

Preface

It is a pleasure for me to introduce the sixth round of the Rudy Bruner Award. The five winners are very different, one from the other, and exemplify the kinds of places that imagination and hard work can create.

When we started the Rudy Bruner Award twelve years ago, our original plan was to cease operation in ten years. We assumed that the issues would have been fully described within five award cycles. We knew that in designing the Award, it was critical to provide a clear framework, but one which would allow for each Selection Committee to define its own priorities and criteria. This would ensure that the Award would stay current over time in dealing with the important issues which affect our nations' cities. We did not know at the time how successful this strategy would be, and it has been gratifying to see in our winners the emergence of new, creative approaches to some of our cities' most critical problems. I know when you read about The Times Square, Project Row Houses, Center in the Square, the Cleveland Warehouse District, and Hismen Hin-Nu, you will be equally impressed. In each of them, a group of hardworking, dedicated citizens and professionals has pursued a vision of what could and should be done — in some cases against very significant odds — and turned their visions into dynamic projects which make important contributions to their urban contexts. I am sure it would be their fondest hope that you learn from their experience and use it in your own communities.

As we talk about these winners, I am constantly amazed at how well they have taken an idea — sometimes a new idea, and sometimes a reinvention of an old idea — and re-worked it to relate to their unique urban settings. The size of The Times Square, for example, is an advantage in New York City, allowing it to create a social service structure at a significant enough scale

to impact the homeless and disenfranchised population. In a smaller town, its size and the concentration of needy population might be a disadvantage.

We would be wise to learn from the creative strategies designed for the management of this socially complex project — specifically, the successful mix of tenant populations and the interplay between social services and building management — when considering this model. Each of the 1997 winners may provide innovative and useful models for your city. That is not to suggest that one should simply attempt to replicate these projects, but rather take what is useful, creative, and effective, and adapt it to the uniqueness of your urban setting.

It is the creativity and appropriateness with which one adapts pre-existing models to create new and unique solutions that allows us to move forward. Many of these models, including The Times Square, Project Row Houses, and Center in the Square, are already being adapted in other cities, either by their original founders, or by others who have learned from them.

We at the Rudy Bruner Award hope that these exciting urban places will provide you with some food for thought, and with some potential solutions to the problems facing your own cities. They teach us how to identify strengths in even the most troubled urban settings, and to build upon those strengths to enhance the urban environment. They are examples of what can be done, and perhaps more importantly, of what you can do. We encourage you to use these winners as resources for the hard work of creating excellent urban places. Good luck!

Simeon Bruner, Founder

Introduction

The Rudy Bruner Award

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence seeks to discover and to celebrate urban places which reflect the successful integration of thoughtful processes and meaningful values into good design. In this search, the award serves as a national forum for debating urban issues and the nature of urban excellence. The Rudy Bruner Award is distinguished from other award programs by its broadly representative Selection Committee (which meets for two full days, and is composed of mayors, community representatives, elected officials, design professionals and developers); its comprehensive application process (which requires statements from a range of involved parties, not just the owner and designer); and the in-depth site visits to each finalist.

Our current and past winners are a diverse group of places which lend vitality to the neighborhoods in which they are located. Some represent new models of urban placemaking guided by creative visions of what is possible, often in defiance of existing norms. They may be guided by leaders whose imagination and creativity fosters new ways of thinking about the urban environment. Others reflect complex collaborations among people who represent different perspectives and sectors of society. In learning about these unique places, we discover creative solutions to some of our most intractable urban problems.

The Rudy Bruner Award is an ongoing exploration into the nature of urban excellence. In the context of the applications, each Selection Committee is called upon to address and debate the factors that make an excellent urban place. What kinds of places make our cities better places to live, work, and play? Which projects enhance the urban environment and at the same time provide safe, attractive, and welcoming spaces for the complex interactions of urban life? How do these places come into being?

What makes them succeed? How are they sustained? The Rudy Bruner Award looks closely at the complex set of interactions whereby projects balance opportunity with cost; form with use; and tradition with change.

Eligibility Criteria

The award seeks excellence in places where it may not be expected. Eligibility criteria are therefore broadly defined. The minimum criteria are:

- The project must be a real place, not just a plan. It must be able to demonstrate its excellence when visited.
- The project must be located in the United States. Site visits are integral to the award process, and it is not feasible to conduct visits at international locations.

The Selection Process

A new Selection Committee is appointed for each award cycle. It meets twice, first to select the five winners from a field of about 100 applications, and later to select the Gold Medal Winner. Between the two meetings, Bruner Foundation staff makes a two- or three-day site visit to every finalist, to answer questions raised by the Selection Committee and to explore the project more thoroughly. The Foundation representatives serve as the Selection Committee's eyes and ears, touring all parts of the project, interviewing participants, taking photographs, and observing patterns of use.

After the site visits the Foundation prepares a report and slide show for the second Selection Committee meeting, where the 5 finalists are reviewed in depth. At this second meeting, the Selection Committee debates the merits of each project, and in so

doing explores and deepens our understanding of urban excellence. This discussion determines which project will be the Gold Medal winner and receive \$50,000, and which will be Silver Medal winners and receive \$10,000.

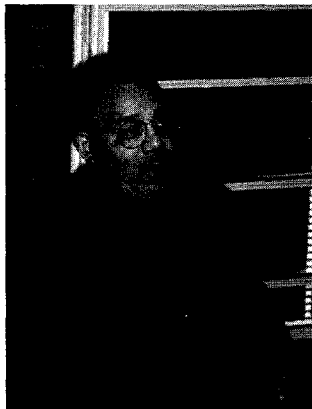
The dialogue at the Selection Committee level is at the heart of the Rudy Bruner Award. Each Selection Committee includes a mayor of a major American city and urban experts from the fields of architecture, finance, development, community organization, and philanthropy. Because the Selection Committee is always composed of a group of distinguished experts on the urban environment, their discussions become a forum for exploring the issues confronting American cities and the solutions being tested around the country. Also, because there are no pre-established criteria for evaluating applications, the Selection Committee must develop criteria on the basis of their own expertise and knowledge of the issues facing our cities today.

The 1997 Selection Committee

Hon. Kurt L. Schmoke, *Mayor of Baltimore, Maryland*
 Robert Curvin, *Vice President for Communications, Ford Foundation, New York*



Hon. Kurt L. Schmoke



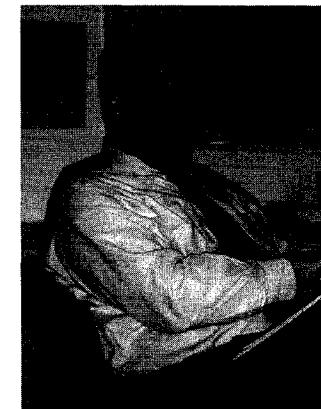
Robert Curvin



Roberta Feldman, Ph.D.



Susan Rice



Robert M. Weinberg

Roberta Feldman, Ph.D., *City Design Center, University of Illinois, Chicago*
 Susan Rice, *formerly of Fleet Bank, N.A. New Jersey*
 Robert M. Weinberg, *Chairman, MarketPlace Development, and President, Friends of Post Office Square, Boston. (The Park at Post Office Square was a 1993 Rudy Bruner Award winner.)*

Selection Criteria

The criteria put forward by this year's committee were:

Entrepreneurial Vision

- Does the project demonstrate entrepreneurial leadership by finding new ways to implement visionary thinking?
- Is there a significant vision that informs the project?
- Did that vision result in a worthy outcome?

Uniqueness

- Is the project unusual or special within its context?
- Does it have something new or important to teach us?

Community Impact

- Does the project have a significant positive impact on its immediate neighborhood or the broader community?
- Did the project identify and address a problem that might not otherwise have been addressed?
- How does it contribute to civic learning?

Sustainability

- Does the project have the ability to sustain itself over time?

Cost Effectiveness

- Does the project demonstrate an effective use of available funds?
- Has it harnessed funds that might have gone elsewhere?

Creation of Place

- Is the project a quality place? Is it well designed? Of quality materials?
- How does the project impact people's perceptions of the neighborhood? The community?

Values

- Are the values and goals for the project made explicit?
- Were those values realized and sustained through the development process?
- Were the risks and impacts of gentrification considered?

Replicability

- Does the project represent a model that can be meaningfully adapted to other settings?
- Could the process, or aspects of the process, be adapted in other cities?

Reflecting the Essence of the Urban Setting

- Does the project recognize what is special and unique about its setting, and build upon it?

Using these criteria, the 1997 Selection Committee selected The Times Square as the Gold Medal winner, and Project Row Houses, Cleveland Historic Warehouse District, Hismen Hin-nu (Sun Gate) Terrace, and Center in the Square as Silver Medal winners.

The 1997 Rudy Bruner Award Winners

The Times Square A derelict hotel in the heart of Times Square, New York, had become a microcosm of the social problems that plague many urban areas. Common Ground Community HDPC, Inc., together with Center for Urban Community Services, saw the potential for the rehabilitation of this notorious hotel, and for providing dignified housing for a neglected population. The Times Square now provides permanent, affordable single room occupancy housing for 652 adults. Some of the residents had been homeless, others are HIV-positive or suffer from mental or emotional problems, and some are low-income adults seeking permanent housing. In defiance of prior norms for this type of housing, The Times Square has brought this mixed population together at an unprecedented scale, to form a stable community with on-site social service support and job training. In so doing, the Times Square has created a new model for combining SRO housing, social service delivery, and job training, at the same time rehabilitating an architecturally significant historic building.

Project Row Houses The preservation of 22 historic "shotgun" houses and their transformation into art gallery space in Houston's Third Ward has changed a neglected neighborhood adjacent to downtown Houston into a new destination for Houston residents. Project Row Houses is an innovative concept based upon the power of art to transform a community. At Project Row

Houses, well known African-American artists install their work in eight gallery houses, and interact with the community. Project Row Houses has several other significant programs in place, including the Young Mothers Residential Program, which provides houses to young women for a period of one year while they receive training and support for parenting, education, and job skills.

Hismen Hin-nu (Sun Gate Terrace) A mixed use project in Oakland, California, Hismen Hin-nu used a hands-on participatory process to involve the community in planning and design. Located in the heart of the racially and socially diverse San Antonio community, Hismen Hin-nu offers varied configurations of affordable housing units and street-level retail space. Its architecture is based upon California's historic Mission style, and incorporates multi-cultural art themes, including the symbolic Sun Gate, designed by a local artist and located at the entrance to the project.

Center in the Square The Center brought together five major cultural institutions into a destination arts complex in downtown Roanoke, Virginia. Center in the Square provides rent-free space to these institutions, promoting synergy among the cultural institutions and with the adjacent farmers' market. The project has contributed to the revitalization of downtown Roanoke, especially the adjacent market area, and provides an educational and cultural resource to Western Virginia.

Cleveland Historic Warehouse District The Warehouse District has been successful in preserving a series of vacant Victorian warehouses in the heart of downtown Cleveland, Ohio, and in transforming them into a new urban neighborhood with over 1,500 units of housing and a variety of commercial uses. Adjacent to the center of downtown, this new neighborhood preserves Cleveland's urban fabric, and introduces life and activity during the day and evening hours, strengthening and diversifying the downtown area, and preserving an irreplaceable architectural resource.

Award Presentation

Since the goal of the Rudy Bruner Award is to celebrate urban excellence, the presentation ceremonies are an important part of the award process. For the 1997 winners, award presentations were made in September, at press conferences held in each winner's city. The presentations attracted mayors, city officials, design and planning professionals, community leaders, tenants, community organizers, and community residents, who spoke about the meaning of these projects to their communities.

The presentation of the Gold Medal award to The Times Square featured remarks by Gordon Campbell, Commissioner for Homelessness in New York; Gretchen Dykstra, President of the Times Square Business Improvement District; and Robert Curvin, Vice President for Communications at the Ford Foundation, and member of the 1997 Rudy Bruner Award Selection Committee.



Gordon Campbell, Commissioner for Homelessness in New York, speaking at The Times Square Award Presentation.



Robert Curvin, 1997 Selection Committee, speaking at The Times Square Award Presentation.

Mr. Campbell spoke forcefully about the importance of The Times Square in providing a new and effective model for dealing with homelessness in New York. Ms. Dykstra spoke about the contribution of the project to stabilization of a major corner in the heart of the Times Square Business Improvement District. Mr. Curvin represented the 1997 Selection Committee in commending the innovative thinking which characterizes The Times Square and the significance of this new model for dealing with homelessness, affordable housing, and effective job training.

The Rudy Bruner Award and its winners have been recognized in past award presentations by the U.S. Conference of Mayors, the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, and the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), as well as in *Places*, *Designer/Builder*, *Design Book Review*, and *Casabella* magazines.



Simeon Bruner presenting The 1997 Rudy Bruner Award to Rosanne Haggerty of The Times Square.

About This Book

The Bruner Foundation is committed to the process of learning about urban excellence, and to continuing to ask the question, “What is an excellent urban place?” The purpose of the Rudy Bruner Award books is to make the dialogue and debate among the Selection Committee members and the innovative thinking of the winners available to policy makers and practitioners across the country.

This book presents the 1997 winners in the context of the Selection Committee discussion on the nature of urban excellence, and of the criteria they developed. Detailed case studies of each 1997 winner are included. The case studies are based upon the site visits conducted in the winter of 1997 and the Selection Committee discussion about each place. Selection Committee comments are summarized at the beginning of each chapter in the section entitled “Project at a Glance.” The book concludes with a chapter about “What Was Learned About Urban Excellence,” which presents the following themes:

- Vision
- Art in the City
- Quality of Place
- Preservation as a Strategy for Change
- Public Private Collaboration
- Adapting New Models of Urban Placemaking
- Sustaining Urban Excellence

Publications

At the conclusion of each award cycle, the Bruner Foundation publishes a book documenting the Selection Committee discussion on urban excellence, and describing detailed case studies of

each Rudy Bruner Award winner. The publications, some of which are available from the Bruner Foundation, include:

- *Urban Excellence*, by Philip Langdon with Robert Shibley and Polly Welch; Van Nostrand Reinhold, 1990.
- *Breakthroughs: Re-creating the American City*, by Neil Pierce and Robert Guskind; Center for Urban Policy Research, Rutgers University, 1993.
- *Connections: Creating Urban Excellence*, by Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener; Bruner Foundation, 1992.
- *Rebuilding Communities: Re-Creating Urban Excellence*, by Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener; Bruner Foundation, 1993.
- *Building Coalitions for Urban Excellence*, by Jay Farbstein and Richard Wener; Bruner Foundation, 1995.

A recent Bruner Foundation endeavor has allowed us to revisit the winners and finalists from the first four cycles of the award to learn how the projects have fared over time. In examining which have continued to thrive and which have struggled, some important conclusions were drawn about sustaining urban excellence. Partially funded by a grant from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, 21 projects were revisited by teams of foundation staff and consultants, HUD regional staff, and past Selection Committee members. The book is available through the Bruner Foundation:

- *Sustaining Urban Excellence; Learning from the Rudy Bruner Award, 1987–1993*, by Jay Farbstein, Robert Shibley, Polly Welch, and Richard Wener, with Emily Axelrod, Bruner Foundation, 1998.

Access To Rudy Bruner Award Materials

- All Rudy Bruner Award applications have been recorded on microfiche and are accessible through the Interlibrary Loan

Department of the Lockwood Memorial Library at the State University of New York at Buffalo, Amherst, NY 14260. Phone: 716-636-2816. Fax: 716-636-3721.

- An abstract and key word identification has been prepared for each application, and can be accessed through two major data bases: RLIN/Research Library Information Network, and OCLC/First Search.
- The State University of New York at Buffalo maintains a web site with 1995 and 1997 Rudy Bruner Award applicants. A portion of the applications have been posted to date. The web site address is: <http://wings.buffalo.edu/libraries/projects/digital/bruner>
- A complete Bruner Foundation archive is maintained at the University of Indiana library.
- The Rudy Bruner Award web site address is: www.brunerfoundation.org.