producing an alternative vision to a proposed major dam on Yoshino River. With Hester's involvement, the Yoshino River Plan brought environmental planning and ecological science into the center stage of public decision-making. Through interviews and behavioral

observations and by working with leading scientists in the field, Hester's unique ability in blending democratic process and scientific knowledge has made a significant contribution to the citizen movement and public understanding of the environmental implications and complexity of the project.

Since 1996, Hester has been working with local communities and activists in Southern Taiwan against the development of a proposed heavy industrial complex. The development threatened fishing jobs and the habitat of critically endangered Black-faced Spoonbill in the flyway connecting Taiwan to Korea. Working with local scholars, scientists and activists, Hester led a team of students and faculty at UC Berkeley to examine the environmental impacts of the proposed development. The team further developed viable economic alternatives and plans for conservation of the coastal wetland habitat. The work made a significant contribution to the local movement and the environmental review process that eventually stopped the heavy industrial development. It also led to the establishment of one of the largest coastal reserves in Taiwan and thriving regional tourism development.

Rodney L. Swink, FASLA wrote:

"I studied under Randy at North Carolina State University and that is where I learned about populist design. Randy taught me that everyone deserves the right to an enhanced quality of life and everyone's voice should be heard. We as landscape architects have a responsibility to be the means through which citizens speak of their hopes and expectations. That can only happen if we engage in communities honestly, listen carefully and openly, and respect the people we serve and the processes we utilize. For some, community service is what happens on the occasional weekend or as an adjunct to their normal duties, an extra activity. That is valuable and to be appreciated. With Randy, community service is the norm; it is the central aspect of his work and career."

Hester's career accomplishments make him the most qualified scholar and educator to receive ASLA Community Service Award this year. His work in regional, environmental, and participatory planning, bridges the realms of large-scale spatial and ecological planning with democratic and participatory rigor and a focus on both environmental sustainability and social justice. Hester's work and influences in the United States and the Pacific Rim have inspired cross-cultural and international collaboration to address regional issues and democratic challenges in planning. His work spanning over 40 years, from the inner-city neighborhoods to regional landscapes, and from small towns in North Carolina and urban wilderness of California and to the fishing villages in Taiwan and watersheds in Japan, attest to his contributions.

**NOMINATION OF RANDY HESTER, FASLA, FCELA
FOR THE ASLA COMMUNITY SERVICE AWARD**

Submitted by Linda Jewell, FASLA, Member of Northern California Chapter

“To recognize an individual landscape architect, group of landscape architects, landscape architecture firms, landscape architecture education programs, or ASLA Chapters who have provided sustained, *pro bono* service to the community demonstrating sound principles or values of landscape architecture. ”

Randy Hester deserves the honor of the ASLA Community Service Award for a lifetime of achievements and contributions to communities across the nation, even the globe, as well as his leadership in establishing such work through his roles as educator, practitioner and writer. He has fought passionately and tirelessly for the welfare of the environment and the humans who inhabit it. Through his forty-plus years of professional work, teaching and writing, he challenged the discipline to bring the benefits of well-designed landscapes to all citizens. Hester not only performed pro bono work for diverse communities but also inspired, taught, and mentored a growing community of significant practitioners who have followed in his footsteps. As Karl Linn advocated for participatory design, Hester developed much of the theory and many of the techniques currently used by designers working with under-represented populations. He expanded participatory design to incorporate principles and precepts of ecological science into techniques for achieving environmental justice and access to nature for all citizens. He applied ideas and techniques while working in his local community and in Asia, where his name is synonymous with participatory design and the landscape architecture profession. Hester's approach is simple in concept and difficult in execution; that is, he studies, teaches, writes about, and practices participatory design and planning with all activities and results informing each other simultaneously.

Hester has received numerous accolades for his landscape architectural focused work and career achievements from a variety of sources. His landscape design and planning projects have received four Honor and four Merit National ASLA awards as well as recognition from EDRA and other design and planning groups. CELA recognized him with an Outstanding Educator Award, for his superb teaching at Pennsylvania State, North Carolina State and U.C. Berkeley, where he also served as Department Chair for five years. He serves as a frequent juror on international and interdisciplinary design competitions, including the Martin Luther King Memorial Competition. He has authored or co-authored 15 books and more than 160 articles and book chapters. His work and writings have been in numerous *Landscape Architecture Magazine* issues, including two cover features. He was presented the 2006 ASLA Bradford Williams Medal and his 2006 book, “Design for Ecological Democracy,” received the prestigious Davidoff Award from the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning. He is the recipient of MIT's 2011 Kevin Lynch Award. To the public, his students and fellow professionals, Randy Hester is a consummate landscape architect and contributor to community. His depth of knowledge, development and use of practical planning and design methods and provocative insights that often challenge the fundamental frameworks of the landscape architecture profession are a testimony to his dedication to, belief in and evolution of the discipline as a community service. More so than anyone practicing today, Hester's pro bono work for communities as well as his teaching and professional practice have contributed to the nurturing of healthy communities.

Community Service and Professional Practice—Hester’s professional design work cannot be separated from his community service; and to him, they are one and the same. He has long supported community work through projects in his consulting firm, *Community Development by Design*. His commitment to community planning and design is also exemplified through volunteer efforts, student projects and funded research ranging in scale from thousand-mile-long flyways to detailed bench designs and building fenestration.

Hester is best known for his publications on participatory planning, yet he is a uniquely talented designer who draws rapidly, accurately and beautifully. His pencil is never still; he constantly draws and writes in sketchbooks that rival Lawrence Halprin’s in their thoughtful observations, design insight and artistic expression. He uses his mastery of both drawing and participatory skills for what he calls “democratic drawing,” including such techniques as “drawing on your feet” and his rather amazing ability at “designing upside down.” With these incredible skills he facilitates actual form-making with citizens, so that he can quickly tap into their creative ideas and take them beyond basic decisions of “where to put the basketball court” to creating special places that reflect the community’s unique and valued aesthetic and social values.

For two decades Hester's work focused passionately on the urban dispossessed. In the mid 1980's he began to incorporate large-scale ecological principles with grass roots community approaches. An example of this approach is his work on the Los Angeles greenbelt, now partially completed, where conservation biology was integrated with community values. The Los Angeles greenbelt provides accessible nature for seven million people and interconnected habitat for native wildlife, including the mountain lion. Community Development by Design, Hester's consulting firm, has also proposed additional greenways that stretch the entire length of the Los Angeles River and focus on bird habitat in each adjacent neighborhood. The proposed Los Angeles River Urban Wildlife Refuge is large-scale in scope, but also local in execution since it was divided into twelve ecological zones, each made up of dozens of neighborhoods with site-specific strategies that support different bird species. Site proposals are sufficiently detailed to illustrate meeting multiple purposes on a single site: wildlife corridor, neighborhood park and recharge/detention basins.

Hester has immersed himself in participatory planning and design projects in Asia, including teaching for the Big Tree Studio, a one-week intensive design workshop with first-year landscape architecture students at Chun Yuan University in Taiwan. Through design-build projects, walls separating university and community are replaced with welcoming social places and disconnected patches of trees and water are connected to create wildlife corridors and continuous pedestrian spaces through campus. Hester continues to collaborate with the young landscape architecture program at Chun Yuan. Each summer he works with students and other campus users to plan further campus improvements that have been built incrementally.

In the mid- nineties, Hester visited Taiwan’s Chiku Lagoon, a habitat for the endangered black-faced spoonbill (*Platalea minor*) scheduled for filling to make way for a petrochemical and steel complex. He immediately committed his efforts to protecting the species by first saving the lagoon and then, the bird from extinction. He has since worked tirelessly on a variety of plans, designs and organizations to save the black-faced spoonbill, often guided by SAVE, an NGO he helped start. A Water Transit Plan, developed at National Taiwan University under his guidance, has been adopted by Tainan County to generate local economic development, provide a unique eco-tourist experience and oversee spoonbill habitat. The Yun-chia-nan National Scenic Area Master Plan incorporated Hester’s proposals for land use control and establishment of core habitats to support wintering spoonbills. SAVE International, has expanded its efforts along the spoonbill’s entire East Asian flyways, including habitats in South Korea and Japan.

Teaching: While teaching is not part of Hester's pro bono work, it has been at the core of the community service of his many students and followers. As a teacher he has contributed communities far beyond the classroom. Hester is the rare academic who successfully teaches the full range of students from freshman to Ph.D.'s. At Berkeley, he was a magnet for outstanding graduate students who wanted to take his two popular graduate classes, *Citizen Participation in Planning* and *Sacred Landscapes*. The first course applies citizen participation to design and the second; *Sacred Landscapes* examines how sacredness can be the basis of good landscape stewardship and long-term environmental resilience. Hester remains a versatile studio teacher who taught broadly in the graduate program, including environmental planning studios, basic design and site design studios, and thesis studios. Additionally his influence on students who remained in architecture, but developed a distinct “Berkeley” view of architecture as much more than the production of engaging forms—also a profession with social obligations to the welfare of the public and the environment.

Books, Research and Publications: Randy Hester as a writer has also contributed to communities across the globe, whether it was as a resource for professionals or as guidelines for community members. He has authored fifteen books and more than 160 articles, reports and book chapters primarily focused on socially responsible design. As an indication of his influence in Asia, his design projects and articles are widely published in Chinese, Japanese and Korean and his recent book was published in Korean. Several of his earlier books – *Neighborhood Space* (1975), *Community Design Primer* (1990) and *The Meaning of Gardens* (with Mark Francis, 1990 and translated into Japanese in 1996) – have become important texts and references for landscape architecture students throughout the world. But it is Hester’s shorter pieces on participation methods that have been the most influential.

In the past several years Hester has published numerous articles on participatory processes that connect local development with regional and transcontinental biological diversity. He presents ways to make the role of grass roots action relevant to local bird experts and regional decision makers. His research formed the basis for proposals recently developed in Korea, China, Japan and Taiwan for stepping-stone spoonbill habitats to be locally managed. Another article spells out how a regional vision for biological diversity can be reconciled with local interests through usable information, hands-on public education, and the inclusion of non-traditional constituencies. These articles advocate the joining of local actions with conservation biology in planning public greenways and have been widely distributed in Korean, Chinese and English. One measure of their impact is that Hester is consistently invited to present his work and methodologies to scientific meetings of ornithologists studying the endangered spoonbill.

Hester's publications on ecological democracy represent the more recent direction of his work. His 35-years of research called attention to environmental injustices, an approach often cast by others as distinct from and at odds with ecological ones. To the surprise of some, his book, *Design for Ecological Democracy* (2006), integrates social and ecological research about city-making into a cohesive whole more effectively than any other author on the subject. Hester’s deep knowledge of ecosystems is successfully integrated with his hallmark understanding of social processes, political realities and his superb design talents. This is a significant resource for those pursuing landscape architecture in service to communities and democracy across the globe.

Summary

As landscape architects, we emphasize social responsibility in our publications, education, conferences and professional code, but few of us consistently commit our careers and practices to doing so. Randy Hester has. He has utilized his unique artistic talent, creative mind, extraordinary work ethic and generous spirit to improve the public landscapes of the underserved; he has inspired youth to study our discipline and he has encouraged countless students and colleagues, including many women, minorities and those from underserved communities, to pursue leadership positions in landscape architecture. Through the dissemination of his design and planning work, his teaching and his writing, he has mentored, cajoled and challenged each of us to insure that our “*lasting impact on the welfare of the public and the environment*” includes everyone. He is a model for us all.

The Office of Rodney Swink

ASLA Community Service Award Nominations
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

ASLA Executive Committee:

It is with great pleasure that I write in support of the nomination of Randy Hester, FASLA, for the ASLA Community Service Award. Randy's stellar career has been defined by his community engagement and his profound efforts to bring meaningful design assistance to cities, neighborhoods and underrepresented populations.

I studied under Randy at North Carolina State University and that is where I learned about populist design. Randy taught me that everyone deserves the right to an enhanced quality of life and everyone's voice should be heard. We as landscape architects have a responsibility to be the means through which citizens speak of their hopes and expectations. That can only happen if we engage in communities honestly, listen carefully and openly, and respect the people we serve and the processes we utilize.

For some, community service is what happens on the occasional weekend or as an adjunct to their normal duties, an extra activity. That is valuable and to be appreciated. With Randy, community service is the norm; it is the central aspect of his work and career. Meeting with neighborhood residents and attending community socials is a common undertaking. So, too, is standing before elected bodies arguing on behalf of people and their needs.

But Randy's efforts go deeper. He embeds himself in communities so that he can learn firsthand the realities, meet people informally and in real conditions, and witness the circumstances that require his assistance. Randy is an activist community servant. He not only listens, but he strives to be the voice of those who are often overlooked. And he does this using design as the medium, as the vehicle to both reflect people's desires and to show what is possible when we all work together.

Randy believes that all designers should embrace community engagement. To that end he has written extensively throughout his career documenting his work and the processes used to serve communities. From his *Community Design Primer*, where he articulated the "values of community designers" and "the principles that guide community design" to his *Design for Ecological Democracy*, which is really a community service manifesto, Randy has shown us all that we can make a difference in our communities, and we have a responsibility to do so.

Randy Hester personifies community service. His work, his accomplishments, his successes have brought recognition to landscape architecture as a profession that cares and one that matters in the life of neighborhoods and villages, cities and towns. Thank you for considering him for this important ASLA award.

Sincerely;



Rodney L. Swink, FASLA, PLA



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COLLEGE OF
BUILT
ENVIRONMENTS

ASLA Medal Nominations

It is my great pleasure and honor to write this letter of endorsement for the nomination of Randolph T. Hester to receive the 2015 Award for Community Service for a landscape architect whose contributions to communities have had a unique and lasting impact on the welfare of the public and the environment. Randy Hester retired in 2010 after a most distinguished career as a teacher, practitioner, public scholar, community advocate, and global citizen. For me, there is no other landscape architect who is more qualified than Randy Hester to receive the award and whose work has a more extensive impact on communities around the world.

His pro bono work includes many projects as a landscape architect, a teacher, and a mentor. Communities and projects he worked closely include the Song Do Mudflat alternative Plan, with SAVE, International, the Budai Habitat Creation Plan, Taiwan with National Taiwan University, A Four Point Land Use Plan for Coastal Tainan County, 2004, a Plan for Habitat Conservation for *Platalea Minor*, 2004, and the Union Point Park Oakland, CA, with EDAW, 1999. These projects are exemplar models of the contributions to community service of a landscape architect bar none.

My knowledge of Randy's work stems from the days when I was one of his doctoral students at University of California, Berkeley and having had the opportunity to work with him in a decade-long battle to preserve the habitats of the endangered Black-faced Spoonbill along the East Asian flyway. We also worked together in forming the Pacific Rim Community Design Network in 1998. In addition, I speak from my experience as an educator, community design scholar, and an academic administrator.

Randy Hester is unquestionably one of the most influential landscape architecture educators, scholars, and practitioners in the United States in the past century. As a founder of the participatory design movement in the field landscape architecture, his teaching and writing compels landscape architects around the country to give voice to people and to engage citizens and communities directly in shaping environments at the neighborhood, city, and regional scales. His work in economically depressed communities brings attention of our growing profession to issues of social and environmental justice. He has worked locally and internationally, in urban and rural contexts, from river corridors and chaparral canyons to central cities and coastal wetlands, through a practice that transcends cultural and geographical boundaries.

As a practitioner

Randy Hester's four decades of practice have included numerous site- and large-scale master plans for a wide range of communities and public agencies. In 1986 his master plan for Runyon Canyon in Hollywood, California won an ASLA Honor Award for instilling a commitment to land stewardship in the surrounding community. This began a two-decade collaboration, much of which was pro bono work, with the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy and thousands of citizens to implement a visionary plan that has created an urban wilderness greenbelt around and in Los Angeles. Hester's planning and design has resulted in the acquisition of thousands of acres for wildlife habitat and the development of a series of provocative gateway parks in the mountains. His design for Augustus Hawkins Nature Park created the first-ever ecological park in South Central Los Angeles, an underserved, inner-city neighborhood with very few public amenities.

Earlier in his career, Hester's community plan for Manteo, North Carolina developed a framework to attract cultural tourism, provide needed jobs, and yet preserve the community's sacred structure. The plan created a living/learning open space system by utilizing underused waterfront spaces that now feature hands-on exhibits to teach visitors about the everyday environment and the area's history. This project has received many honors, including the Virginia Dare Award and an ASLA Honor Award. Of the 60 specific projects recommended in this plan, the town has implemented 58. *The Manteo Way of Building* completed in 2003 provides another twenty-year plan for the town.

In Raleigh, North Carolina, Hester established a citywide citizen participation program that became the basis for the City's comprehensive plan. This work included the implementation of a multimillion-dollar open space plan to rectify past class and racial discrimination in the provision of public parks. He organized a grassroots effort to create an alternative, low-cost transportation plan for the city and worked for ten years to realize a rehabilitation plan for the Chavis Heights neighborhood. Needless to say this work was primarily done on a pro bono basis. The plan prevented scheduled urban renewal clearance and created a uniquely African-American landscape. His work won the All-America City Award for Raleigh.

Since 1996, Hester has taken his advocacy approach of community design and planning across the Pacific. Specifically, he and a team of students and experts have been working with local communities and activists in Southern Taiwan against the development of a proposed heavy industrial complex. The development threatened fishing jobs and the habitat of critically endangered Black-faced Spoonbill in the flyway connecting Taiwan to Korea. Working with local and international scholars, scientists and activists, Hester led students and faculty at UC Berkeley to examine the environmental impacts of the proposed development. The team further developed viable economic alternatives and plans for conservation of the coastal wetland habitat. The work made a significant contribution to the local movement and the environmental review process that eventually stopped the heavy industrial development. It also led to the establishment of one of the largest coastal reserves in Taiwan and thriving regional tourism development. Today, the Chiku area has become a prime model of environmental conservation and alternative economic development that inspires other communities from around the world to do the same.

As an Educator

Randy Hester is an inspiring teacher for generations of landscape architects and landscape architecture educators who are today giving to their communities through professional service as well as pro bono work. He taught not only with his words but also with his deeds. I was fortunate in having been not only his student, but also his teaching assistant and a co-instructor. In all the courses he taught, he carried his participatory approach into powerful pedagogy for learning. In his Participatory Design course at Berkeley, students learned in both classrooms and in the communities. Each student was asked to volunteer for a community or civic organization and carry out a project with the host organization. The combination of structured and non-structured participatory process allowed students to engage in experiential learning and service. In weekly meetings, students shared their lessons learned and also led in-class exercises to sharpen their skills. In his Environmental Planning Studios, students worked extensively in groups and with community members to address design and planning ranged from site- to regional scales, locally and abroad. In the large Introduction to Environmental Design (ED 1) course, he engaged the Graduate Student Instructors in designing the curriculum and transformed a large-lecture course into intimate design modules that engage students in learning through hands-on design projects. Hester's pedagogy and teaching philosophy has influenced many of his students who later became educators themselves. His influence is felt in schools across the nation where generations of his former students have taught.

Randy Hester's career and lifetime achievements are remarkable and exemplary, and are absolutely worthy of the ASLA Medal. His career-long pursuit in democratic and participatory design has elevated the status of the profession of landscape architecture in the public consciousness and policy arena. There are few other landscape architects today that have made a more unique and lasting impact on the welfare of the public and the environment. Randy Hester's accomplishments make him the most qualified landscape architect to receive the ASLA Medal this year.

Sincerely,



Jeffrey Hou, PhD
Associate Professor and Chair

American Society of Landscape Architects
Ms. Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Ms. Mitchell,

I did not meet Randy Hester until the mid-1980s but I had heard the stories for years. My partners, Joe Porter and Don Ensign, had taught with Randy at his alma mater, North Carolina State University. Randy was always a firebrand, concerned with social justice issues and determined to make change in society. It seems that upon graduation Randy moved into a low-income black neighborhood in Durham, North Carolina, so that he could learn first-hand about the lives of those less fortunate than himself. A few years later, Randy would run for (and be elected to) the Raleigh City Commission, intent on waking up his fellow North Carolinians to the needs of their underrepresented fellow citizens.

Randy Hester has lived a life of total immersion. While others bemoan the lack of positive change in society, Randy actively works toward progress on major social and environmental issues. While many have chosen not to talk about sensitive political issues, Randy has constantly challenged us to examine our preconceptions and bias about issues of race, poverty, and homelessness. His compassion and energy are contagious. He will not allow us to be complacent. But his focus on such issues was not detached or patronizing. Randy's brilliance is that he has always met people where they stood, as equals, and engaged them with dignity. When tasked with designing a park frequented by the homeless, Randy did not seek to determine how to displace the homeless in order to make the park more welcoming to others, but instead actively interviewed the homeless who called the park home, in order to determine how to better meet their needs.

His lifelong commitment to issues of environmental justice is now yielding results for the entire profession. ASLA has formed a professional practice network for environmental justice and is seeing the rapid growth of educational sessions about environmental justice issues at our annual meeting. Always a man ahead of his time, Randy Hester's time has come. The issues for which he has crusaded all of his life are now the issues of our day. If our profession is in any way prepared to address these challenges it is because of Randy's commitment to these issues.

With Randy Hester, what you see is what you get. One cannot separate his countless pro bono efforts on behalf of communities throughout the country from his writings on Ecological Democracy or his teaching. There is a beautiful symmetry to his life built around a passionate concern for others. I can think of no other individual more deserving of the ASLA Community Service Award. He represents the best of what our profession has to offer.

Sincerely,



Kurt Culbertson
Chairman/CEO

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American Society of Landscape Architects
Ms. Carolyn Mitchell
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Ms. Mitchell

RE: Letter of Support for Randy Hester for the ASLA Community Service Award

Randy Hester has dedicated his professional life to encouraging people to participate in designing their own communities. His process leads ordinary citizens to experience success and build self-esteem that empowers them to make change. This is far from a theoretical approach. Randy's resume is a catalog of impressive and varied public interest projects.

To judge the relevance of Randy's work, it is important to understand its influence in two ways. One is the benefit that has resulted in improving the quality of communities, and the second - and possibly most important - is the changes in the community development process that have occurred by meaningfully including citizens in the process.

Randy's talent would have allowed him to be a professional artist. He graduated first in his landscape architecture class at North Carolina State University, earned a second degree in sociology, and studied community psychology, public finance, city planning and growth management. Randy combines a high degree of art, physical science and social sciences in his service to the public and has influenced a great many citizens, students and private practitioners to do the same through his projects, public service, teaching and writing.

I met Randy in 1970 when we were both teaching in the School of Design at North Carolina State University. Randy was returning from graduate school at Harvard with a mission to affect change. He rented a house in a poor neighborhood in Raleigh and promptly immersed his students in working with Raleigh neighborhoods in a bottom-up movement that established the Goals for Raleigh, an organization that gave a new voice to Raleigh citizens, particularly the disadvantaged. In 1975, Randy was elected to the Raleigh City Council, where he pushed council members and city staff well out of their comfort zones to address values identified by Goals for Raleigh. He has continued this approach, becoming engaged in the neighborhoods and communities he works with.

Randy's direct approach as a newly minted Harvard graduate is the same today: start with a community problem and engage its citizens in designing the solution. Randy has aggressively repeated this in different locations for forty-five years and applied it to influencing ecosystems, economic development, design management and park, neighborhood and urban design.

Randy Hester is one of the most unique, independent and productive landscape architects that I know. He has the capacity to adapt any form of teaching, practice, pro-bono engagement, design, collaboration or writing required to assist a neighborhood or community. His attitudes and work have been enormously valuable to me as a practitioner. When challenged with social aspects of community development, his is the voice I hear challenging me to dump the status quo and dig deeper. Seeing the immense body of Randy's achievements and knowing how he has dedicated his work to help citizens change their communities and teach others to do the same, I can only imagine how many others hear that same voice.

Randy has dedicated his life to community service and made a profound contribution to communities and his work, teachings and writings will continue to have a unique and lasting impact on the welfare of the public and the environment. I urge you to award Randy the ASLA Community Service Award.

Sincerely

Joe A. Porter, FASLA
2008 ASLA Medal Recipient