

February 22, 2007



Colorado Chapter
American Society of Landscape Architects
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Board of Trustees
American Society of Landscape Architects
c/o Carolyn Mitchell, Honors and Awards Coordinator
636 Eye Street NW
Washington, DC 20001

Dear Trustees:

On behalf of the members of the Colorado Chapter, it is my honor to nominate Joe A. Porter, FASLA, for your consideration for the ASLA Medal.

As a young professor at North Carolina State University, Joe became impressed with the potential for the private sector to make positive change in improving the urban environment of America and for enhancing our quality of life. It was a notion that was perhaps unfashionable in the 1960s when "the system" was suspect and considered the root of many problems. With tremendous energy, enthusiasm, and passion, Joe chose to engage the development community and to work to change it -- a daunting task.

Moving to Colorado in 1972, Joe founded a small firm in the great American West, a vast landscape which at the time had few examples of landscape architecture and even fewer landscape architecture firms. With one project in hand, he set up shop with his partner, Don Ensign, FASLA. Today, 35 years later, it has grown to 200 employees, making it the largest firm in the region and one of the largest in the country. Yet size and economic prosperity were not Joe's goals. His hope was to create a model of collaborative design, an institution that would long outlive its original partners. Time would suggest that he met with great success, as the firm is now in its fourth generation of partners and carries on the legacy of design excellence set forth by its founders.

For the last three decades, the Mountain West has been one of the fastest growing regions of the country. As a result, projects in the West are often played out on both a national stage and in an extraordinary complex local context where traditional economies of agriculture, timber harvesting, and mining give way to new economies. It is a place where generations who have lived on the land for more than a century are being joined by a tremendous American migration. As a result, we have been profoundly lucky to have Joe helping to develop the vision that matched the scale of this vast landscape.

Joe Porter is a landscape architect who can see the big picture. Throughout his life and career he has always thought and acted boldly. He has challenged developers and communities to continually expand their thinking and to seek solutions which integrate issues of economics, environment, and community in an artful way. Due to his willingness to engage and embrace the development community, he has possessed the credibility and skill to address powerful agents of landscape change in a constructive way creating humane and environmentally sensitive solutions and model communities.

For his ability to champion a collaborative approach to design, his willingness and effectiveness in harnessing economic development as a positive agent of landscape change, and his leadership in challenging the profession to think big thoughts and to embrace grand challenges, Joe Porter is eminently worthy of the ASLA Medal.

Thank you for your consideration,

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Mark Tabor, ASLA
President, Colorado Chapter
American Society of Landscape Architects