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SALISBURY, NORTH CAROLINA 28144

March 2, 2007

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:

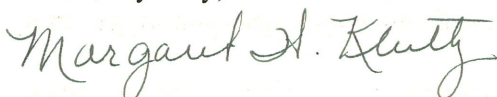
I am honored to nominate Rodney L. Swink, FASLA, for the LaGasse Medal in recognition of his notable contributions to management and conservation of natural resources and public landscapes.

As Director of the North Carolina Office of Urban Development, Rodney has worked tirelessly since 1984 to develop the North Carolina Main Street Center as a resource for small towns and cities across the state that are committed to revitalizing their downtowns. When I was Mayor of Salisbury, serving on several downtown committees and personally involved in downtown revitalization, I got an up-close look at the professional guidance and resources that Rodney and the Main Street Center provided for my city. But I also have had the privilege over the years of watching Rodney help many other cities and towns gain the courage to take back their downtowns and infuse into them an entrepreneurial spirit.

In the 1970s and early 1980s, many North Carolina downtowns were deteriorating, falling victim to the mall phenomena. Businesses that were once considered downtown anchors were relocating to suburban areas. Rodney's dedication to our state's downtown areas was key to reversing the trend toward downtown decline. The Main Street Center helped property owners and elected officials to realize that increasing the number and size of paved parking lots was not the answer to getting people back downtown. Rodney exposed local leaders to the wisdom of paying attention to the streetscapes that enhance the charm and identity of downtowns. Street trees, pocket parks, and seasonal plantings became important. Small businesses began to realize that they could offer a higher level of service and quality than discount stores located in suburban areas. Citizens developed pride in the historic fabric of their main streets and took on sensitive restoration and redevelopment of the architectural gems that had been boarded up or had fallen into disrepair. The initiatives of the Main Street Center also encouraged quality new development that was sensitive to the size, scale, and rhythm of the existing downtown area and greater community.

Without Rodney as their champion, North Carolina's downtowns would not be the growing, thriving places they are today. Salisbury and many other main street communities across our state now are not only home to popular retail and office space but also offer an exciting mix of unique residential, cultural arts, and fine dining opportunities. Rodney's direct contributions have been critical, but he also has been an inspiration to so many North Carolinians who are now themselves tireless champions of the downtown effort. Thanks largely to Rodney Swink's guidance over the years, small towns and cities across North Carolina may once again experience the energy of their downtowns as a pivotal social and cultural public landscape.

Yours very truly,



Margaret H. Kluttz