

**Robert C. Ripley, FAIA**  
**2015 Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal Recipient**  
***Architectural Excellence in the State of Nebraska***



Robert C. Ripley, FAIA, Nebraska Capitol Administrator, Office of the Capitol Commission, is the recipient of the 2015 Harry F. Cunningham Gold Medal for Architectural Excellence in the State of Nebraska. The Gold Medal is the highest honor the Nebraska Chapter of The American Institute of Architects (AIA) can bestow and is awarded in recognition of the most distinguished achievement in architecture or service to the profession of architecture in the State of Nebraska.

Nominators Dan Worth, AIA, BVH Architects and Fred Zarate, AIA, State of Nebraska said, “Nebraskans of all ages have been positively affected by Robert C. Ripley’s passion for public service, architecture and particularly by his passion for the conservation and preservation of the Nebraska State Capitol. Bob has been the caretaker, the steward, and the guardian of Nebraska’s history as depicted and beautifully contained within the walls and grounds of Bertram Goodhue’s monumental Capitol.”

For more than 32 years, Ripley’s core job has been to restore and preserve the Nebraska State Capitol, a National Historic Landmark, including the creation of a legacy Capitol Master Plan that will guide conservation of this national treasure for hundreds of years to come.

Born and raised in Lincoln, educated at Lincoln Public Schools and the University Of Nebraska College Of Architecture, Bob’s passion and efforts have educated thousands of school children and adults on the importance of architecture and history of Nebraska’s State Capitol.

As a public servant and through his extensive public service, Bob has positively impacted Nebraskans and beyond on the importance of the Capitol by lectures, books, tours, and documentaries. Bob passionately shares his vision for Nebraska’s Capitol and the history contained within. One of his key roles is to help everyone understand “why the Nebraska State Capitol is important to all Nebraskans, and our nation.”

Ripley’s expertise is far beyond the confines of his position, being actively involved in a wide variety of organizations over his career including The American Institute of Architects, Nebraska Chapter; The Architectural Foundation of Nebraska; City of Lincoln, Parks and Recreation Advisory Board; Nebraska State Capitol Environs Commission; Association for Preservation Technology; National Trust for Historic Preservation; The Society of Architectural Historians; Nebraska Statewide Arboretum; and Preservation Association of Lincoln.

Serving under six governors and leading a staff of 26, Ripley has expanded the role of Capitol Administrator far beyond previous standards, developing collaborative conservation practices and a nationally recognized historic archive. Ripley's national reputation, innovation, and success in challenging preservation projects led to his three-year stint as the Historic Preservation Consultant and Project Coordinator for the Phase III restoration of the Washington Monument.

"The Capitol is a source of pride for Nebraskans, and Bob understands how important it is to preserve the building for the current and future needs of state government. His lifelong dedication to historic preservation means that the beauty of the building, including its artwork and symbolism, will be here for all Nebraskans and our many visitors to enjoy for centuries to come. I enjoy working with Bob and appreciate his great stewardship for our wonderful Capitol. Bob is well deserving of this honor," said Governor Pete Ricketts.

[Click here](#) to view Robert Ripley's submission.

The Gold Medal commemorates the achievements of Harry Francis Cunningham who came to Nebraska as lead architect for Bertram Grosvenor Goodhue's office during completion of the tower phase of construction for the State Capitol following Goodhue's death in 1924. It was Goodhue's revolutionary building design which won the nationwide competition in 1920 for the creation of the state house in Lincoln. Cunningham subsequently established the first school of architecture at the University of Nebraska- Lincoln.