



**Friends of Switzerland**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

## **Renata von Tscharner selected to receive Friends of Switzerland's Stratton Prize**

### *Charles River Conservancy initiates search for FOSI Stratton Fellowship Candidates*

CAMBRIDGE – Tuesday, March 3, 2015 – Charles River Conservancy Founder and President [Renata von Tscharner](#) has been chosen by the [Friends of Switzerland](#), to receive this year's Julius Adams Stratton Award for Intercultural Achievement.

The Friends of Switzerland, Inc. (FOSI) annually awards the Julius Adams Stratton Prize to, "eminent persons in the USA and Switzerland who exemplify the fruitfulness of the exchange of ideas and technologies between our two countries." Named after Dr. Stratton, former president of MIT who received the first award in 1966 "for his exemplary and lasting definition of humanistic conduct in the perplexing world of Science," the Stratton Prize has been awarded to a distinguished list of individuals who have contributed to intercultural understanding between our two countries, across the arts, diplomacy, business, science and medicine, and academics.

"Renata's work is inspired by the urban liveability concepts of her native Switzerland," said FOSI President Larry Grob. "Whether it was the vision of well-maintained public parks, river swimming or safer and uninterrupted bicycling along the shores, she translated them into reality. She has become a powerful advocate pulling in support from individuals, foundations and corporations to implement her vision."

Von Tscharner has more than 30 years of experience in non-profit leadership. A native of Bern, Switzerland, she is a graduate of the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology (ETH) in Zürich in architecture and city planning. In 2000, von Tscharner founded the Charles River Conservancy, which is dedicated to the stewardship, renewal, and enhancement of the urban parklands along the Charles River. The Conservancy promotes the active use and vitality of the parklands, increases recreational and cultural opportunities, and works to ensure the beauty and integrity of this extraordinary public resource.

In addition to founding the Conservancy, von Tscharner has worked on the conversion of the Covent Garden Market in London, co-authored several books, taught at various colleges in the United States and has her own television program.

Previous Stratton Prize Laureates include noted influential leaders in their fields, such as photographer and Science Museum founder Bradford Washburn, economist John Kenneth Galbraith, businessman and philanthropist Hansjörg Wyss, and entrepreneur Josef von Rickenbach.

"It is a great honor to be awarded the Stratton Prize, which celebrates Swiss American connections," said von Tscharner. "Having lived in the United States since

1979, I feel so fortunate to have been able to implement some of what I consider typically Swiss ideas yet working with the tool of the non-profit organization, a concept that is so refreshingly American.”

The Stratton Prize traditionally also comes with the opportunity for the Laureate to nominate a Stratton Fellow who pursues research in Switzerland. FOSI has developed the Stratton Fellowship to encourage educational and cultural exchange.

As this year's Prize winner designate, von Tscharnner seeks to award the \$5,000 Stratton Fellow stipend to an American interested in doing a research project in Switzerland. The research should focus on Swiss urban liveability and the public-private partnerships that support open spaces. The Charles River Conservancy will work with applicants interested in applying to determine if they are a good fit. The fellowship is posted on the Conservancy website at [thecharles.org/jobs-and-internships](http://thecharles.org/jobs-and-internships). Applications are due by April 1, 2015, awarded April 15, and announced on May 1 at the Stratton Award Dinner. The Friends of Switzerland will underwrite the cost of airfare to and from Switzerland.

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### **About the Friends of Switzerland**

Friends of Switzerland is dedicated to fostering friendship, understanding, and enjoyment between the Swiss and Americans in New England, and was established in 1964. FOSI members include expatriate Swiss, Americans who have travelled or lived in Switzerland, and others interested in the multicultural society and traditions of Switzerland. FOSI's members represent a broad spectrum of professional and cultural backgrounds and interests in finance, health, law, travel, science, the arts and education. Members and friends meet during the year for a monthly Stammtisch Luncheon and Speaker series, and convene annually for the formal Stratton Prize Dinner in the Spring. FOSI is a non-profit, tax-exempt charitable corporation.  
[www.friendsofswitzerland.org](http://www.friendsofswitzerland.org)

### **About the Charles River Conservancy**

Founded in 2000, The Conservancy has over 25,000 supporters and volunteers. The Conservancy's programs include advocating for the urban river front, building a world-class skatepark, returning swimming to the River, employing 2,000 landscape volunteers annually, improving the river paths, building underpasses, illuminating bridges, and offering the Sunday Parkland Games. The Conservancy, with the help of private donors, often partners with DCR and MassDOT to implement civic projects and programs.  
[www.thecharles.org](http://www.thecharles.org) [facebook.com/charlesriverconservancy](https://facebook.com/charlesriverconservancy) [twitter.com/charlesrivercrc](https://twitter.com/charlesrivercrc)

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