

Unlimited Vision:

Donald Beekman Myer, FAIA Wins the 2004 Centennial Award

by Mary Fitch, AICP

On behalf of the Board of Directors, Washington Chapter/AIA President David Neumann announced that Donald Beekman Myer, FAIA, has been selected as the 2004 winner of the Chapter's Centennial Award. This award is the highest honor the Chapter can bestow upon a member. It is given to an architect whose contributions span at least a decade of service to the Chapter, the community, and the profession.

In its unanimous decision to award the medal to Myer, the Centennial Award Jury commended Myer's active participation in the Chapter and the community.

Noting his time as Clerk of the Works of the National Cathedral, one juror said "Don was and still is an incredibly positive and respected leader in the community. He is wonderful ally for good design."

Myer's career in Washington began "after a distinguished career as an army truck driver," with a National Park Service appointment to work on renovation of the Washington Monument. Soon, thereafter he started his 27-year career with the US Commission of Fine Arts. "This was an extremely exciting period," says Myer, "It was a great opportunity to work with people who really shaped this community." Myer was noted not only for doing his job well, but for always "being on the verge of some new enterprise." According to Charles Atherton, FAIA, former Secretary of the Commission of Fine Arts, Myer's study of the **Bridges of Washington**, "is the only source of information about this important element of the city fabric and has been in demand since its first printing in 1974." After he retired from the Commission, Myer went on to become Clerk of the Works of the National Cathedral and Curator of Buildings and Grounds at Tudor Place in Georgetown.

Beyond his service to the city and the nation, Myer was pivotal in the growth and development of the Washington Chapter/AIA. "During its all-important centennial year, he not only served as president, but also undertook the publishing of the *Centennial*

History of the Washington Chapter, no small task given the complex and lengthy record of Chapter involvement in extensive planning efforts leading up to the first centennial of the capital and the 1901-02 Senate Park Commission," wrote Atherton in his letter of support. Myer played an important role in the formation of the Washington Architectural Foundation and served as its president from 1997-1999. "What astonishes me about Don Myer" one juror noted "was the amount of energy and political capital he gave to the Chapter purely for the good of the order."



Donald Beekman Myer, FAIA

Rather than rest on his laurels, Myer has continued to be active. He teaches graduate studies in Architecture at The Catholic University of America, continues to play a role in the Cathedral community, and is taking classes in botanic illustration. "I am enthusiastic about the future. It was a great thrill to play an essentially behind-the-scenes role and watch how the city has changed. The future is looking really great for the architectural profession."

Myer is particularly thrilled that preservation has come into its own in Washington. "It was so wonderful to be part of projects like the Willard, the Hotel Washington, and the Apex Building on Pennsylvania Avenue. He teaches his students now about the interrelatedness of design disciplines. "Preservation has really grown to include urban design, campus design, landscape; it's all how you integrate it."

In his letter of support, Mark McInturff, FAIA summed up Myer's career with these words:

I have always appreciated the fact that the Centennial Medal can be given to a recipient for any one of a variety of forms of service to the profession and the city. There have been great designers, great teachers, and great community leaders. That the medal celebrates the diversity of our profession makes it only more appropriate that Don, who is such an advocate of the broadest vision of design, should be its 2004 recipient. 🏆



Councilmember Jim Graham

A Champion for the City

Councilmember Jim Graham Receives Foundation's Glenn Brown Award

by Mary Fitch, AICP

There is an urban renaissance going on in Washington's most populous ward. New money, new vigor, new buildings are coming to Adams Morgan, 14th Street, and Columbia Heights with near blinding speed. Previous issues of ARCHITECTUREDC Magazine are filled with new and proposed projects. The speed at which things are changing in Ward 1 could ultimately be detrimental to the neighborhood fabric. Councilmember Jim Graham has worked hard, however, both to spur the economic revitalization of the ward and to protect its diverse character.

It is for his sincere effort to make sure that new prosperity benefits all—neighbors old and new—that Graham has been selected as the 2004 recipient of the Glenn Brown Award. Created in 2000 by the Washington Chapter/AIA and the Washington Architectural Foundation, the Glenn Brown Award honors an individual who has raised the public awareness of architecture and its benefits to society, thereby improving the quality of life in Washington, DC.

Although Graham has been a Councilmember since 1999, his influence on the neighborhood started well before his government service. As executive director of the Whitman

Walker Clinic he helped pioneer DC's response to the AIDS crisis and build a network of clinics and service that serves DC's gay and lesbian community, brought a measure of stability to the 14th Street Corridor, and helped ready it for the renaissance it enjoys today. "I'm very proud," says Graham, "that I was able to save two Arts and Crafts commercial buildings in Washington." As Councilmember, Graham made sure the new features of the Tivoli Theatre project protected the historic theatre while bringing new services to the neighborhood. He helped link parts of the ward with a simple, yet innovative transit system, the U Street Link, which connects the U Street and Woodley Park Metro stations. He was also the champion of the award-winning streetscape and façade improvement program along Georgia Avenue (ARCHITECTUREDC, Winter 2004, p. 30).

In announcing the award, Foundation President Stephen J. Vanze, AIA noted that "Jim Graham has made a difference in a very diverse DC community at a time of its greatest transition. At the same time we celebrate the new development, we also applaud Mr. Graham's efforts that development benefits all the residents of the neighborhood." 🏆