

**Oregon Chapter
American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA)
Portland, OR**

March 22, 2006

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Tim Gish

503-381-4964

E: timg@landscapeforms.com

Spring Opening of the Ira C. Keller Fountain:

**Celebrated Fountain Resumes Dramatic Cascading Waterfalls
With April 6th Ceremony**

Portland, OR – The Oregon Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (OR-ASLA) announces the spring activation of the Ira Keller Fountain on April 6th at 10:00 AM. Portland City Commissioner Randy Leonard, representing the Portland Bureau of Water, will turn on the water during the ceremony, sending 13,000 gallons of recycled water per minute, cascading through the fountain’s terraces and platforms. The event is free and open to the public.

Originally known as the Forecourt Fountain, it opened in 1970 and was designed by iconic landscape architect, Lawrence Halprin. It was renamed the Ira Keller Fountain in 1978.

“This event highlights a commitment by the Oregon chapter of the ASLA and the Portland Bureau of Water to engage the public in all aspects of community life,” says Tara Byler, President of OR-ASLA. “We are also recognizing the stewards of this fountain along with those who support other landmarks in our city and state,” adds Byler.

Since acquiring the maintenance of the fountain in 1989, the Water Bureau has taken its job seriously. “The Water Bureau’s stewardship of this fountain over the years has assured that what you see today is consistent with Halprin’s vision when he designed the fountain,” says Commissioner Randy Leonard.

-more-

Keller Fountain/Add One

In 2005, during the winter closure of the fountain, Water Bureau operations crews made substantial improvements to motors and pumps, reducing energy consumption by 17%. Further, in the mid-1990's, the Water Bureau, using a capital improvement project, addressed major issues related to many aspects of the fountain. The Water Bureau worked with Halprin's office to restore the surfaces of the slabs and update the electrical systems and lighting along with other extensive work. The end result was that the fountain was restored back to its original appearance and it had improved operational mechanisms.

“As landscape architects, one of our goals is to educate the public about the importance of designed landscapes,” said Tara Byler, President of the OR-ASLA. “With April being National Landscape Architecture Month we felt it appropriate to highlight this fountain because it is a perfect example of how a beautifully designed public space can have a positive impact on a city and it's citizens and visitors”, adds Byler.

Part of an urban redevelopment plan by the City of Portland in the late 1960's, the Keller Fountain is an integral piece of an eight-block master-planned series of parks and walkways, including Lovejoy Fountain and Pettygrove Park.

The design of the fountain is an abstract interpretation of natural forms and forces (like waterfalls) that are found in the Pacific Northwest.

In the 1981 *Process Architecture: The Sketchbooks of Lawrence Halprin*, Halprin writes, "In Portland I attempted to do two things: The first of these was to develop a long eight block sequence of open spaces. promenades, nodes of plazas & parks with a mix of public space & private space interwoven. Along this progression are a diversity of uses - housing, apartments, shops, restaurants, offices, auditorium. The space is choreographed for movement with nodes for quiet & contemplation, action & inaction, hard & soft, Yin & Yang.

-more-

Keller Fountain/Add Two

The second basic approach was to bring into the heart of downtown activities which related in a very real way to the environment of the Portland area-the Columbia river, the Cascade mountains, the streams, rivers & mountain meadows. These symbolic elements are very much a part of Portlanders' psyche-they glory in their natural environment & escape to it as often as possible. But it seemed important to acknowledge the urban character of these places as well as their origins-so the Designs deal with the origins of form: the process by which natural form is created. The fountains & plazas are formed to link up with nature's process not copy her.

Finally these places were for the first time designed to be used to be participatory NOT just to look at - - they say COME IN not stay off."

Also on April 6th, there will be a first Thursday opening reception of an exclusive "Black Box" exhibit of the original Northwest works of Lawrence Halprin. The exhibit features 24 original diagrams, sketches and watercolors that reveal Halprin's inspiration for his landmark work in Portland. It will be held at the AIA/Portland Gallery, 315 SW Fourth Ave., from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. The exhibit will be on display until April 28th, 2006.

The Oregon ASLA is a professional organization of landscape architects and designers with approximately 220 members.

###