

## 2017 Potomac Chapter ASLA Lifetime Achievement Awardees

### Beatriz and Laurence Coffin



*Bea and Larry Coffin (center) celebrate the award with family*

**Beatriz de Winthuysen was born in Spain and lived with her family through the Spanish Civil War. Her father was a renowned Impressionist painter and a recognized authority in historical gardens and notable private and public projects. Time spent traveling with her family throughout Spain developed Bea's love for art, landscape and architecture.**

**Bea attended university in Barcelona, Spain before moving to the United States to attend Furman University. After graduating she attended Cornell University, then went on to graduate from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, with a degree in Landscape Architecture.**

**Laurence E. Coffin was born in Toronto, Canada and grew up with his family in Richmond, Va. During his summers, he spent a great deal of time working on a family farm, where his burgeoning love for horticulture and stewardship for the land began.**

After high-school Larry joined the Merchant Marines and traveled to Russian occupied Poland. He returned home, and enlisted in the United States Army, serving in Japan.

Upon his return, Larry graduated from Virginia Tech with a degree in Horticulture and was hired by NATO as an architectural draft-man, working on a major air base in Keflavik, Iceland.

Larry returned to the states and graduated from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, with a degree in Landscape Architecture.

Bea and Larry met at Harvard and after graduating moved to New York City to begin working for large architectural and landscape architectural firms. Larry for the architectural firms Skidmore, Owings and Merrill (SOM) and with Leo Novick (ASLA). Bea for A. Carl Stelling (ASLA) and Volkert, Walker, Smith, Smith and Haines Associates. They were married in New York City in 1958 and thus began the firm of Coffin & Winthuysen.

During their years in New York they worked on many interesting projects. Bea worked on the development of the site construction plans for the entire Stony Brook University campus. Larry worked on Lincoln Towers, a large housing project developed by Web & Knap, the project consisted of building clearance for a 10-block area between 64<sup>th</sup> & 70<sup>th</sup> St and 10 Ave to the rail-yard and Hudson River.

1963 Larry was offered a position as Assistant Professor, teaching Landscape Architecture at the University of Michigan State in Lansing, where he taught for 5 years. Bea took a position as a Teaching Assistant in Spanish classes while writing her thesis. During that time, the newly formed Coffin & Winthuysen received contracts from the cities of Chicago and Dearborn. One major contract from Chicago (General Neighborhood Renewal Project - GNRP), was preparing the design for closing the large area of Ogden Avenue, bringing new life to the Lincoln Park neighborhood.

In 1965 they moved to Washington, D.C. Larry was appointed as Recreation Specialist for the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation in the district and as Adjunct Associate Professor of Architecture, began teaching City Planning and Urban Design at Catholic University of America.

1966 he began work on D.C. City government urban design studies for the Anacostia area, The Far Northeast and Far Southeast, followed by multiple other community studies including The Anacostia River Basin.

Since founding the International Institute of Site Planning (IN SITU) in 1976, Bea has lectured and been published nationally and internationally. At present, she continues her active role with IN SITU.

In 1974 they changed the name of their landscape architecture and planning firm to Coffin & Coffin. National and International Projects/Clients have included;

D.C. and Federal government agencies, Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax Counties in Virginia, Montgomery, Prince George, Washington and St. Mary counties in Maryland Washington Metropolitan Transit Authority (Rhode Island Ave. & Bethesda Metro Centers), The Smithsonian Institute The Pavilion Plaza (Old Post Office), The Middle East Institute, The Embassy of Japan. The German Embassy Arlington National Cemetery, Georgetown Waterfront Park, Catholic University, Georgetown University, U.S. Naval Academy,	Uniformed Services University of Health Sciences National Institutes of Health, National Navel Medical Center University of the District of Columbia, Van Ness Campus, Washington International School at Tregaron Wayne Community College, North Carolina, Reston Planning Commission Highway Commission, (Rockville Pike, Columbia Pike, Woodrow Wilson Bridge, Route 68 Expansion), National Capital Development Commission at the invitation of Australia, Center Way and Roosevelt Center, Greenbelt,
---	---

1985 – 86 Larry worked for the National Capital Development Commission at the invitation of the Australian government. He prepared recommendations for all new capital improvement projects in Canberra's urban core, Parliamentary Triangle, proposed Museum of Australia, Australian Botanical Gardens, Lake Burley Griffin, and several satellite communities under design.

Between 1989 – 1995 Beatriz was invited to work in three countries, Ecuador, Bolivia and Mexico. Teaching university programs in Landscape Architecture and Site Planning.

**Larry is a former member of both the Pennsylvania Avenue Development Corporation in Washington and Design Advisory Panel for Housing and Community Development in Baltimore**

**Bea is a former steering committee member of the Design Advocacy Program for the D.C. Commission on the Arts and Humanities in Washington**

**They are current members of the Cosmos Club of Washington.**

**This talented, generous and modest couple continues sharing their knowledge and spirits through their many, many works. Our world has been greatly influenced by all the studies and projects they have produced. Today many of our members and mentors have worked with or learned from Beatriz and Lawrence Coffin of the Coffin & Coffin firm, and will continue to do so for generations to come.**

**They have left us a very bright path to follow.**