

AT THE BEGINNING, LOOKING BACK

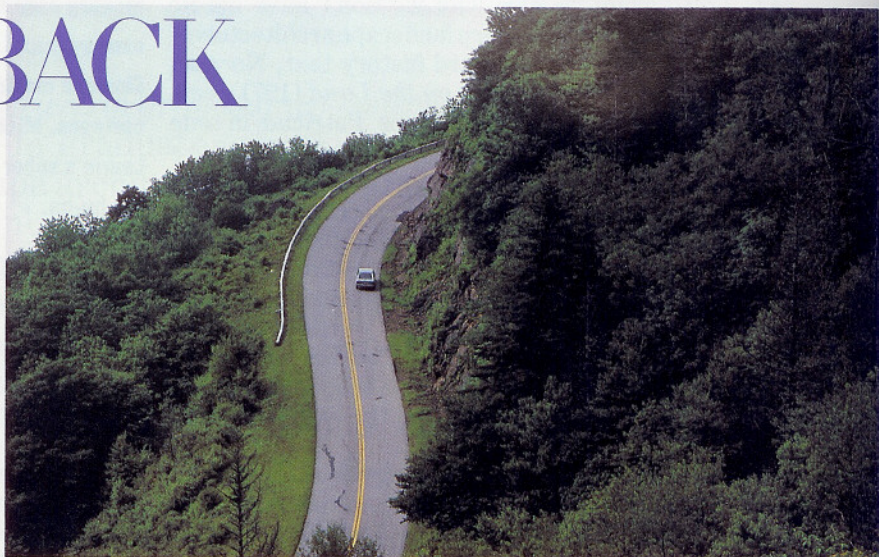
BY MICHAEL LECCESE

PORTRAITS BY MICHAEL ANDERSON

An opinionated quartet ponders the profession's ups and downs

Are the best times ahead for landscape architecture? You could draw that conclusion from a recent exchange among two of the field's most outspoken figures and two of its most reasonable. They met in Washington, D.C., to assess

eight decades of building parks, planning roads and saving the environment. The four also broached such "terrible tragedies" as the rejection of Lewis Mumford's humanist values and the debacle of urban renewal. □ M. Paul Friedberg, FASLA, and Ian McHarg, FASLA, looked every bit the iconoclasts. Urbanistic designer of plazas and indoor gardens, Friedberg personified the crisp New Yorker, clad entirely in black. Regional planner and incendiary ecologist, McHarg wore a pleated tuxedo shirt with his academician's blazer.

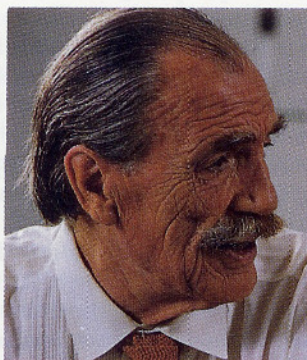


JOHN RILEY/FOLIO

Their foil was the bespectacled Ray Freeman, FASLA, 30-year veteran of major planning efforts with the National Park Service. Moderating was William H. Tishler, ASLA, a professor at the University of Wisconsin and editor of *American Landscape Architecture: Designers and Places* (Preservation Press, 1989).

Each speaker seemed to view the profession's legacy as intertwined with his own. Friedberg, McHarg and Freeman have been friends and colleagues through the years with many of the field's shining lights. Tishler has edited essays appraising the careers of designers from Thomas Jefferson to Thomas Church. More amiable bull session than history lesson, the forum began with Friedberg and Freeman exchanging playful punches and ended with McHarg crooning Louis Armstrong songs.

Tishler started the discussion by asking for examples of seminal contributions since 1910. "My own agency was very much shaped by the



"Conservation did not figure in the education of landscape architects during [the 1940s]. The working environmentalist didn't exist."
—McHarg

Olmsteds," said Freeman. "The first professional person that the Park Service actually hired after the first Act of 1916 was a landscape architect, Charles B. Punchard, Jr. He was stationed in California because all the parks were in the West in those days. This harks back to Olmsted, Sr., and his role in the Yosemite Valley. Landscape architects made a major contribution to the environment of this country in the early 1900s. Arthur Carhart, a landscape architect, was a strong environmentalist with the U.S. Forest Service in 1919, and is one of the founders of the Wilderness Society. So the profession was very active."

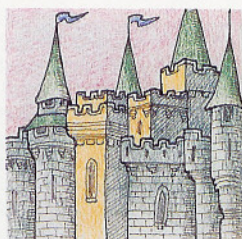
Tishler turned to McHarg, "Ian, would you say that we've lost that—"

"No, no, I received none of that during my education at all," countered McHarg, rubbing

Parkways like the Blue Ridge (above) and Rock Creek (opposite) melded conservation, aesthetics and roads.

1970

Walt Disney World
Orlando, Florida
Walt Disney Productions
Once 27,000 acres of rural Florida, America's premier theme park has altered our concept of vacation and recreation.



1971

SUNY-Buffalo
Buffalo, New York
Sasaki, Dawson, DeMay
A 1,250-acre branch campus for 50,000 students, its central feature is a 70-acre man-made lake. The campus maintains much of the feeling of its rural setting.

1973

Amelia Island, Florida
Wallace, McHarg, Roberts & Todd
On the southernmost of the Atlantic barrier islands—Florida's only one—this 1,600 acre resort community was planned to accomplish the "optimum fit between man's requirement . . . and the existing ecology."

1974

Inner Harbor
Baltimore, Maryland
Wallace, Roberts & Todd
This centerpiece and catalyst for Baltimore's revitalization mixed new commercial buildings and the city's historic waterfront open space. Commented *Landscape Architecture* in 1981, the design "clarifies a kaleidoscope of visual elements [and facilitates] the best qualities of urban life."