

Olmsted Straight – No Chaser

BY JOHN KOLAR

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AUDITORIUM



The Frederick Law Olmsted
Society of Riverside

Long-time Olmsted scholar and former Olmsted Society President John Kolar posits that in recent years, the sacred name of Frederick Law Olmsted has taken on an aura of mythic proportions. On questions pertaining to Riverside and in support of disparate causes alike, Olmsted's endorsement is frequently invoked. We hear of his enthusiasm for baseball and petunias, as well as his abhorrence of alien trees and gaps in our parkways. Curiously, only the fewest of such thesis are supported by quotations of Olmsted himself.

One reason for the paucity of citation may well be Olmsted's writing style. Laura Wood Roper, in her biography of Olmsted, wrote: "Admittedly, he was not very good at it (educating the public) himself. The style of his professional papers was labored. Try as he might, he could not say just what he meant clearly and gracefully." In his lecture, Kolar will set out to transcribe Olmsted's own words into plain American English in order to distill the intent of the creator of our Village.

Refreshments will be served.