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## **ABOUT The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape THE AUTHORS**

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TERRY J. LASSAR is a writer and a consultant. She covers real estate and land use issues nationwide and has published many articles and books on urban development, planning, architecture, and design; as well as on land use topics. She has a master's degree in English from the University of Virginia, and a J.D. from Washington University

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TERRY J. LASSAR

DOUGLAS R. PORTER

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## FOREWORD

AMERICAN CULTURE The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape HAS ALWAYS HAD a delicate, not to say adversarial, relationship with The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape the urban impulse. We may have a lot of cities in this country, but we don't always like them, or believe them to be central to our The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape identity as a civilization. Thomas Jefferson, of course, hoped we could all but do without cities, and if his 18th-century vision of the United States as a rural and agrarian society came to seem impractical after the Industrial Revolution, it is hard not to The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape believe that a vast number of Americans still find it alluring.

Somehow, almost in spite of ourselves, we managed to make great cities in the early decades of the 20th century, a time when New York, Chicago, Boston, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Minneapolis, Buffalo, St. Louis, Cleveland, Detroit, and Kansas City—to name but a few—grew to possess a powerful and civilizing urbanism. Then, in the second The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape half of the century, we proceeded to rip this magnificent creation The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape apart, as the automobile allowed our anti-urban tendencies to flourish once more. Sometimes we sold our cities short in the guise of social responsibility, pretending that we were renewing them when we were actually destroying them with expressways and sterile towers; at other times, we masked our anti-urban sentiments in the genteel middle-class garb of suburbanization.

If we have never truly been the rural country of Jefferson's dreams, neither are we the urban culture that Alexander Hamilton envisioned. Most Americans in truth favor the world in between—the benign suburban landscape in which private space is elevated above that of public space, and there is at least the illusion of safety, comfort, and plenty for all.

The ULI J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development was created to honor one of the great real estate developers of modern times, a man who knew that the act of building is also The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape the act of creating community, and who saw his mission as trying to tie the quest for comfort and beauty with the larger calling of community. J.C. Nichols understood that successful real estate developments do not exist in a vacuum—that they The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape need to make economic sense, they need to make aesthetic sense, and most of all they need to make social sense—and The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape the projects that do best are the ones that enrich their The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape surroundings.

What joins together all five of the initial winners of the Nichols Prize—Joseph Riley, Daniel

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Patrick Moynihan, Gerald Hines, Vincent Scully, and Richard The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape Baron—is that they all share Nichols’s sense of the city as The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape a public realm, as the physical embodiment of the idea of common ground. They have always been aware that great cities do not come accidentally, and The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape that ennobling urban places are not built easily. There is a paradox involved in the making of cities that all of the Nichols Prize The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape winners have, I believe, understood: they know that for all that cities may go against the American grain, they represent our highest ideals.

It is right that in its first five years, the prize has gone to a public official who changed the face of one of our most beloved cities; to a scholar-politician who was The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape a passionate and articulate The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape advocate of greater public architecture; to a developer who showed that design could have a profound impact on the marketplace and who, like J.C. Nichols himself, has taken on the building of projects that sought to establish a broader urban context; to one of America’s greatest architectural historians who has influenced generations of students through his powerful arguments for the meaning of community and the connection between architecture and the quality of life; and to a developer who has consistently believed in development with a social conscience, and has proven that social responsibility and business success are not incompatible.

The accomplishments of each of these winners are extraordinary; the range they represent is even more so. Together, they embrace all of the qualities that The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape the ULI J.C. Nichols Prize—and, indeed, the Urban Land Institute itself—was created to support. For all that the five winners are different from each other, they have one important thing in common. Each in his own way reminds us that ideas and action are inseparable in the making of cities. Every one The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape of the Nichols Prize winners is a citizen whose mission is to use ideas to improve the quality of life, and they are all driven by a deep and passionate belief not only in the value of cities, but in their urgency. They believe, too, in the new, and in the need to see our cities not only as a great gift from the past that is our obligation to preserve and protect, but also as a laboratory for the future. Each of them, in his own way, sees the city as a place of promise.

Paul Goldberger  
Dean, Parsons School of Design  
Architecture Critic, *New Yorker*

## INTRODUCTION

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THIS BOOK CELEBRATES *The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape* THE FIVE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY of the Urban Land Institute's distinguished award program—the ULI J.C. Nichols Prize for Visionaries in Urban Development—and profiles the five extraordinary recipients from 2000 through 2004.

The J.C. Nichols Prize furthers ULI's mission: to provide responsible leadership in the use of land to enhance the total environment. The annual prize was established in January 2000 to recognize individuals *The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape* and representatives from institutions who provide unique leadership by inspiring enlightened urban development that enhances the overall quality of life in America's communities. How we build, how we shape our environment have a profound and lasting impact on how we live. In this way, the Nichols Prize is a visible symbol of the critical role that development plays in building community, strengthening our cities, and enriching our lives.

The \$100,000 prize honors the legacy of legendary developer Jesse Clyde Nichols (1880-1950), of Kansas City, Missouri. The prize is funded by an endowment by the Nichols family. A founding member of ULI, J.C. Nichols is widely regarded as one of America's most influential entrepreneurs in urban development during the first half of *The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape* the 20th century. Part of his enduring legacy are the Country Club Plaza, one of the country's oldest shopping centers; the Country Club district, a model residential neighborhood; and numerous other well-preserved residential neighborhoods in Kansas City.

Wayne Nichols, the grandson of J.C. Nichols, says his grandfather understood the difference between building mere subdivisions linked by streets and utility lines, and building whole neighborhoods in which people feel connected and a sense of community. In the early 1900s, Nichols and some of his peers took train trips to visit each other's developments. They would throw their plans out on the table, critique them, and work together to flesh out a viable design. "Their goal," according to Wayne Nichols, *The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape* "was to create beautiful communities—not subdivisions, not shopping centers—but long-term, integrated planned communities. They *The Power of Ideas: Five People Who Changed the Urban Landscape* saw themselves as building human environments. Their motto was 'land development is a responsibility, not a right.'"

## ULI J.C. NICHOLS

# The Power Of Ideas Five People Who Changed The Urban Landscape

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