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LaGasse Medal Nominations
(Landscape Architect Category)
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors & Awards Coordinator
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Nomination of Mary Hughes, FASLA for the LaGasse Medal

Dear Trustees:

The great thing about the LaGasse Medal is that it gives ASLA a way to honor those professionals who work as stewards of public and historic landscapes. These are people that, while infinitely deserving, too often go unrecognized for their contributions to our profession and to the places we value. With this in mind, and with much enthusiasm, I nominate Mary Hughes, FASLA, for the 2012 LaGasse Medal.

Since 1996, Mary has been the university landscape architect at the University of Virginia. We have known each other for several years and I value the professional camaraderie that has developed between us. I have been fortunate enough to walk the UVA campus with her on a couple of occasions and have seen firsthand all that she has accomplished there. One of these walks took place in the middle of summer, when the temperature reached 100 degrees. Even in the melting Virginia heat, her passion for the campus was hard to miss. Her enthusiasm was, as always, infectious. There is something about being around Mary, and talking about campuses and landscape architecture with her, that makes me love what I do even more than I did before.

A little background: Mary graduated from UVA with an MLA in 1987. She worked for a multidisciplinary design firm before becoming the very first Regional Historical Landscape Architect for the National Park Service Midwest Region in 1991. Hers was one of only six such positions nationwide at that time. It didn't take long for her to establish herself as a force in the emerging field of landscape preservation. She created the Cultural Landscape Program for the Midwest Regional Office

shortly after taking the job, a program that received a Federal Design Achievement Award several years later. She produced cultural landscape reports for important sites and parks in her region, including the Jefferson National Expansion Memorial in St. Louis, MO, designed by Dan Kiley and Eero Saarinen. This particular report was the first of its kind for a post-WWII work of landscape architecture. Still relevant today, it was used as a resource by the team that won the 2010 design competition to restore the landscape surrounding Saarinen's Gateway Arch.

For nearly 20 years Mary has added insight and practical knowledge to the conversation surrounding cultural and historic landscapes. She contributed to the creation of the NPS's *Guidelines for the Treatment of Cultural Landscapes*, first published in 1992. No complete discussion on the topic can take place without acknowledging the continuing importance of this work. Along with Charles Birnbaum, FASLA, she edited the book: *Design with Culture: Claiming America's Landscape Heritage*, which has elevated the discourse surrounding landscape preservation as a discipline, and has supported Birnbaum's work at the Cultural Landscape Foundation. She also served as one of two landscape architects on the national HABS/HAER Foundation Board to represent HALS (Historic American Landscapes) shortly after it had been established.

Even taking into consideration all of these notable achievements, Mary's most visible legacy will likely be her work at UVA. Famously designed by Thomas Jefferson, the campus is one of the great public and institutional landscapes in the world. It is the only campus in the United States recognized by UNESCO as a World Heritage site. For the past 16 years, Mary has guided the campus both in its preservation as a historic place and in its evolution as home to one of the nation's most vital 21st century universities. That is a difficult feat to manage effectively, and she has done it beautifully. Through her leadership, the campus – which had evolved over time into a composite of disparate pieces after decades of poor planning and design decisions – has been transformed into a truly unified and coherent landscape whose beauty extends beyond Jefferson's fabled Lawn.

Mary has used her experience at the NPS to lead efforts to preserve the school's historic gardens and landscapes as a member of the university's Historic Preservation Team. She was integral to the production of the Historic Framework Plan, which establishes guidelines for preserving campus buildings and landscapes from the early 19th to the mid-20th centuries. Along with the Director of Gardens and Grounds at Monticello, she also directs the Historic Landscape Institute, an educational program she conceived in 1997. The two-week summer program teaches students about the theory and practice of historic landscape preservation by immersing them in the landscapes that Jefferson designed.

It is not, however, all about history. Mary has also worked closely with some of the nation's top architects and landscape architects to responsibly introduce a contemporary design vocabulary onto the constantly expanding campus. The amount of construction of new buildings and landscapes on

the campus over the past decade or so has been staggering. It is her job to oversee the site design for these projects to ensure that they meet established criteria for materiality, scale and character. Such oversight is critical to the long-term aesthetic quality of the campus.

In my mind, one of Mary's greatest accomplishments has been her successful advocacy for, and implementation of responsible stormwater management on campus. She spearheaded efforts to establish the Meadow Creek Regional Stormwater Management Master Plan, which received a design award from the Society for College and University Planning (SCUP) in 2008. The signature project that resulted from this plan – The Dell – received a 2009 Honor Award from ASLA in the General Design Category for Nelson Byrd Woltz. This high profile project has received other awards and lots of national attention. The university has since expanded stormwater improvements to other parts of the campus based on the success of that effort. UVA has become a model for what all universities should be doing on their campuses, something that could not have happened without Mary's hard work and leadership.

There are many other things I could tell you about, such as the campus landscape master plan that she collaborated with Michael Vergason, FASLA on in 1997; her contributions to the 2008 Grounds Plan, which provides a comprehensive planning framework for land use, natural systems, transportation and infrastructure across the campus; about how she lectures in UVA's School of Architecture, was a gubernatorial appointee to the Commonwealth of Virginia Art and Architecture Board, and has a long history of service to ASLA. The bottom line is that what Mary has been able to accomplish so far in her career is nothing short of extraordinary. Possibly unbeknownst to her, she has become a role model and inspiration for those of us who work as landscape architects and stewards on campuses and other cultural landscapes across the country.

It is for all of these reasons that I believe now is the time for ASLA to honor Mary Hughes with the 2012 LaGasse Medal. She is the perfect person to carry on Alfred LaGasse's important legacy.

Thank you for your consideration in this nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'm hough', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Mark H. Hough, ASLA
Campus Landscape Architect

To Whom it May Concern:

I am writing in enthusiastic support of Mary Hughes' nomination for the LaGasse Medal. Mark Hough has written a very compelling and most comprehensive letter as her nominator. It is a letter that is hard to improve upon. Nevertheless, I would like to make a few personal and professional observations about Mary.

I have known Mary Hughes since the time she was my student in the mid-1980s at the University of Virginia. I recall that she was already pretty accomplished at the time, as a teacher, but that she had this deeper desire to pursue landscape architecture. What impressed me from the start was Mary's commitment and passion for the potential of our discipline to contribute to the public good. Clearly, she has forged a particular, even unique, career aimed at that potential.

As Mark Hough has noted, Mary established a remarkable legacy with the National Park Service in her six years in the Midwest, focusing particularly on the emerging field of the cultural landscape architectural historian. I think she did an extraordinary amount of good with that program. When we at UVA finally came to the realization that we needed a campus landscape architect to compliment the recently established campus architect position, Mary's name was the first one we thought of. I don't know that she wanted to leave the NPS, but we were persuasive in convincing her to at least apply (among many other very well qualified candidates). She did apply. We unanimously selected her. The rest, as they say, is a certain kind of history.

I have enjoyed a long professional relationship with Mary since she returned to the University in the mid-1990s. I will comment on two connections in particular. The first is through the Historic Landscape Institute that she helps organize and co-direct with Monticello staff every summer. It is an intense immersion, over the course of two weeks, that attracts a remarkably disparate group of professionals and citizens to Charlottesville. Mary has been central to the ongoing success of this very popular, rigorous, and well-accepted program. I have been invited to play a small part in the program each summer, but that gives me enough of a sense of the territory that students cover under Mary's direction. One can imagine that between the resources and landscapes of both Monticello and the University of Virginia, students have access to some of the most significant strategies for practicing contemporary landscape preservation offered anywhere in the country.

The second, and for me the most important, contribution Mary Hughes has made is her role in seeing the University's innovative stormwater master plan through to realization. As the Principal in Charge for Nelson Byrd Woltz's work on the Dell, Mary could not have been a better partner, client, and collaborator. The Dell was her inspiration. It was her vision that conceived of the Dell as the ideal demonstration project to support the larger stormwater plan for the campus. Mary put the design and technical team together. We have long felt fortunate to have been selected to contribute to that remarkable project. As Mark Hough has pointed out, it has proved to be an exemplar that many other universities and public institutions are choosing as a model. It's success is directly and fully attributable to Mary's commitment to see it through. And it will long stand as one of the greater testaments to her achievements as a preeminent public practitioner in this country.

I urge you to give Mary Hughes the highest consideration for this most deserved recognition.

With sincere admiration,



Warren T. Byrd, Jr., FASLA
Professor Emeritus, University of Virginia
Principal, Nelson Byrd Woltz Landscape Architects



ASLA Board of Trustees
LaGasse Medal Nomination – Landscape Architect Category
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors & Awards Coordinator
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye Street, NW
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Re: Endorsement of Mary Hughes, FASLA for the LaGasse Medal

Dear Trustees:

I strongly endorse the nomination of Mary Hughes for the 2012 LaGasse Medal in the Landscape Architect category. I have known Mary for more than 10 years and I worked closely with her from 2004 through 2010 on the realization of the South Lawn, a major new project at the University of Virginia.

Mary is a fierce, tireless and diplomatic defender of the public landscape. She has a particular talent for bringing non-landscape architects into the conversation and inspiring them to be mindful about the broader values of place. Her understanding of and support for the integration of a contemporary aesthetic within the context of a historic landscape is critically important to community education. She understands that landscapes --- by definition --- are evolutionary and dynamic and she continuously relays that message. Her openness to new ideas about conserving site resources as 'green infrastructure' networks is commendable, particularly in the larger landscapes of an urbanizing university setting. Mary's success is also based on her deep pragmatism about the long-term stewardship of public landscapes. She ensures that specific individuals charged with the future maintenance of these sites are at the table with designers from the outset of a project in a mutually educational collaboration.

Leadership, dedication and perseverance against all odds define Mary's approach. She is certainly an embodiment of the LeGasse legacy!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Cheryl Barton', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cheryl Barton, FASLA, FAAR, LEED AP
ASLA Past President

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landscape architecture
green urbanism

**ASLA LaGasse Medal Nomination:
Mary Hughes, FASLA, University Landscape Architect, University of Virginia**

Mary Hughes is an exceptionally deserving of the ASLA LaGasse medal.

During Mary Hughes' fifteen years at UVA, she has single-handedly changed the administration's awareness of the campus landscape beyond the "sacred Jeffersonian center." Working out of the University President's office, not Facilities Management, Mary has redirected efforts away from the Jeffersonian Academical Village towards the broader the campus landscape, hundreds of acres of developed and wild lands that have been seen primarily as open (vacant) space for future infill and growth. Through state funds supplemented by grants, including a Getty Foundation Preservation grant, and solicited donations, she secured funding for a multi-year research project on the history of land-use and landscape design of the University grounds. This initiative has resulted in amazing summer internship opportunities for UVA landscape architecture students, and enriched our cultural landscape curriculum. Hughes encouraged research and archaeology on the history of a free-black settlement, founded in the 1830s by Katherine (Kitty) Foster, adjacent to and below, the UVA Academical Village. This resulted in new awareness for the way one could read race+space topographically in the university landscape. This research resulted in a design commission for the public spaces of the "South Lawn" project. Cheryl Barton, FASLA and Walter Hood, FASLA completed that project last year; it includes a memorial garden for Kitty Foster that would not exist if it were not for Mary Hughes. At the same time, Hughes was prodding the University to undertake a comprehensive study of the waterways and storm water system of the University's lands that resulted in a stormwater master plan by Andropogon Associates, and an ASLA award-winning design project for the Dell, a public park+ stormwater management system designed by Warren Byrd, FASLA, of Nelson Byrd Woltz. That project has changed the atmosphere for landscape design



on Grounds. Ecological performance, sustainability, and rain gardens are part of the palette now. We are long past brick, boxwood and serpentine walls because of Hughes' curation.

Mary Hughes' job responsibilities at UVA are truly astounding. In addition to the above initiatives, she advises the University Landscape and Arboretum committee and the Public Art committee. She is a tireless advocate for the sound management of the University Grounds in exchanges with the President, the Provost, and eleven School Deans as well as Directors of Housing, Parking and Transit, Intramural Recreation, Safety, and Facilities Management. Through these encounters, many of which are contested and difficult, Hughes has gained a reputation for her passion, integrity, and knowledge.

And if this is not enough, for the past decade, Hughes has directed the annual Summer Historic Landscape Preservation Institute with colleagues from Monticello, such as Peter Hatch. She has inculcated an ethic of cultural landscape stewardship in the professionals who take this course that provides on-site, in the field exposure to significant cultural landscapes and training in techniques and approaches for protecting, interpreting, and designing within public sites such as the UVA Grounds.

In all these efforts, Hughes approaches the University Grounds as a complex intersection of historical traces and ecological systems, not as mere open space. In each of her initiatives, the University landscape has been released from a frozen mythic image (Jefferson looms large here) and re-discovered as an evolving place, responsive to contingencies. Hughes has been responsible for shifting the focus on the University landscape from historical background to living foreground.

To be frank, Mary Hughes is one of the smartest, most gregarious, accommodating, and sincere people I know. People gravitate towards her—for her hospitality (one of the best gardeners and cooks in Charlottesville), her intelligence (spotted regularly with Architecture School faculty and students in Campbell Hall and on site), and her reliability (she has been an early and key figure in the Charlottesville Rivanna River trails group as well as numerous ASLA committees).

All of these qualities contribute to her success as the University Landscape Architect. There are few public universities with public land holdings as significant, diverse, complex and contested as the University of Virginia. One of the reasons our Grounds are as vital as they are today is the good work of Mary Hughes.

As I have considered her credentials and accomplishments, I could not help but favorable compare her to the many impressive members and non-members of the ASLA who have won this award. Moreover, I could not help but notice that the last female member of the ASLA (who was not an honorary member) to receive the LaGasse Medal was Leslie Kerr in 1993. Nineteen years ago..... Mary's nomination this year is fitting given her individual contributions towards managing a World Heritage site, the University of Virginia Central Grounds, and its extended campus. It is timely as she is one of the most inspiring women I know in the profession. It seems obvious, in fact, imperative given how few women have been awarded the LaGasse Medal. Given the number of women in our profession, once a generation, at the minimum, we should be recognizing the inspired and effective work of ASLA women in managing our public lands!

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Elizabeth K. Meyer". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end of the last name.

Elizabeth K. Meyer, FASLA
Associate Professor, Department of Landscape Architecture
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LaGasse Medal Nominations
(Landscape Architect Category)
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors & Awards Coordinator
American Society of Landscape Architects
636 Eye St., NW
Washington, DC 20001

Re: Nomination of Mary Hughes, FASLA for the LaGasse Medal

Dear Trustees:

I could not imagine a more deserving nominee for the LaGasse Medal than Mary Hughes, FASLA.

My work with Mary parallels her career work at the University of Virginia. I came to Charlottesville to initiate a series of on-campus workshops as part of a Comprehensive Master Plan for the University the same week in 1996 that Mary began in her position as University Landscape Architect. It was a very fast start to a very productive collaborative planning effort that included a Facilities Master Plan, followed later by a Landscape Master Plan. Since that time, I have worked with her on multiple planning and design projects that continue today. From the beginning, it was clear to me that Mary is a consummate scholar and a confident professional.

Over those sixteen years it has been a great pleasure to watch Mary's talents and skills emerge in her effective stewardship of the Grounds, the only campus on the prestigious World Cultural Heritage list. Her quiet manner belies a deep passion and solid determinism that is clearly manifest in the improvements and new additions to the Grounds. Mary has a particular ability to navigate the pressures of complex processes and to guide a balanced outcome. I am particularly impressed with her ability to preserve the historic gardens and landscapes in a way that sustains their historic legacy but make history valid and real today. She is as capable of guiding the contemporary additions to the place in a way that enhances the place as a whole. Her astute knowledge and strong career at the University of Virginia, is leaving a lasting impression on one of our most critical American landscapes. We are all lucky that she is there.

It has been my great pleasure and benefit to learn from and to be part of the work touched by Mary Hughes. It is without reservation that I share my support for her nomination.

Sincerely,

Michael Vergason, FASLA, FAAR
Principal
Michael Vergason Landscape Architects, Ltd.

Gregg Bleam Landscape Architect

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

Re: Mary V. Hughes, FASLA · LaGasse Medal Award Nomination

Dear Trustees:

It is with great pleasure that I write in support of the nomination of Mary V. Hughes, FASLA, for the LaGasse Medal in recognition of her distinguished career of leadership in the wise management of public historic landscapes.

Over the past two decades, I have had the privilege of working with Mary Hughes as a consultant and collaborator. I first worked with Mary at the National Park Service as a consultant when we prepared a design analysis of Dan Kiley's work at the Jefferson National Memorial. Due to Mary's research and diligence, we were able to establish that the existing landscape was an important "modern" landscape worthy of preservation. This confirmed that Kiley's design was built, for the most part, according to his original plans. Our project solidified the historic significance of one of Dan Kiley's most important early landscape designs.

My work with Mary continued when she became the landscape architect for the University of Virginia, where she has been responsible for the oversight of contemporary landscape design and cultural landscape preservation for over 16 years. Throughout this time, our office has worked on numerous University projects with Mary. In each of our collaborations, she exhibited a unique ability to help seamlessly weave contemporary landscape themes into the historic fabric of the University.

Since Mary's arrival in Charlottesville, her passion for the preservation of public landscapes has expanded beyond the University. Mary has served as co-director of the Historic Landscape Institute with Peter Hatch of Monticello. She also served as co-editor with Charles Birnbaum of the book, *Design with Culture: Claiming America's Landscape Heritage*, which chronicles the origins of the landscape preservation movement of the United States.

Throughout her career, Mary Hughes has shown her leadership in the preservation and management of historic public landscapes. This is evident in her work with the National Park Service and at the University of Virginia. Mary's deep appreciation for design, history and preservation of historic landscapes is unique in a world where resources are so easily compromised. It is for these contributions that I enthusiastically support the nomination of Mary Hughes for the LaGasse Medal.

Sincerely,



Gregg Bleam, FASLA
Principal