



In Memoriam: Ann Webster Smith



With a deep sense of loss and in a spirit of great sadness, US/ICOMOS informs its members and friends of the unexpected death of Ann Webster Smith, 2005 Gazzola Laureate and Chair Emerita of US/ICOMOS. In announcing this news, we can only reiterate the immense gratitude of all ICOMOS and of the national and international heritage community for her many contributions to our field. The loss of her leadership leaves US/ICOMOS and ICOMOS with an immense gap that cannot be filled. Though we did not suspect it at the time, the Gazzola Prize was a most proper culmination to her life.

Her achievements, generosity and dedication were too vast to summarize here, so we will simply refer to the nomination for the Gazzola Prize that was submitted last year by John Fowler, Chair, US/ICOMOS Board of Trustees:

“The work and achievements of Ms Smith in fostering a global culture of protection for the cultural heritage of the entire world are so prolific and varied that they defy description. Her unwavering dedication, passion and generosity for ICOMOS, where a large part of her work on behalf of international preservation has taken place, are universally known, almost legendary by now. Because of the many roles that she has played in the organization, she knows ICOMOS, and has helped it from its many perspectives: as a regular member, as an Honorary member, as Secretariat staff, as National Committee president, as coordinator of the International Scientific

Committees, and as a member of the Bureau. For three decades Ms Smith has been at the very core of the dreamers and doers who have nurtured ICOMOS to its current maturity. Her commitment to cooperation and teamwork has enlarged our reach, and ushered many to join in building a better organization. Her home was always open to accommodate those passing through, and her apartment often was – and is – the venue to many an impromptu ICOMOS meeting or strategy session...

Her sharp and detailed memory has merged into the corporate memory of ICOMOS, and her impartial use of that vast repository of information has been her tool for steering our growth. A true visionary never fearing change for the sake of improvement, she has conceptualized, supported, championed and enabled numerous cultural programs for international cooperation; influenced major decision-makers towards the preservation ethic; steered private and public funds for the support of international preservation initiatives; mentored dozens of young preservationists into their full professional capacity; and given her unfailing support and assistance to new and young ICOMOS members. She has always made time for nurturing new folks into ICOMOS, seeing their potential and developing their interests for the organization's benefit and future."