

**PAUL BUSSE**  
**FOUNDER | OWNER**  
**APPLIED IMAGINATION**

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ALEXENDRIA, KY 41001  
859.448.9848

**LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE MEDAL OF EXCELLENCE**

January 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020

ASLA Medal of Excellence Nominations  
c/o Honors and Awards  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Sir or Madam,

It is with tremendous enthusiasm that I nominate Paul Busse for the ASLA Medal of Excellence. Anyone who has ever seen a child (or adult's) face light up with joy at the sight of the remarkable landscapes he has created at the annual New York Botanical Garden Train Show, the understands the remarkable contribution Paul has made to our society's understanding of landscape design and the natural world. A 1972 graduate of the program in landscape architecture at The Ohio State University, Busse defined his own unique path in the profession – marrying his love of landscape and of trains in a truly remarkable way.

Adrian Higgin's of the New York Times said of Paul's work: "In Paul Busse's fairy-tale world, the buildings of New York are ornate, earth-toned, glossy and fashioned from the detritus of the plant kingdom. Over the past 24 years, Busse and his team of artists have crafted more than 150 landmarks using seed pods, dried eucalyptus leaves, walnuts, bamboo, grape tendrils, fungus, cinnamon sticks — anything that is organic, stable and of utility in the universe of what he calls botanical architecture.

Lady Liberty is a swirl of palm leaves; the Brooklyn Bridge is formed from willow sticks and elm bark; the circular Guggenheim Museum is fabricated from toadstools. But a simple description of these plant-based models is doomed to inadequacy.

Perhaps it's the warm, subdued colors, or the slightly crooked roof lines, or the interior lights shining through the sawtooth, resinous window panes, but the feeling is one of cozy enchantment. "Make it whimsical," Busse said. "Put magic behind it."

The train shows created by Busse at the New York Botanical Garden, the United States Botanical Garden in Washington, D.C., the Chicago Botanical Garden, Atlanta Botanical Garden, New Orleans Botanical Garden, Bellagio Conservatory in Las Vegas, The Texas State Fair, the Morton Arboretum, Eiteljorg Museum in Indianapolis, Krohn Conservatory in Cincinnati, The Biltmore Estate, Franklin Park Conservatory in Columbus, Reiman Gardens in Ames, Iowa, Lauritzen Gardens in Omaha, Kentucky Children's Garden in Lexington, Frederik Meijer Gardens in Grand Rapids, Fernwood Botanical Garden in Niles, Michigan; Glenwood Gardens in Cincinnati; and the Royal Botanical Garden in Burlington, Ontario; have attracted millions of visitors per year for the last two decades. In addition to the joy the installations produce, Busse's work have brought these visitors to gardens and botanical gardens around the country, dramatically expanding their memberships, and further introducing the public to the beauty of landscape design. For a lifetime of magic shared with millions children (and their parents and grandparents), I nominate Paul Busse for the ASLA Medal of Excellence.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Kurt Culbertson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Kurt" being more prominent and stylized than the last name "Culbertson".

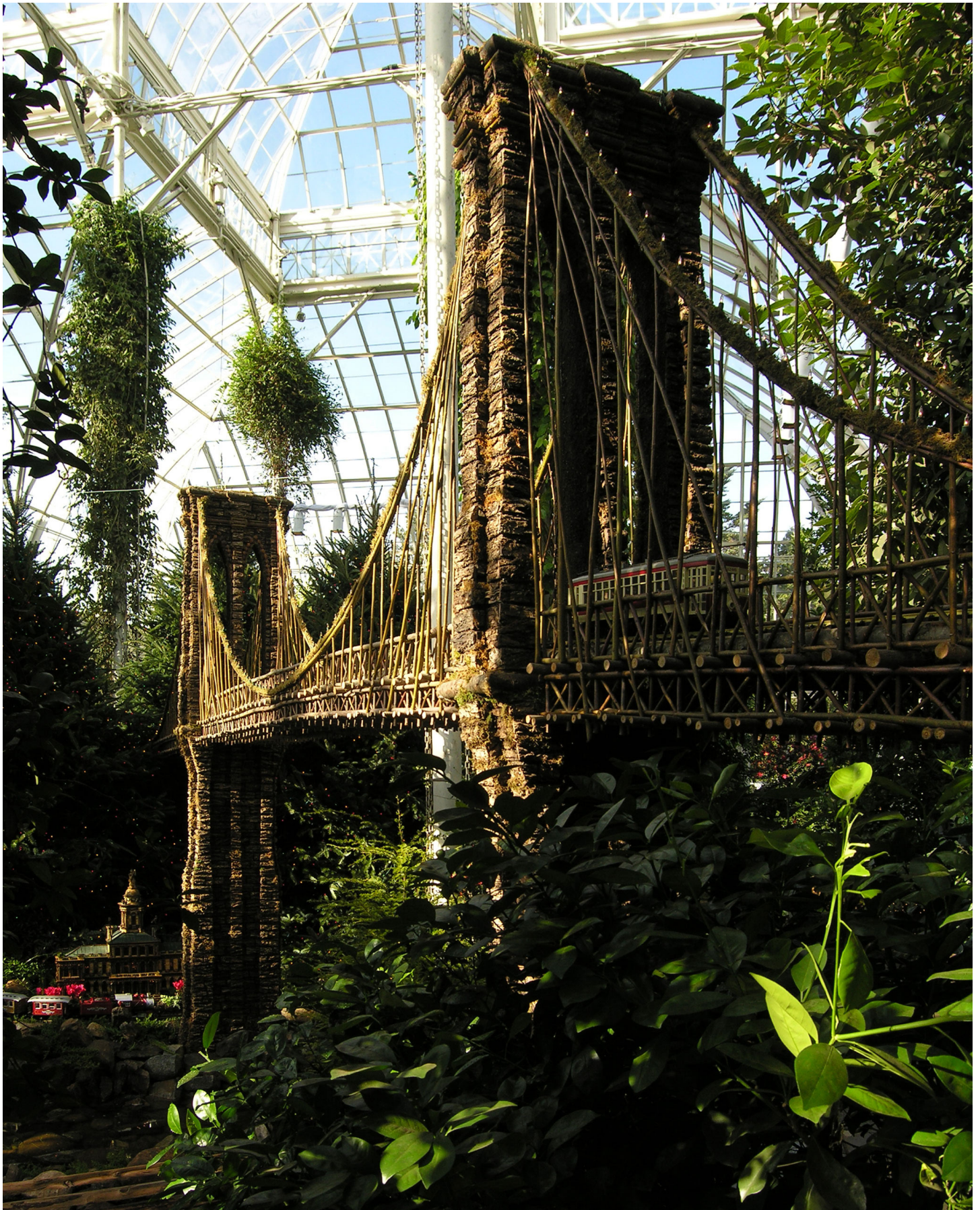
Kurt Culbertson  
Chairman | CEO





Residential Garden Railway





Brooklyn Bridge at New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY





Train tracks in Banyan Tree at Bellagio Conservatory, Las Vegas, NV





**Ellis Island and Statue of Liberty at New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY**



**Bellagio Conservatory model at Bellagio Conservatory, Las Vegas, NV**



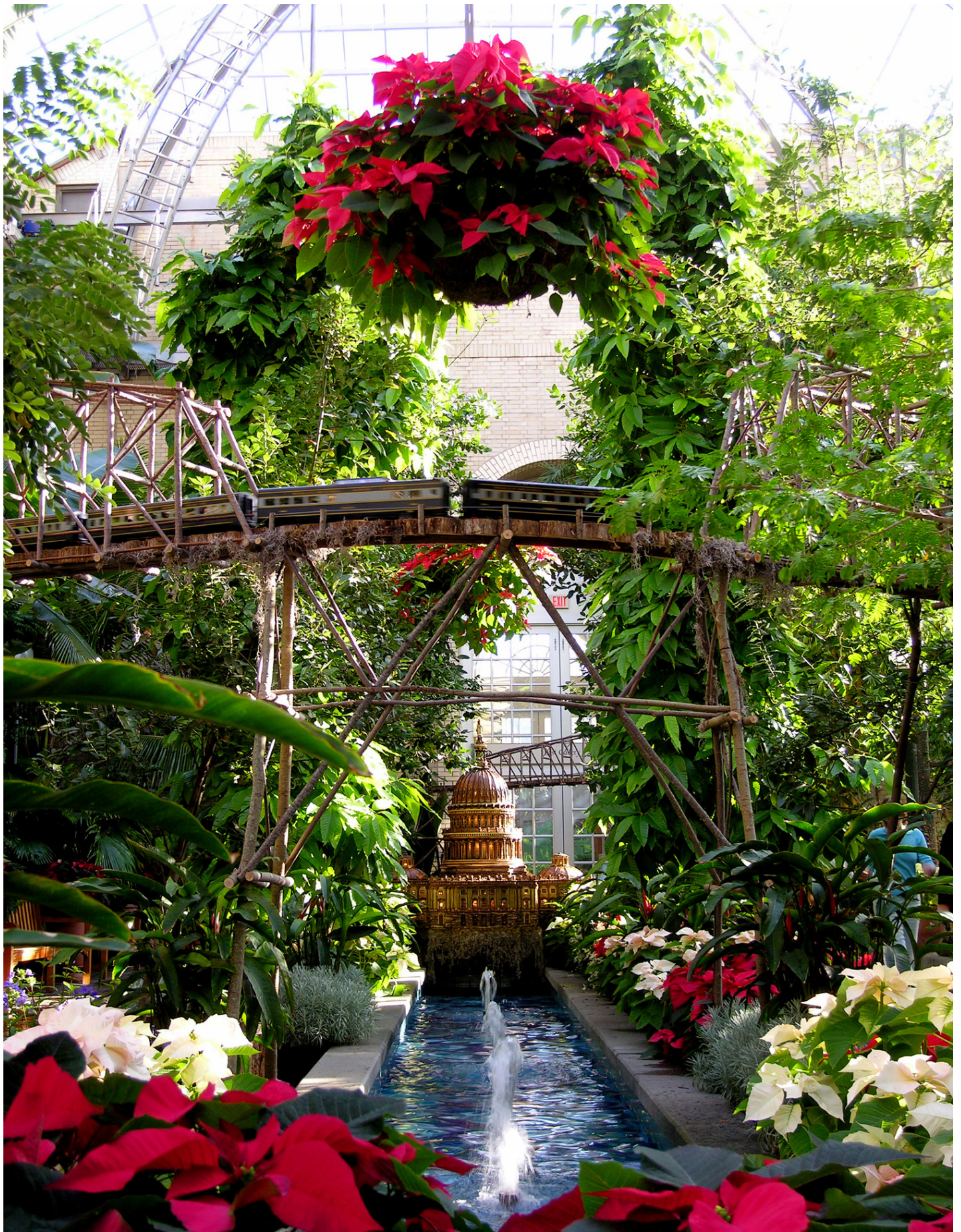


Rural scene at Bellagio Conservatory, Las Vegas, NV



Wrigley Field at Chicago Flower Show





Capitol Building at United States Botanic Garden



# NYBG

January 9, 2020

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636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Nominating Committee Member:

Since 1992, The New York Botanical Garden has worked in partnership with the incomparable Paul Busse and his team of artists at Applied Imagination to create the Garden's annual *Holiday Train Show*. This exhibition, which began as modest affair to entice visitors to the Garden during the middle of winter, has grown into a bona fide New York City holiday tradition that delights more than 260,000 visitors every year. The success of the *Holiday Train Show* is due to Paul's creative vision, which draws on his training as a landscape architect and his ability to manipulate scale and perspective to create immersive, magical spaces.

Words are insufficient to describe Paul's work, which is part landscape design, part fine art, and part stagecraft and must be seen to be fully understood. Fortunately, over his long and distinguished career, millions of people have had the opportunity to experience Paul's remarkable creations first-hand here at NYBG and at several other botanical gardens and cultural institutions across the United States. The fantastical structures and elegant landscapes Paul creates provide all who encounter them an opportunity to engage with the intricate beauty of the natural world.

It has been my honor to work with Paul and his colleagues at Applied Imagination for the better part of two decades. I wholeheartedly endorse his nomination for the Landscape Architecture Medal of Excellence, as would every person who has had the good fortune to be delighted by his work.

Sincerely,



Todd Forrest  
Arthur Ross Vice President  
for Horticulture and Living Collections





Dear Sir or Madam,

January 9, 2020

It is with great enthusiasm that we write to support the nomination of Paul Busse for the ASLA Medal of Excellence. Quite simply, Paul Busse's vision has helped transform our institution.

In the mid 1990's, the Morris Arboretum's Advisory Board of Managers challenged the staff to install color in the garden in an effort to increase attendance. At that time, the Morris Arboretum was viewed as a "pretty" green place in the northwest corner of the city. A series of garden restorations infused new color in the landscape, but there was a certain excitement missing. By happenstance, our Executive Director witnessed the magic of Garden Railway at the New York Botanical Garden around this same time. We contacted Paul Busse and the folks at Applied Imagination in an effort to become the first public garden in the Philadelphia area to install a garden railway.

In 1998, Paul Busse and the team from Applied Imagination designed and constructed our Garden Railway on a ¼ acre parcel of the garden. From its opening, the Garden Railway has been a perennial favorite among our visitors and the numbers bear this out. In its first season, the garden railway increased annual visitation by 100%. Our Holiday Railway exhibit turned December from one of our least visited months into one of our busiest and most profitable months of the year. Garden visitation had been climbing slowly before the installation of the garden railway but attendance figures increased markedly afterwards. This speaks to the strong affinity visitors have with Paul's work.

Numbers notwithstanding, this exhibit is completely engaging. The exquisite beauty of the buildings is remarkable. With the nuanced layout of the tracks winding their way through mature plantings and overhead trestles, Paul and his team created a magical experience that resonates with all. Everyone is a kid in the Garden Railway as is evidenced by the smiles of delight from visitors both young and old. Paul's insight and vision in this garden cannot be overstated. He not only installed a beautiful Lilliputian landscape, but he taught us the ethos by which we manage this garden from "miniscaping" to the theatrical placement of buildings. It is a pleasure to work with him and his team each year.



**Morris Arboretum** of the  
**University of Pennsylvania**

*Official arboretum of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania*

Paul Busse's contributions to other garden railways are equally as amicable and transformative. His body of work installing garden railways speaks for itself. This legacy of fine garden creations makes Paul Busse an ideal candidate for the distinction of the ASLA Medal of Excellence.

Sincerely,

Anthony S. Aiello

*The Gayle E. Maloney Director of Horticulture and Curator*

Vincent Marrocco

*Associate Director of Horticulture/Chief Horticulturist*





01.09.2020

ASLA Medal of Excellence Nominations

636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

To whom it may concern,

I am writing in support of the nomination of Paul Busse, for the ASLA Medal of Excellence. Having worked with Paul and his team for more than a decade, I have witnessed firsthand the creativity and passion that allowed him to transcend traditional Landscape Architecture and create an entirely unique profession, a blend of model railways, architecture, exhibit design and horticulture.

Paul's commitment to excellence is inspiring, and the annual Holiday exhibit at the US Botanic Garden has been a source of joy for families for many years, and it has become our busiest time of year. I see visitors marvel at the creative use of botanical materials, and enamored with the details of each building and structure. The show brings visitors to the garden who might otherwise never visit a botanic garden.

Paul's story could be an inspiration for others who might settle for security, instead of pursuing their true passion. Paul also brings to mind the diversity within the profession, and how the skills acquired can be applied to other trades.

Paul has left a lasting legacy with those he has worked with, and makes a great candidate for the ASLA Medal of Excellence.

Sincerely,

Nick Nelson

Landscape Architect, US Botanic Garden

245 First Street, SW  
Washington, DC 20024  
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January 21, 2020

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Dear Sir or Madam,

I am so thrilled to nominate Paul Busse for the ASLA Medal of Excellence. As one of Paul's earliest partners, I can tell you with great enthusiasm that his work has had a tremendous impact on the Krohn Conservatory's growth over the last several decades. Year after year attendance at our holiday display continues to grow, this past season being our best-ever!

The pure joy that Paul's world class display brings to our visitors is unmatched. In a world so connected to technology, his contribution to the natural world is needed now more than ever. Paul has spent a lifetime bringing people closer to nature and each other, and I can think of no one more deserving of this recognition.

Sincerely,

Andrea Schepmann

General Manager

Krohn Conservatory

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