



January 20, 2015

Dear Awards Committee:

With great respect for her dedication to AASL and to the profession of architecture librarianship in general, I nominate Barbara Opar for the AASL Distinguished Service Award. Based on Barbara's contributions to AASL and its members, along with her track record as an outstanding scholar in the field, I feel that she is highly deserving of this award. Her contributions over the course of her career have made a significant positive impact on the profession and on many of her colleagues on an individual level, including myself.

I have known Barbara for just shy of 3 years. In that short time, however, she has proven herself to be a valuable colleague and mentor. Furthermore, she has helped me to find my niche within AASL and architecture librarianship. Since I had submitted an article to AASL's ACSA News column prior to attending the AASL 2013 Conference in San Francisco (my very first AASL conference), I struck up a conversation with Barbara at the conference about the direction of the column and her role as editor. On a bus ride to one of the conference excursions we chatted about how the column could foster collaboration between AASL members and between librarians and architecture faculty. Barbara was very open to the suggestions of a newcomer and her enthusiasm for advancing the values of AASL through her service was obvious. We talked about the ways in which AASL had furthered her own career and how it had served as a catalyst in the development of others. By the end of the bus ride, Barbara had invited me to discuss further my ideas for potential column articles and a possible role in assisting with the coordination of the AASL/ACSA News column. In addition, she had converted me into a believer in the benefits of AASL and the kindness of its members.

Barbara's simple gesture of reaching out to a new AASL member at a conference was generous enough. But shortly after the conference, during a telephone conversation about the column, she invited me to assist her with editing. As many of us know, it is often more work to collaborate than it is to fly solo. In that sense, Barbara took a risk in working with me. I believe that she did so because, as her track record demonstrates, she is the kind of person who pays her own hard-earned success forward. In September of 2013, I became the official co-editor of the AASL/ACSA News column.

Barbara and I enjoy a rare professional relationship where we push each other in pursuit of excellence, pulling no punches with our comments and suggestions to each other. As a result, working with Barbara has made me a better writer and a better editor. She is demanding. She is exacting. But she is always constructive and patient. My role as co-editor of the column has introduced me to AASL members all over North America and has helped me to stay abreast of developments in our profession. The fact that it all started with a serendipitous conversation demonstrates how Barbara epitomizes AASL's third objective: to "promote a spirit of cooperation among members of the profession."

Barbara's contributions to architecture and design librarianship in general over the course of her career are exemplary. Recently, her pivotal role in selecting and evaluating resources for the AASL Core Reference List was instrumental in making this it available to our members. She updates her skills regularly by attending training sessions and shares her expertise with colleagues by presenting at conferences and authoring publications on a yearly basis. Particularly impressive are the book chapters she has written on architectural engineering literature for top-notch publishers like CRC Press and Routledge. To boot, she has published a whole slew of book reviews to help librarians and professors determine which are the most valuable resources in our discipline.

I can think of no one more deserving of AASL's Distinguished Service Award than Barbara Opar. Please find, submitted along with this nomination, letters of support from 3 distinguished architecture librarians who are familiar with Barbara Opar's work and her exemplary record. If the committee should need further documentation or clarification from me, please do not hesitate to ask.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Barret Havens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized initial "B".

Barret Havens  
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