



ASLA

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**Legislature passes bill recognizing Frederick Law  
Olmsted, founder of American Landscape Architecture**

New Haven, Connecticut, June 8, 2005 — In a unanimous vote, The House of Representatives passed S.B. 794, “**An Act Establishing Frederick Law Olmsted Day**” on Friday, June 3, 2005 in concurrence with the Senate, which passed the bill unanimously in April. The 136-0 vote, coming just days before the end of the legislative session, means Connecticut will soon formally recognize the contributions of one of its most accomplished native sons.

The bill, which now awaits the governor’s signature, proclaims April 26 of each year “Frederick Law Olmsted Day” in celebration of the legacy of this Connecticut native, considered the founder of American landscape architecture.

Frederick Law Olmsted was born in Hartford on April 26, 1822. He died in 1903 and is buried in the city's Old North Cemetery. Well known for New York City’s Central Park, Olmsted also designed many of Connecticut’s most important urban parks -- including Bridgeport’s Beardsley and Seaside parks, New Britain’s Walnut Hill Park, Waterbury’s Hayden Homestead Park and Hartford’s Pope Park -- as well as dozens of landscapes for institutions, subdivisions, estates and other privately owned grounds.

**Senator Bill Finch** (22nd Dist.), who lives across the street from Beardsley Park in Bridgeport, and who has sponsored the Olmsted bill for four consecutive years, said, “Perhaps no Connecticut native has impacted the United States in such a pervasive and dramatic fashion as Frederick Law Olmsted. He understood that people need to

be connected to the natural environment, and that parks and public spaces allowed mixing of citizens from various classes, and were therefore nurturing of democracy.

"The naming of April 26 as Frederick Law Olmsted Day in Connecticut is just the beginning of our efforts to celebrate and restore his parks and landscape legacy."

**Norma Williams**, a Ridgefield landscape architect who is spearheading the formation of the Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance in conjunction with the Connecticut Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects, Senator Finch, UConn's landscape architecture program and other partners, said, "We're so pleased that Olmsted is finally getting official recognition. Given his vast contributions to our state's landscapes, and to our way of thinking about parks and natural spaces, we want people to learn that every day is 'an Olmsted day' here in Connecticut."

Plans for the Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance, patterned after similar organizations in Maine, Massachusetts and elsewhere, include development of a database, website and trail map cataloging and showcasing Olmsted's important works; an annual conference with nationally renowned Olmsted scholars and speakers; development of tourism opportunities centered around Olmsted-designed and -influenced parks and landscapes; and publications and other educational projects to promote appreciation and stewardship of Connecticut's historic landscapes.

**Roderick E. Cameron**, president of the Connecticut Chapter of ASLA and a landscape architect with Brookfield-based CCA, LLC, said Olmsted's many parks and landscapes across the state continue to enrich our communities today. "Olmsted's insight into the need for all people to maintain healthy and happy lives through recreation and a strong connection with nature reinforces our resolve to fight the obesity epidemic undermining our society's health system by working to design communities for active living."

On April 27th, the Connecticut Chapter of ASLA hosted a "birthday party" for Olmsted at the Legislative Office Building. The program, which featured a presentation on the Connecticut Olmsted legacy trail and speeches by Senator Finch and DEP Deputy Commissioner David Leff, was attended by a diverse group of Olmsted advocates -- including landscape architects, parks officials, planners, legislators, foresters, historians, tourism officials, community groups and non-profit organizations -- in testimony to the many disciplines influenced by Olmsted's work and the profession of landscape architecture which he created.

While much is known about Olmsted's Connecticut projects, or those of his firm in the years following his death, research is still ongoing. [Editors, please see attached spreadsheet identifying the towns, and types of projects, of Olmsted's known Connecticut work.] The College of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Connecticut is funding research this summer, directed by **John Alexopoulos** of the Landscape Architecture program, to do further study of Olmsted sites and plans, and to create a brochure which characterizes the Olmsted design

philosophy to help a Connecticut park visitor, for instance, better appreciate the vision of its designer.

Governor Rell is expected to sign the Olmsted Day bill. As Lieutenant Governor, M. Jodi Rell received the Connecticut Olmsted Award from the Connecticut Chapter of ASLA in 2002 (along with then-Senator Kevin B. Sullivan) in recognition of her efforts in advancing the cause of universal accessibility in public spaces.

Founded in 1899, the American Society of Landscape Architects is the national professional association for landscape architects, representing more than 15,000 members. Landscape architecture is a comprehensive discipline of land analysis, planning, design, management, preservation and rehabilitation. ASLA promotes the landscape architecture profession and advances the practice through advocacy, education, communication and fellowship. Learn more about landscape architecture online at [www.asla.org](http://www.asla.org). For more information on activities of the Connecticut Chapter, please see our website at [www.ctasla.org](http://www.ctasla.org).

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For more information about Frederick Law Olmsted, the Olmsted Day bill, or the Connecticut Olmsted Heritage Alliance:

**Roderick E, Cameron, ASLA, AICP** is a licensed landscape architect, certified planner and President of the Connecticut Chapter of ASLA. He is a senior landscape architect and planner with the firm of CCA, LLC in Brookfield, Connecticut. Mr. Cameron has over 25 years of experience in the fields of environmental planning and design. Tel: (203) 775-6207. Email: [roderickcameron@ccaengineering.com](mailto:roderickcameron@ccaengineering.com).

**Norma Williams, ASLA** is a licensed landscape architect with a private practice specializing in historic landscape preservation. She has been active in the Connecticut Chapter of ASLA for many years, including working to gain recognition for Frederick Law Olmsted in Connecticut. Ms. Williams was instrumental in the 1998 listing of Hartford's Old North Cemetery (burial site of Frederick Law Olmsted) on the National Register of Historic Places. Tel: (203) 431-5866. Email: [norma\\_williams@sbcglobal.net](mailto:norma_williams@sbcglobal.net).

**John Alexopoulos, ASLA** is Assoc. Professor of Landscape Architecture at the University of Connecticut. His interests lay in public park design, specifically the development of the landscapes in 19th century parks. Tel: (860) 486-1941. Email: [john.alexopoulos@uconn.edu](mailto:john.alexopoulos@uconn.edu).

**Senator Bill Finch**, of Bridgeport (22nd Dist.), who introduced S.B. 794, was re-elected to a third term in the State Senate in November 2004. A passionate Olmsted advocate, Sen. Finch is Chair of the Banks Committee, as well as Vice Chair the Transportation Committee. Tel: (860) 240-0414. Email: [Finch@senatedems.ct.gov](mailto:Finch@senatedems.ct.gov).