

American Society of Landscape Architects honors Carol Coletta with LaGasse Medal

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The 125-year-old [American Society of Landscape Architects](#) has named Carol Coletta a 2024 recipient of the prestigious [The LaGasse Medal](#).

The ASLA awards only two LaGasse Medals each year, one for a professional landscape architect and one for a non-landscape professional, which is awarded to someone directly responsible for managing natural resources or public landscapes. Coletta received the non-landscape professional honor. She is president and CEO of Memphis River Parks Partnership, which manages 26 parks along six miles of riverfront along the Mississippi River in downtown Memphis.

The recipient of The LaGasse Medal for a professional went to Jeff Caster, FASLA. Caster is known for decades of leadership at the Florida Department of Transportation, Florida A&M University, the Florida Wildflower Foundation and ASLA.

Last fall, Coletta and Memphis River Parks Partnership celebrated the opening of the new Tom Lee Park, which transformed 31 acres of flat, barren land into a lush, sustainable park. Designed by Studio Gang and SCAPE, the park is the centerpiece of the Memphis riverfront and a national model for welcoming and ecologically restorative urban parks.

In announcing The LaGasse Medal honors, the ASLA called Coletta “a national figure in the revitalization of cities and public spaces.”

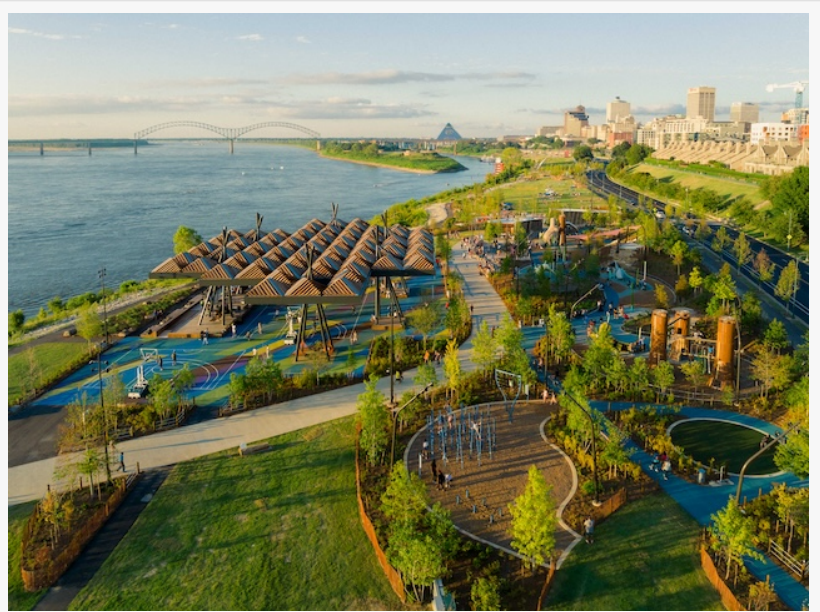
In nominating Coletta for The LaGasse Medal, SCAPE founder Kate Orff, FASLA, wrote, “Carol is a revered figure in the world of parks and civic open space and an indefatigable advocate for a vibrant, connected and equitable public realm. Her vision, character, grit and generous spirit



Carol Coletta, president and CEO of Memphis River Parks Partnership and recipient of the 2024 LaGasse Medal from the American Society of Landscape Architects

have lifted dialogue around urban parks and open space to be more civic-minded and participatory, while always foregrounding the power of design in place making....

"Carol brought together elected officials, funders, donors and community members into a coalition of the willing to build Tom Lee Park. Carol's enthusiasm for her work is infectious, and during the Covid pandemic and global challenges, she raised \$61 million for the park's transformation. The newly constructed Tom Lee Park fulfills its promise: it's a destination for everyone, paying homage to the city's history and looking forward to a more equitable future. The park's transformation is her vision come to life."



The 31-acre, \$61 million Tom Lee Park is managed by Carol Coletta and the Memphis River Parks Partnership

Who is Carol Coletta?



Tom Lee Park fulfills its promise: it's a destination for everyone... The park's transformation is her vision come to life."

SCAPE founder Kate Orff

Before relaunching the nonprofit public-private Memphis River Parks Partnership, Coletta was a senior fellow in The Kresge Foundation's American Cities Practice. She led a \$50+ million collaboration of national and local foundations, local nonprofits and governments to Reimagine the Civic Commons in five cities. It was the first comprehensive demonstration of how a connected set of civic assets – a civic commons – can yield increased and more widely shared prosperity for cities and

neighborhoods.

Coletta also served as vice president of community and national initiatives for the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, where she managed a portfolio of more than \$60 million in annual grants and a team of 18 in 26 communities focused on driving success in cities.

She led the two-year start-up of ArtPlace, a unique public-private collaboration to accelerate creative placemaking in communities across the U.S. and was president and CEO of CEOs for Cities for seven years.

Coletta served as executive director of the Mayors' Institute on City Design, a partnership of the

National Endowment for the Arts, U.S. Conference of Mayors and American Architectural Foundation. She also ran a Memphis-based public affairs consulting firm, Coletta & Company, where she served business, foundations, nonprofits and government on the broadest range of civic issues.

About the American Society of Landscape Architects

Founded in 1899, ASLA is the professional association for landscape architects in the United States, representing more than 15,000 members. Landscape architects lead the planning, design and stewardship of healthy, equitable, safe and resilient environments.



The Life on the River playground in Tom Lee Park was named one of the 11 Most Unique Playgrounds in the U.S. by Mental Floss

About Memphis River Parks Partnership

Memphis River Parks Partnership is a nonprofit public-private partnership that works with and for the people of Memphis to trigger the transformative power of their river. The Partnership has raised \$80 million for public parks and assets along the Memphis riverfront over the past seven years.

The Partnership's properties include Tom Lee Park, a 31-acre park named in honor of Memphian Tom Lee, who couldn't swim but saved 32 people when a sternwheeler capsized in the Mississippi River in 1925. Tom Lee Park is surrounded by racially and economically stratified neighborhoods, presenting Tom Lee Park with the rare opportunity to create public space to bring together people from all walks of life. Tom Lee Park was named one of the top three urban design World Changing Ideas by Fast Company magazine. Since its opening nine months ago, Tom Lee Park has drawn 500,000 visitors from more than 128 ZIP codes.

More information about Memphis River Parks Partnerships is available at memphisriverparks.org.

For Immediate Release

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