



Rockefeller Foundation Honors Three New Yorkers' Urban Activism with 2010 Jane Jacobs Medal

Legendary Central Park Activist is honored for lifetime leadership and the torch is passed to a new generation of innovative and passionate park leaders

New York, NY, July 20, 2010 – Today the Rockefeller Foundation announced the recipients of the 2010 Jane Jacobs Medal – Joshua David and Robert Hammond, Co-Founders of Friends of the High Line and Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, longtime and founding President of the Central Park Conservancy and current President of the Foundation for Landscape Studies. The Medals are awarded each year to recipients whose work creates new ways of seeing and understanding New York City, challenges traditional assumptions and creatively uses the urban environment to make New York City a place of hope and expectation.

Joshua David and Robert Hammond, whose vision and collaboration transformed the once derelict High Line elevated railroad into one of New York City's most unique parks, will receive the 2010 Jane Jacobs Medal for New Ideas and Activism. Elizabeth Barlow Rogers, a pioneer for her work in park management and landscape beautification – and perhaps best known for her 16 years with the Central Park Conservancy, will receive the 2010 Jane Jacobs Medal for Lifetime Leadership. Along with the Medal, Joshua David and Robert Hammond will receive \$60,000 each and Elizabeth Barlow Rogers will receive \$80,000.

Joshua David and Robert Hammond will each donate \$20,000 of their winnings to Friends of the High Line. Elizabeth Barlow Rogers will continue her lifetime of commitment to landscapes and parks by donating her full \$80,000 award to the Foundation for Landscape Studies.

The Rockefeller Foundation Jane Jacobs Medal was created in 2007 to honor the author and activist who died in April 2006 at the age of 89. The Rockefeller Foundation's relationship with Jane Jacobs dates back to the 1950s, when the Foundation made a grant to the then-obscure writer from Greenwich Village, for the research and writing of the book, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. Now more than fifty years later, Jane Jacobs' work remains one of the most influential books ever written on urban design.

"The Rockefeller Foundation Jane Jacobs Medal recognizes New Yorkers for extraordinary work that has changed the way we think about development, neighborhoods and planning within cities," **said Dr. Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation.** "It is no surprise that this year's winners are Joshua David, Robert Hammond, and Elizabeth Barlow Rogers – all of whom have displayed vision and innovation in the building and restoring of our city's storied parklands to make our neighborhoods sustainable and livable, embodying and defining the very legacy of civic activism that Jane Jacobs fostered."

Robert Hammond, a resident of the West Village, then a consultant for many non-profit and entrepreneurial endeavors, and self-taught artist, met Joshua David, a freelance writer and long-time resident of Chelsea, at a community board meeting in 1999. They were drawn to the meeting after hearing of plans to demolish the High Line – a 1.5-mile-long railroad viaduct elevated above the streets on the west side of Manhattan. Both Mr. Hammond and Mr. David saw the historic structure as an icon of New York’s industrial past, and they believed it had the potential to be transformed into an amenity for the neighborhood.

That same year, Mr. Hammond and Mr. David founded Friends of the High Line – a non-profit advocating for the High Line’s preservation and reuse as a public open space. They joined forces with their friends, neighbors, and elected officials who believed in their cause, including Gifford Miller and Christine C. Quinn, who at the time were New York City Council members and later each went on to become the Council Speaker. In March of 2002, Friends of the High Line gained its first support from the City of New York – a City Council resolution advocating for the High Line’s reuse.

From there, Friends of the High Line gained the support of the administration of Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg, who reversed the City’s policy favoring demolition of the High Line. With the leadership of the Bloomberg administration and its strong partnership with Friends of the High Line, the City of New York later received park designation for the High Line through the Federal rail-banking program that allows abandoned transportation corridors to be used as trails. The City, under the vision of New York City Planning Commission Chair Amanda Burden, then created an award-winning urban planning framework for West Chelsea, which supported the High Line’s reuse while providing new housing opportunities and enhancing the neighborhood’s thriving art gallery district.

By 2006, when the City broke ground on the first of three phases of construction of the High Line, Friends of the High Line had achieved political and financial support from all the elected officials representing the High Line neighborhoods, numerous civic organizations, and thousands of preservationists, open-space advocates, design professionals, and civic-minded individuals and businesses. The first section of the High Line opened to the public in June of 2009. In its first year, the park has welcomed more than two million visitors from New York and around the world.

After years of relentless activism to save the High Line from demolition, Friends of the High Line is now the non-profit conservancy working with the New York City Department of Parks & Recreation, led by Commissioner Adrian Benepe, to make sure the High Line is maintained as a great public space for all New Yorkers and visitors to enjoy. In addition to overseeing the maintenance, operations, and public programming for the park, Friends of the High Line works to raise the essential private funding to support more than 70 percent of the park’s annual operating budget. It has also raised nearly \$50 million to support construction of the first two sections of the park and an endowment for its future operations.

For more than a decade, Mr. Hammond and Mr. David’s work has embodied the spirit of Jane Jacobs. They challenged the prevailing notion of how their neighborhood should

evolve, and rallied together an entire community to build a landmark in landscape design that gives all New Yorkers and visitors a unique way of viewing New York City.

For 46 years, Elizabeth Barlow Rogers has worked tirelessly on behalf of New York City's parkland – none more prominently than Central Park. An art history major with a master's degree in city planning, Ms. Rogers's early interest in open space planning led her to become a volunteer with the civic organization that would eventually be known as New Yorkers for Parks. Ms. Rogers is a writer whose principal subject is the nature of place. Following the publication of *The Forests and Wetlands of New York City* in 1970, an exploration of the city's rich array of natural areas, she turned her attention to the great nineteenth-century parks designed by Frederick Law Olmsted and his collaborator, the architect Calvert Vaux. The publication of *Frederick Law Olmsted's New York*, a companion volume to the 1972 exhibition at the Whitney Museum of American Art on Olmsted, led to her subsequent involvement in the preservation of Central Park.

Throughout the 1960s and 70s Central Park had fallen into severe disrepair due to misuse and management neglect compounded by the City's fiscal problems. Some government leaders were, in fact, considering turning it over to the National Park Service. Ms. Rogers believed, on the other hand, that the citizens of New York City could reverse the decline of this nineteenth-century landscape masterpiece and world treasure. Mayor Koch, at the suggestion of his first park commissioner, Gordon Davis, gave her a mandate to fulfill this mission by creating the title Central Park Administrator and appointing her to that position in 1979. A year later Ms. Rogers, Mayor Koch, and Commissioner Davis founded the Central Park Conservancy, a pioneering public/private partnership aimed at encouraging and cultivating citizen support for the management renewal and restoration of Central Park.

Ms. Rogers held the dual position of Central Park Administrator and President of the Central Park Conservancy until 1995, overseeing the development of a comprehensive plan to guide the fundraising campaigns and rehabilitation efforts that are credited with reversing the park's decline and bringing it to its current state of horticultural health, scenic beauty, recreational utility, and safety.

Today, the Central Park Conservancy provides 85 percent of Central Park's \$25 million annual budget through fundraising and investment revenue and, since its inception has overseen the investment of over \$500 million in the Park's landscape rehabilitation and management improvement. Experts say that Ms. Rogers's vision for the creation of a then-novel type of civic organization has provided a model for public/private partnerships to restore and improve both large and small urban parks worldwide.

After leaving the Conservancy in 1995, Ms. Rogers formed the Cityscape Institute, a nonprofit organization dedicated to assisting citizens and public officials in the beautification of public places, and in 2001 she initiated a program in Garden History and Landscape Studies at the Bard Graduate Center, which she directed until 2005. The following year she founded the Foundation for Landscape Studies, an organization whose mission is to promote an active understanding of place. In addition to publishing *Site/Lines*, a bi-annual journal, the foundation has recently served as a partner to the Morgan Library

and Museum in mounting the exhibition “Romantic Garden: Nature, Art, and Landscape Design,” for which Ms. Rogers served as co-curator and author of an extensive catalog essay.

In accepting the recognition of her work as a public-space planner and manager as well as a writer on landscape subjects, Ms. Rogers says, “If I had to name five books that were pivotal in giving direction to my professional life, I would put Jane Jacob’s *Death and Life of American Cities* at the head of the list. Thus, the decision of the Rockefeller Foundation and the jurors it has assembled to simultaneously present me and the founders of New York’s greatest new park, the High Line, the medal named for the writer whose revisionist vision of the Good City changed the course of urban history is truly the thrill of a lifetime. The fact that the Municipal Art Society—the civic organization that does so much to preserve New York City’s landmarks, including its historic neighborhoods and parks—administers the Jane Jacobs Medal adds to my gratitude for this honor.”

The selection of the Jane Jacobs Medalists and allocation of the prize money was determined by the 2010 Jane Jacobs Medal Jury, chaired by Dr. Judith Rodin, President of the Rockefeller Foundation. The Jury also includes Rockefeller Foundation trustee David Rockefeller, Jr.; Mary Schmidt Campbell, Dean of New York University’s Tisch School of the Arts; and Bruce Nussbaum, Professor of Design & Innovation at Parsons The New School for Design and Former Assistant Managing Editor of Business Week. The 2010 Jane Jacobs Medal is administered by the Municipal Art Society (MAS).

Municipal Art Society

The MAS, founded in 1893, is a private, non-profit membership organization whose mission is to promote a more livable city. It advocates excellence in urban design and planning, contemporary architecture, historic preservation, and public art. Visit www.mas.org for information on tours and programs.

The Rockefeller Foundation

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For more information about the Rockefeller Foundation, the 2010 Jane Jacobs Medal, and Jane Jacobs’ life, visit <http://bit.ly/akfR8i>

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