

Executive Committee  
Board of Trustees  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye St. NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

**Re: Letter of Nomination for the 2013 ASLA Design Medal: Stuart O. Dawson**

Dear Executive Committee Members:

From Chicago, on a crisp fall morning in 2011, I headed west on a pilgrimage. Leaving the city of Jens Jensen, O.C. Simonds, and Alfred Caldwell, I was soon immersed in a vast agricultural sweep. After two hours in this archetypal midwestern landscape I arrived at my destination: the headquarters of John Deere & Company. One America's most iconic tableaux—Eero Saarinen's valley-bridging structure with its foreground lakes, beautifully orchestrated topography and plantings—lay before me and I was, in all honesty, a bit giddy. I spent the next two days perusing the design by walking, driving, and sketching; observing from both indoors and outside; even conversing with Deere employees and everyday citizens of Moline. What emerged was a place rich, nuanced, and enduring in character, a place of poetic genius eliciting the essence of its immediate surroundings, its region, and I dare say, even its country. An American classic. A masterwork.

For me, the pilgrimage to the Deere headquarters confirmed the profound ability of designed landscapes to communicate and inspire when composed by a sensitive and skilled designer, and it ultimately inspired this letter. You see, that pilgrimage led to the concept for a design studio at Harvard's Graduate School of Design and led to my meeting and collaborating with Deere's acknowledged author, Stuart O. Dawson.

That the American Society of Landscape Architects' Annual Meeting is convening in the great City of Boston at the same time that the Boston-based firm, Sasaki Associates, is celebrating its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of practice has not escaped notice. The concurrence of these events inspired the nomination of Sasaki's Principal Emeritus, Stuart O. Dawson, for the 2013 ASLA Design Medal.

Stu Dawson's role in the success of Sasaki, an interdisciplinary design practice recognized in 2007 with the ASLA's Landscape Architecture Firm Award, as well his impact on the broader profession of landscape architecture, cannot be overstated. A design principal at Sasaki for **more than half a century**, Stu has sustained a body of built landscapes possessing all of the characteristics – lasting, sensitive, contextual, vibrant, and experiential – that embody the best of what is possible in highest aspirations of our profession.

If one measure of this sustained contribution is recognition via awards, I should note Stu's work has been awarded over 83 times in the past fifty years. The diversity of the awards is remarkable, including awards bestowed by national organizations such as the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Institute of Architects, the General Services Administration, the Waterfront Center, the US Army Corps of Engineers, the American Planning Association, the Urban Land Institute, and the Presidential Design Awards.

Like many of Stu's peers with similar legacies who have been recognized with the Design Medal in recent years – Peter Walker, Laurie Olin, and M. Paul Friedberg – Stu has had many honors bestowed upon him. He is the recipient of the ASLA Medal, the designer of the ASLA Centennial Medallion Award-winning Boston Waterfront Park, a member of the Council of Fellows, and a pioneer within the Cultural Landscape Foundation's Oral History project. The ASLA Design Medal is not among these honors. It is time.

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## **Background**

*“So, I decided to stay in Urbana and attend the University of Illinois... Mom and Dad introduced me to Stan White and the profession called landscape architecture. I was really interested in architecture, because I hadn't heard of landscape architecture, even though I'd fallen in love with elm trees and all the things they do.”*

*– Stu Dawson, TCLF Oral History Project*

An Urbana, Illinois native, Stu attended the University of Illinois and studied landscape architecture under Stanley White. He accepted Hideo Sasaki's offer to study at Harvard's Graduate School of Design, and received his MLA in 1958. Stu began at Sasaki while still a student, working up to the role of principal in 1964 (Sasaki Dawson and DeMay). Under Stu's thoughtful leadership and mentorship, Sasaki developed over many decades into a diverse, interdisciplinary firm with a national portfolio. This includes an incredible range of project types – from urban and waterfront developments to college and university campuses, from resorts to corporate headquarters in the United States and abroad.

For the purposes of this nomination, we can identify two fundamental eras in Stu's work – the post-WWII economy of corporate headquarters, college campuses, and private development, and the last quarter century's waterfront revitalization movement. The early work includes projects such as master plans for Sea Pines Plantation and the Harbour Town waterfront development, both in Hilton Head, South Carolina and the iconic plaza and reflecting pool at the Christian Science Center, Boston. The later projects include the Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park and Long Wharf, both in Boston; the redevelopment of downtown Newburyport, Massachusetts, the Indianapolis Riverfront Park and National Harbor in Prince George's County, Maryland.

Stu's work in both eras was innovative. His early work displays exceptional integration of built form with natural systems and landscape expression. His later work helped pioneer the new civic role of waterfronts in America.

## **Working with Architects (1956-1973)**

*“In fact, we worked on eight different corporate headquarters with SOM – seven with Bruce Graham and one with Gordon Bunschaft. At the same time, we were working with Eero Saarinen on four different corporate headquarters, and Dirk Lohan, of Fujikawa, Conterato, Lohan and Associates, Mies' grandson, with three corporate headquarters.”*

*– Stu Dawson, TCLF Oral History Project*

From roughly 1955 to 1975, Stu's practice was heavily focused on accommodating corporate migration to suburban contexts. Stu's work with architects in the corporate campus boom of the 1950s and 1960s – Upjohn, TRW, McDonald's, and John Deere, for example – may seem removed from today's practice of landscape architecture. However, the work generated in these years embodies principles we celebrate today as innovative.

First, the integration and holistic nature of these teams – landscape architects, architects, and engineers working side by side throughout the process – persists as a model that is often discussed and celebrated but rarely achieved to the same level. Second, the work holds up well by today's sustainability standards– from acres of restored meadows at the TRW Corporate Headquarters to the delicate, designed relationship between built form and natural hydrology of the John Deere site. And lastly, the works are timeless when compared with today's aesthetic sensibilities. Each project is rendered with a crisp and thoughtful attention to detail, craft, composition, and form. Two of the most exemplary examples follow.

### Deere Headquarters; Moline, Illinois

Opened in 1964, the 1200-acre corporate campus is nestled in hilly, wooded land just north of the Rock River floodplain. The design, a collaboration between Eero Saarnin Associates and Sasaki Associates – led by Stu Dawson, unites building and landscape. Two adjacent lakes

serve as focal points of the park, viewable from within the main building. The lower lake also functions as a reservoir for flash floods and as a heat exchange device for the air conditioning system. Roads and parking are minimized, preserving a mostly natural landscape. A few highly-maintained lawns and gardens serve as a setting for Saarinen's architecture and the Deere collection of sculpture.

#### Christian Science Center; Boston, Massachusetts

Completed in 1971, the world headquarters of the First Church of Christ, Scientist in Boston's Back Bay neighborhood features a monumental central open space similar to the plazas and piazzas neighboring European cathedrals. To contextualize the campus architect Arnaldo Cossutta of I.M. Pei Associates, in association with the Boston Redevelopment Authority, created a 25-acre master plan encouraging private investment nearby and connecting the campus to the community. Cossutta retained Sasaki Associates to provide the setting: a great plaza with a circular spray fountain, an iconic 700-foot long reflecting pool, and a grove containing nearly 200 linden trees. The detailing of the linden bosque continues to serve – over forty years later – as a model for urban tree planting. The Cultural Landscape Foundation, for example, states: "Innovative now, prescient then, the continuous soil trenches beneath the linden bosque have granted large, healthy shade trees to contemporary visitors."

#### **Finding Home on the Waterfront (1974-present)**

*"Maybe it has to do with growing up in the Midwest, in Urbana, Illinois. We didn't really have any water, except through a hose... I love waterfronts. If everything in life happened on the waterfront, I'd be the happiest guy in North America."*

– Stu Dawson, TCLF Oral History Project

In the 1970s, American cities began reconceiving waterfronts, moving away from privatization and industry-only and toward more public and recreational uses. At the forefront of this effort, Stu led the Boston Waterfront Park project – one of the first revitalized waterfronts in the nation. What followed was decades of work on American waterfronts – perhaps one of the greatest bodies of waterfront work in our profession. Two areas of distinction are embodied in the work – one at the scale of the city and one at the detail scale.

Stu's concept of the waterfront is not limited to a linear edge. Rather, he always viewed the waterfront as an integral part of the city's urban fabric. Perhaps the best known example of this is the green yarn model. When presenting the master plan for the Boston Waterfront to the Boston Redevelopment Authority, Stu draped green yarn along all of the public ways in the cities, demonstrating the need for public realm "everywhere", but also illustrating its function as an urban connective tissue. Perhaps it is for these reasons that Stu's waterfront work rarely feels peripheral or isolated – but rather becomes inextricably linked to the identity of the city. One cannot imagine Charleston without its waterfront park.

Stu also conceives of the waterfront as a place of intense materiality. The lessons learned from the corporate work of earlier decades – scale, proportion, detail – became partnered with a new layer: abuse. Waterfronts are the harshest of environments for designers. Intense public use, flood dynamics, storm events, and working waterfront infrastructure all require a durable detailed design vocabulary. In "The Art of Landscape Detail", Niall Kirkwood describes the process of detailing the Boston Waterfront Park: "Now more than 20 years old, [it] stands as a representative of a model set of detail practices that address the nature of contemporary public civic space". Both Stu's understanding of the waterfront operating at these two scales – the city scale and the detail scale – are embodied in the following three examples.

#### Boston Waterfront

Boston Waterfront Park, in combination with Quincy Market, served as a catalyst for additional waterfront development and ushered in a commitment to increased public access along the inner harbor. It has triggered millions of dollars of private investment and miles of walkways and public spaces along the water. In its heyday, it served as a prime location for all kinds of

public events. Yet the impact is beyond local – the park modeled a new direction in urban planning: embracing and celebrating older neighborhoods instead of demolishing them. The park was awarded an ASLA Centennial Medallion.

#### Charleston Waterfront

Hired by the City of Charleston in the late 1970's, Sasaki created a master plan for the eastern edge the City. The plan, led by Stu Dawson, called for the revitalization of a series of waterfront brownfields and parking lots, instigated by a first-phase eight-acre linear waterfront park. The project transformed the riverfront into a public green space that includes promenades, piers, fountains, seating walls, and quiet gardens. The centerpiece is the iconic pineapple fountain, a reference to the traditional symbol of hospitality in the south. Restoration of native vegetation, including existing marsh grasses, protects the river's marine ecology. Since its 1990 dedication, the park has been a catalyst for new development and vacant property reclamation. It was awarded the ASLA Landmark Award in 2007.

#### Indianapolis Waterfront

The Indianapolis waterfront is an epic story of urban regeneration – one for which Stu Dawson led the charge for nearly two decades. Forty years ago, the waterfront was decrepit, abandoned. Today, the waterfront park provides a mix of commercial, cultural, and institutional destinations. The urban park reconnects downtown Indianapolis with the river is also an open space armature around which new development has occurred. The master plan goes beyond the practical provision of creating a recreational environment and creates a landscape that satisfies the community's deep desire for a sense of place unique to the site's particular cultural, historic, and topographic circumstances.

#### **Inspiring Generations of Practitioners**

*“Harvard, it was just a year really, the summer at Sasaki and then really eight months at Harvard, twelve months in all. It [was not] just Harvard, it had to be living in Cambridge and being exposed to so many different cultures, interfacing with MIT and with New York City and Maine at the other end and the exposure to classmates.”*

*– Stu Dawson, TCLF Oral History Project*

Stu, much like his mentor Hideo Sasaki, is committed to a model of practice rooted firmly in teaching. In the early days of the Sasaki practice up until just last year, Stu led a number of design studios at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Indeed, last spring he contributed substantially to my Harvard studio re-visiting one of his most renowned designs--the Deere & Company headquarters. Stu embraced the studio wholeheartedly and encouraged the students, even when their proposals suggested legible changes to the original scheme. That such a renowned designer would have the humility, honesty, and generosity, to reveal his own misgivings of a widely acknowledged masterwork was a revelation to the students. Of ideas, he demanded clarity and precision, but he also delved deeply into the power of a subtle swale or rise, and the poetry of the joint and reveal.

Teaching, however, extends beyond the formal classroom into all aspects of Stu's interactions. M. Elen Deming describes this philosophy well in her letter of support: “In those days, young Associates called the Firm “Sasaki University,” because it firmly embraced a commitment to professional mentoring and the discipline required to transform talented young people into consummate professionals”. Carl Steinitz once spoke of Hideo Sasaki's legacy. As a critic, he said, Hideo was more “light than heat.” This poetic sentiment captured the way Stu works as well – a method of teaching and practice focused on the creative illumination and steering of ideas. There are hundreds, maybe thousands, of practitioners that have learned from Stu – at the Sasaki office, on project teams, or in academia. The collective impact he has had on the profession of landscape architecture is immeasurable.

#### **Closing**

The ASLA Design Medal recognizes designers who have produced a body of exceptional design work for a sustained period of at least ten years. For his commitment to a collaborative

ethic of practice, his enduring passion for the details of our medium, his legacy of teaching and mentoring generations of landscape architects, and his exceptional body of design work over five decades of practice, Stu is worthy of this highest of honors of our profession.

Thank you for the opportunity to present this nomination.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Peter Osler". The signature is stylized with a large initial "P" and a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Peter Osler, RA, FAAR, ASLA  
Director, Program of Landscape Architecture  
Illinois Institute of Technology  
Assistant Professor



Executive Committee  
Board of Trustees  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye St. NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

**RE: Letter of Nomination for the 2013 ASLA Design Medal: Stuart O. Dawson**

Dear Trustees,

In many professional offices beginning with the Olmsted's there are often towering yet overlooked figures. Through TCLF's efforts with the Pioneers series, we are attempting to "lift the veil" on these practitioners (e.g. Edward Daugherty, FASLA who was awarded the ASLA Medal in 2010 did little to promote himself during his distinguished career). As we learned in our 2011 oral history module, Stuart "Stu" Dawson, like Daugherty, has practiced for more than fifty years and his significant body of award winning work has made remarkable contributions to shaping the post-war American landscape and how we practice as landscape architects.

A founding principal of the Sasaki firm since 1964, Dawson has participated in its development into an internationally-recognized interdisciplinary practice, overseeing a diversity of projects including urban and waterfront developments, college and university campuses, resorts, and corporate headquarters in the U.S. and abroad. He has won the respect of consultants and clients for his quiet observations of a site's potential and sensitive understanding of its needs while encouraging them to embrace innovative design solutions – and in some of these instances, like John Deere and Company in Moline, Illinois, with which he was first involved in 1959, his advice was sought for many decades thereafter.

There are far too many notable projects to mention where Stu played a leadership role in their planning and design, but in the following exemplary and enormously influential projects, Stu redefined the role of the landscape architect: the orchestrator. For example, the master plan for Sea Pines Plantation and its associated Harbour Town waterfront development in Hilton Head, South Carolina, set a new standard for addressing complex and interrelated systems, and has been touted for its ecologically-sensitive treatment;



while Christopher Columbus Waterfront Park in Boston (1974-76), among the nation's first revitalized waterfronts, raised the bar on crafting site-specific urban design solutions that were unique to a site – an idea that Stu also brought to Boston's historic Long Wharf in 1978, and Charleston Waterfront Park, along the Cooper River in Charleston, South Carolina (1978-1990). In these waterfront projects, systems-based solutions provided the foundation for nuanced site designs that bridged the history of a site through a Modernist lens.

The torch-carrier for multiple generations at the firm, where he embraced the Sasaki spirit of creative collaboration, he has given back to the profession through his long association as Instructor at Harvard's Graduate School of Design as well as guiding and mentoring talent within the firm. Stu was also a Founding Member Boston Landmarks Commission and a served as a Peer Professional at the U.S. General Services Administration – two examples of agency influence where landscape architecture cast a greater shadow because of his volunteerism and commitment.

Finally, on a personal note, the last day we shot the Dawson oral history, we were on the outdoor deck at Sasaki's office in Watertown where Stu was joined by his son, Mark, now a principal, and his grandson Travis Mazerall – three generations of Dawsons at the firm. It was immediately clear -- in this very emotional moment -- that Stu's influence on his family, the firm and landscape architecture around the globe is both nuanced and expansive. It would be a wonderful honor to award Stuart Dawson the Design Medal this year on the 60th anniversary of Sasaki Associates firm at the Boston meeting – a city that Stu has done much to shape.

With best wishes,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'C' followed by a horizontal line that tapers to the right.

Charles A. Birnbaum, FASLA, FAAR  
President and Founder



*City of Charleston*

*Joseph P. Riley, Jr.*  
*Mayor*

February 28, 2013

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

RE: 2013 ASLA Design Medal, Letter of Endorsement for Stuart O. Dawson, FASLA

Dear Executive Committee Members:

It is an honor and pleasure to nominate landscape architect Stuart O. Dawson, FASLA, to receive the 2013 ASLA Design Medal. Stu is clearly worthy of this high honor having contributed and influenced so many cities like ours by simply designing beautiful public environments, making our communities even more livable.

We opened our Waterfront Park in 1990, and I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Stu for over 25 years and can say Stu is an extraordinary leader in his field. He has the ability to listen to clients like me and complex interdisciplinary teams solving the functional challenges of cities and yet not lose sight of the esthetic beauty and context of a city. In truth, Stu designed our waterfront park to be truly unique to Charleston, with identity and timelessness, and endured Hurricane Hugo, becoming our community's front yard on our harbor. Stu's ability to envision our waterfront park was in part one of the catalyst for our city's 20th century transformation. Stu has led many successful projects throughout the country and world, and it is his leadership and design sensibility that helps leaders like me make our cities beautiful, successful and attractive places to visit and live in.

Charleston is a better city and forever grateful for Stu's contribution, and as a person, I consider Stu a friend and an inspiration. His work is powerful, clear, well-made and beautiful.

Stu Dawson is an artist and a great one – he is a humanist and a great one, too. He has created beautiful works of art, parks and public spaces that enrich the lives of all who see and use them. I support Stu's nomination for the ASLA Design Medal with enthusiasm and without reservation.

Most sincerely yours,

Joseph P. Riley, Jr.  
Mayor, City of Charleston



*P.O. Box 652, Charleston, South Carolina 29402*

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February 18, 2013

**2013 ASLA Design Medal Nominations** c/o Carolyn Mitchell

American Society of Landscape Architects

636 Eye Street, NW

Washington, DC 20001-3736

(202) 898 2444

**To the Members of the Executive Committee and the Board of Trustees;**

It is my distinct honor to support the nomination of Stuart O. Dawson for the ASLA Design Medal of 2013. The Design Medal was introduced “to recognize an individual landscape architect who has produced a body of exceptional design work at a sustained level for a period of at least ten years.” Well, how about someone who has been a master designer for more than *fifty* years? If longevity and excellence are the criteria, Stu Dawson is your clear choice. For over five decades, Dawson has demonstrated a positive impact on the field of landscape architecture: in his advocacy and support for education; sustaining leadership in one of the world’s premier multidisciplinary design firms; and his astonishing personal design legacy.

First some background: As Professor and former Head of the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign (UIUC), I can attest that Stu Dawson is a legend here. Born and raised in Urbana, Illinois, Stu attended the University of Illinois (BLA 1957) in its salad days and quickly became the young protégé and partner of a young alumnus and instructor named Hideo Sasaki. Both men stand among Illinois’s most visionary and outstanding graduates; their legacy endures in the work of the firm that Sasaki and Dawson co-founded with architect Ken DeMay in 1959, now called Sasaki Associates, Inc.

Connected to that, Stu Dawson has been a part of my larger professional life for nearly thirty years, ever since I joined Sasaki Associates fresh out of graduate school in 1985. Clearly the “master designer” in the firm, Stu was among my first important professional supervisors and mentors. His freehand sketches and site diagrams were paragons of clarity and insight that wowed clients with their conceptual power and simplicity. I learned a great deal from him on the job, but perhaps even more later, once I began teaching, when memories of our work conversations would suddenly resurface and illuminate a design problem.

An unbroken chain of creative influence and affinity runs directly between Urbana and Sasaki Associates. Later I would learn that the “Sasaki Way,” as we called it, comprised the basic pedagogy imparted by University of Illinois Professor Stanley White, perfected and retaught at Harvard by Hideo Sasaki, and then rather brilliantly operationalized by Stu Dawson. Applying that now-familiar process of site inventory, analysis, and synthesis to design and planning projects, Stu Dawson and Hideo Sasaki patiently *taught* clients how to recognize and value the resources they sought to develop. The rock-solid professional reputation of

the firm was built on the trust that client/collaborators such as architect Eero Saarinen (John Deere Headquarters), and I.M. Pei (Christian Science Center) placed in Dawson. He earned similar respect from public sector clients—whether a Mayor (Waterfront Park Charleston, SC), or a Chancellor (Master Plan for the University of Illinois). Strong attention to client communications, material innovation and, above all, powerful and enduring design concepts are still hallmarks of the Sasaki “brand.”

Stu Dawson is a strong advocate and supporter for many professional educational programs, not just Illinois. He recently taught a joint studio at Harvard GSD with Peter Osler, a faculty member at IIT Chicago. Yet Dawson’s DNA seems to be part of our institution and he has been generous to us on many levels. Indeed, our largest design studio bears his name—the Stuart O. Dawson studio. As a member of our Alumni Resource Committee, he provides us with feedback on our programs, sponsors our Hideo Sasaki Lecture series, hosts outreach meetings in Sasaki’s offices, and supports student interns. During our Department’s centennial celebration in Fall 2008, Dawson led the Classes of ’57 and ’58 in raising funds for a new travelling scholarship named for Professor Chuck Harris. By helping extend and complete professional education through opportunities for world travel, Stu Dawson thus shares one of his own cardinal values—learning about the world directly from cultural, geomorphic, and architectural precedents.

In those days, young Associates called the firm “Sasaki University,” because it firmly embraced a commitment to professional mentoring and the discipline required to transform talented young people into consummate professionals. That this is even more true today is another key part of Dawson’s legacy. Although professional development always was an important part of the ethos of the firm, individual “stars” were never foregrounded. Dawson believes the best work emerges from creative collaboration and teamwork; all members of the team make important contributions; and the world’s wicked problems require more than individual expertise. We happen to think this is a model for contemporary teaching.

Our Department deeply values our long relationship with Stu Dawson and the firm he has built over the past five decades. If and when our graduates are hired at Sasaki Associates we believe it is, in part, a litmus test of our own success as educators. We are therefore deeply honored to support Stuart O. Dawson for ASLA’s 2013 Design Medal. No one practicing today is more deserving of this honor. In every sense, Stu is a master designer as well as a master critic, a master advocate for landscape and an important organizational leader besides. When the 2013 ASLA conference is held in Boston this Fall, it will be possible for attendees to admire firsthand some of Dawson’s finest design achievements, including the iconic Christian Science Center and Columbus waterfront park. This will be the very best possible moment to recognize him with ASLA’s 2013 Design Medal. Thank you for giving him your highest respect.

Yours very sincerely,



M. Elen Deming, D.Des., ASLA, FCELA  
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Executive Committee  
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23 February 2013

Re: Letter of Nomination for the ASLA Design Medal: Stu Dawson

Dear Executive Committee Members:

I am pleased to support the nomination for Stu Dawson, Principal of Sasaki Associates, for the ASLA Design Medal. As a young landscape architect, Stu joined Hideo Sasaki in 1953 in an adventure of discovery and transformation. Together with their partners, they evolved a firm that had an early and almost immediate impact across the landscape and design profession. Hideo was generous to encourage Stu to lead projects for some of the most significant clients of the era.

One of the most powerful projects of his young career was the landscape for the John Deere Headquarters in Moline, Illinois. Deeply rooted in the traditions of landscape architecture, working with Eero Saarinen and John Dinkeloo, Stu and the Sasaki team invented a new prototype for the 20th century. The project marks another great quality of Stu's practice - his close collaboration with engineers. While the Deere landscape represented a powerful expression and reinterpretation of the romantic tradition, some of its most significant innovations were in the storm water management of the site. The close integration of architectural form and the remarkable setting of the main building complex are a testament to the collaboration between engineer, architect and landscape architect. For decades after its construction, Stu remained at the service of the Deere Company in the evolution and maintenance of the landscape. The project was recognized with an ASLA Landmark award in 1991.

The Charleston Waterfront Park grew out of a collaboration with planners and urban designers who devised a strategy for the regeneration of a great southern town that was suffering through a long period of decline. The Waterfront Park was a critical part of a larger idea in city building. The site was a derelict industrial area located at the edge of the historic city. The design strategy represented innovative ideas for their time in the late 1970's early 1980's - restoration of an ecologically sensitive salt marsh, careful and strategic urban infill buildings, a clever parking strategy and most significantly - the creation of a rich and varied public realm for the adjacent district, the citizens of larger Charleston and visitors from across the country and around the world. The evolving project became a model of economic revitalization and growth.

Stu's relationship with Mayor Riley, his client for almost 30 years of projects in Charleston, is one of the great collaborations in contemporary landscape architecture. The work, the Mayor and the landscape architect were recognized by a multitude of awards including the Presidential Design Award in 1991 and the ASLA Landmark Award in 2007.

Stu's relationships with clients are legendary. Many became close friends and their lives were transformed by the visions and ideas of a great landscape architect.

Over the years at Sasaki Associates, Stu became a mentor for young landscape architects and colleagues across all the disciplines of the firm. I met Stu just a few days after beginning work in 1987. As a young architect and urban designer, my eyes were opened to the world of landscape architecture through Stu.

The ASLA Design Medal recognizes designers who have produced a body of exceptional design work for a sustained period of at least ten years. Stu Dawson's enthusiasm for cities, urbanism and the power of landscape design to improve the world is infectious and inspiring. He has not only influenced generations of designers but produced an array of transformative works across the country.

For this legacy of production, his model of collaboration and his passion for landscape - I support Stu Dawson for the 2013 ASLA Design Medal.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Pieprz." with a period at the end. The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Dennis Pieprz, HASLA  
Principal  
Sasaki Associates

Executive Committee  
Board of Trustees  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

27 February 2013

re: Letter of Nomination for the 2013 ASLA Design Medal: Stuart O. Dawson

Dear Executive Committee Members:

I write to support the nomination of Stu Dawson for the ASLA Design Medal. Stu has designed some of the most significant, enduring and influential landscapes of the modern era. Many of Stu's designs are national landmarks or signify an important transition point in American landscape design over the past five decades.

*Fifty years ago:* As a young landscape architect in Hideo Sasaki's office, Stu leads the design and collaborates with Eero Saarinen and Kevin Roche on the landscape for the John Deere and Company Headquarters. This beautiful and tranquil landscape in the Illinois countryside, completed in 1964, sets a modern precedent for landscape architects creating corporate settings outside of American cities.

*Forty years ago:* Stu collaborates with Araldo Cossutta of I. M. Pei's office to design the 14-acre site of the Christian Science Center. A popular new Boston landmark is created with a 700-foot-long reflecting pool and fountain. The new plaza and gardens are an early and quintessential example of bold private interventions in American cities—making privately owned open spaces publically accessible.

At about the same time in Boston, Stu collaborates with civil engineers on the design of Boston Waterfront Park to reconnect the city with its historic waterfront. Stu invents a robust design expression that captures the scale and enduring qualities appropriate for the tough urban environment of an old industrial waterfront. The design is a catalyst for Boston's revitalization, as well as a model for many other American cities as underutilized waterfronts become opportunities for landscape architects across the country. Boston Waterfront Park helps initiate this return to the waterfront.

*Thirty years ago:* Stu is selected by Mayor Riley and the City of Charleston, South Carolina, to reclaim abandoned waterfront land for this historic city. Side by side with Mayor Riley, Stu absorbs the feel and character of the city and its people, and reinterprets these attributes in a contemporary way in the design of Charleston Waterfront Park. It is embraced—in fact, loved—

by the residents of Charleston as it reflects the community's engagement. It is the first step in significant reinvestment and increased tourism in Charleston. This project marks a transition as landscape architects increasingly aim to make designs that both celebrate the past and, at the same time, have a powerful social impact.

*Twenty years ago:* Stu is selected by the Army of Corp of Engineers and the City of Indianapolis to undo an overly engineered waterfront. Stu works closely with Sasaki civil engineers to remove floodwalls in favor of a vegetated riparian edge and green spaces that slope down to the river. With a place for residents on the water, Downtown Indianapolis experiences a renaissance and attracts new investment. This project marks the trend, early on, of landscape architects reshaping the urban infrastructure of American cities to create an enhanced public realm.

Added together, Stu Dawson, in his own modest and quiet way, designed these seminal projects that are at the forefront of our profession, and seemingly foretell future trends in American cities as well as the future direction of American landscape architecture. I strongly support his nomination for the ASLA Design Medal.

Sincerely,

Alan Ward, FASLA

























































