

# TRIBUTE TO PAUL CRAWFORD



**Paul C. Crawford, FAICP**

**1947-2008**

# MEMORIES OF PAUL CRAWFORD

*Losing Paul Crawford, a delightful person and colleague, and one of the department's most popular teachers was a strong hit to all of us. He leaves a lasting legacy and received (in memoriam) the 2008 Distinguished Leadership Award for A Planning Pioneer from the American Planning Association California Chapter. Paul was one of FOCUS earliest contributors with the article Planning, Architecture and Politics in our first issue in 2004. For this Tribute, we collected memories from three people who knew Paul well and who help us remember the extraordinary man that he was.*

*Kaizer Rangwala is Assistant Community Development Director, City of Ventura, and Director of the Ventura County Sub-Section of the American Planning Association. These remarks have been originally published in the Cal Planner, Sept-Oct. 2008.*

## **A True American Planning Hero, by Kaizer Rangwala**

*Sam: It's like in the great stories Mr. Frodo, the ones that really mattered. Full of darkness and danger they were, and sometimes you didn't want to know the end because how could the end be happy? How could the world go back to the way it was when so much bad had happened? But in the end it's only a passing thing this shadow, even darkness must pass. A new day will come, and when the sun shines it'll shine out the clearer. Those were the stories that stayed with you, that meant something even if you were too small to understand why. But I think Mr. Frodo, I do understand, I know now folk in those stories had lots of chances of turning back, only they didn't. They kept going because they were holding on to something.*

*Frodo: What are we holding onto, Sam?*

*Sam: That there's some good in the world, Mr. Frodo, and it's worth fighting for.*

*- Lord of the Rings: The Two Towers*

The planning profession in its search to recapture the pride and glory of being a city planner needs a hero that inspires us to strive for the good in the world – and have a good time while working hard to make a difference. Paul Crawford was one such consummate planning protagonist that exemplified the best attributes of a planner and set an example of a contemporary American planning hero.

Paul Crawford passed away at his home in San Luis Obispo in May. Born in Chicago, Paul moved to California in the 1950s and graduated from the city and regional planning program in 1971 from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. At 33, Paul was the youngest county planning director in California. After 10 years in the public sector, Paul co-founded the planning consulting firm Crawford, Multari and Clark Associates.

Paul enjoyed distinctive and livable places and was a true pioneer in crafting policies and over 100 development codes that would facilitate such places. He was generous with his time and offered advice to others who could help make communities better places.

So much of what is happening today in the realm of Form-Based Coding would not be if it were not for Paul laying the groundwork and setting the template. “Few who have rallied around Form-Based Codes have the encyclopedic knowledge of conventional zoning that Paul possessed. That knowledge, and his depth of experience as a planner, enabled Paul to see the true potential of the approach, and create the necessary “conversion kit” to plug form-based codes into the use-based regulatory framework that exists in nearly every US municipality. Years from now, we will look back

and see how Paul's leadership and insight set the stage for this important advance," said Peter Katz, president of Form-Based Codes Institute (FBCI).

Paul's ability to speak and write simply allowed him to connect with everyone. You felt important and valued when you talked to Paul. "His spirit was so generous and infectious that no one could resist responding and joining in whatever task was at hand," notes Carol Wyant, executive director of FBCI.

"Paul was never flustered, and endured happily in a profession rife with bureaucracy and politics. And I think it was largely Paul's good nature that allowed him to work so many years on zoning ordinances, a world with few thrills," said his business partner Chris Clark.

Together with his new urbanist friends, Paul co-founded the FBCI and served as its chairman. With Dan and Karen Parolek he co-authored the recently published seminal textbook on Form-Based Codes.

"Paul embraced life on more fronts than almost anyone I know: photography, spelunking, teaching, good wine and food. Paul had a gift for reducing complex concepts into simple, clear language -- this gift combined with his passion for Form-Based Coding enabled FBCI to accomplish much more in its few years of existence than we could have imagined," notes Carol.

As planners we work under tight deadlines and are often stretched to the limit. Paul was a self-admitted workaholic. "Paul taught us how to work hard and live the good life. Enjoying the sweet life (La Dolce Vita) at times meant squeezing in quality time during evenings and weekends having a good meal with friends, often at client sites, or more recently going off to Italy for a few months," recalls Geoff Ferrell, vice chairman of FBCI.

Paul was appointed and recognized by numerous state and national planning organizations. The California chapter of the American Planning Association recognized Paul with its Excellence for Distinguished Leadership as a Planning Professional award in 1998. In 2000, Paul served as president of the California Planning Roundtable. A year later, he was elected to the College of Fellows of the American Institute of Certified Planners.

Paul's memories will live on in the places that will continue to be shaped by people's lives that he touched and policies and codes he authored. Forever preserved are his wit, presence, knowledge and humility that have left an indelible impression on our psyche for the past 30 years. This is the mark of great technician who fought the good fight and has left the world better than he found it.

#### **An Appreciation: Paul Crawford, by Mike Multari**

In May, we lost Paul Crawford, a fine planner, respected teacher and good friend to many. He died at age 60 from brain cancer. Paul hailed from Visalia, and after earning a CRP degree at Cal Poly, returned there shortly to work for Quad Consultants. San Luis Obispo beckoned him back, however. Within a few years of joining the SLO County planning staff, he rose to be the department's director. During the 1980s, Paul was recognized in a survey by the Telegram Tribune newspaper as the most influential person in the land-use field in SLO. His calm, professorial demeanor served him well during those turbulent times as the SLO County was transitioning from a wide-open attitude about development to a more environmentally aware approach, and planning was the focus of that whirlwind of change. He managed the overhaul of the County's land use plans and regulations, and combined the general plan land use element with the zoning ordinance – an innovative effort that won a California Chapter APA award.

*Mike Multari is a co-founder of the planning consulting firm Crawford Multari & Clark Associates. He is a part-time lecturer at the CRP department and Cal Poly's Assistant Director of Facilities Planning. His remarks were originally published in the Central Coast Section APA Quarterly Newsletter, "Coastal Connections," Summer, 2008.*

At about this time, I was working at the City of SLO, so we'd regularly meet for coffee and compare notes on our work. Paul was itching for something new, as the County land-use issues had become predictable and repetitious, while ever more contentious. By 1990, we left our public sector jobs to start a consulting business that evolved into Crawford Multari & Clark Associates. You get to know someone pretty well after a traveling around the state trying to drum up clients. Paul generally drove – he was the consummate sneaky speeder and had an uncanny sense of direction – while telling me about his family, his favorite movies and books, his photography and spelunking hobbies, trips taken and planned, and, of course, wine. Once on a trip to Auburn, Paul was his usual charming self, impressing our waitress with his knowledge of wine. She returned late in the meal with a glass of wine, unnamed, recommended by the chef. Paul swirled and sniffed and tasted...declaring it a zinfandel, probably from such and such a place. He was right, and the chef came out himself and joined us, as we spent the rest of the evening talking and tasting wines over dessert. That was pure Paul.

Paul found his professional focus in the nitty-gritty details of development codes, poring over the arcana of zoning and subdivision regulations late into the night. Many evenings after dinner, I'd walk by the office and see his light on. Because he almost always did his work on his own, it is easy to picture him as a cloistered monk, ensconced in his scriptorium, carefully detailing a manuscript. But Paul enjoyed a party. Once at a conference, I was leaving our room to take an early morning swim, only to bump into Paul and other planning revelers just coming in from a long night of wine and conversation.

His list of professional accomplishments is most impressive: Distinguished Leadership and other APA awards, Fellow of the AICP, California Planners' Roundtable, President of the County Planning Directors' Association, Congress for New Urbanism, founder of the Form-based Codes Institute, adjunct professor at Cal Poly, architect of development codes for more than 80 cities and counties, and co-author of the book Formed-Based Codes. But his genial personality, love of his family, and his passion for life are even more memorable in a remarkable life — and sad loss for the rest of us.

#### **Paul Crawford, by Chris Clark**

*Chris Clark is a principal of the planning consulting firm Crawford Multari & Clark Associates. He is currently a full-time lecturer at the CRP department.*

Paul taught at Cal Poly for many years. When he passed away he had been there longer than anyone still teaching in the City and Regional Planning Department. He was there after a successful career in public service, culminating in directing planning at the County of San Luis Obispo, and following Mike Multari into a respected consulting practice, where he eventually gained a national reputation for his contributions to zoning.

Certainly students enjoyed his stately good looks and deep voice. They appreciated his friendliness. But more importantly his students knew they were in the presence of an experienced and confident mind, a planner at the height of his profession.

For years Paul taught Planning Agency Management and this was a natural extension of his prior vocation. But he also taught the introduction to planning, a survey course attended by students who might just be considering the profession. Paul can take credit for a number of students who entered the field upon the promise he represented.

Paul had started at Cal Poly as an architecture student and did not fare well. The 1960s were a great time to be in college, but not conducive to academics. On the advice of a professor, Paul gravitated to planning. Architecture, like law and medicine, is a well-known profession. For a Visalia kid it made sense within a limited paradigm.

Planning was not so well known, as is still the case. Paul loved it. It melded design, public policy and management. The hybrid qualities requisite of a good planner fit well with his many talents. He excelled and maintained the passion to the very end of his days. Along the way, Cal Poly honored its prodigal student with a distinguished alumni recognition award.

Paul will continue to teach by way of a book he co-authored on Form Based Codes, his redeeming effort for the years of Euclidean zoning he had ministered throughout the state. Paul was a zoning expert. Cities throughout California continue to benefit from the clarity and care he brought to those arcane regulations.

Perhaps the greatest benefit, though, will be in the careers of those planners who attended his Introduction to Urban Planning class. They sat in those desks and listened to an accomplished planner. Somewhere in their minds they would understand that he once occupied their seat. And the distance they would need to traverse in order to achieve his standing was a worthy trek.

***The Paul Crawford Scholarship Fund has been established at Cal Poly in his memory; anyone wishing to donate should make checks payable to the Cal Poly Foundation, noting the scholarship, and mail it to:  
City and Regional Planning Department, Cal Poly  
1 Grand Avenue, San Luis Obispo, CA 93407.***

# PHOTOGRAPHS BY PAUL CRAWFORD

*Paul Crawford was an accomplished amateur photographer with a keen eye for architecture, urbanism, and the human aspects of cities. We present a random collection of some of these beautiful images, mostly from Spain, Italy, and France. FOCUS thanks his wife Linda Crawford for making these images available.*



