



2022 PLANNERS EMERITUS NETWORK HONORS AWARDS

The Planners Emeritus Network (PEN) is pleased to recognize 12 highly qualified planners who have made significant contributions to the field of planning, APA, and their communities.

- **Gayle Ackerman, Director of Community Development, Lake Forest, AICP**

Gayle Ackerman has dedicated over three decades of service to the planning profession, both in the private and public sectors. She began her career in the private sector and transitioned to the public sector, working for the cities of Huntington Beach, Irvine, and Lake Forest (for the last 30 years), where she is the Community Development Director. Gayle was hired just one year after Lake Forest incorporated, giving her the unique opportunity (and challenge) to plot the new City's land use course. She has overseen every General Plan and Housing Element Update since incorporation, oversaw the APA Award-winning *Opportunities Study* and resulting new residential neighborhoods, as well as a new civic center, the master-planned developments of Foothill Ranch and Portola Hills and the City's first mixed-use ordinance, just to name a few planning successes.

- **Stephen Avis, Northern Section Board Member, AICP**

Stephen Avis, currently known as Councilmember Avis to the City of Ferndale, is a renowned planner in the far north Redwood Region of the Northern Section of the California Chapter. After a successful career in nonprofit management, Stephen returned to university to earn a degree with distinction from the Geography, Environment and Planning Program at Sonoma State University, under the guidance of Thomas Jacobson FAICP, JD. While at Sonoma State, he led a student project to prepare an Area Plan for Downtown Santa Rosa. The Plan was adopted by the City and resulted in reactivating the courthouse square and revitalizing the downtown commercial area.

He is well known for his enthusiastic outreach and educational programs for planners working in the areas north of the Bay Area, where he has been the long-time Redwood Region Activity Coordinator and an active member of the Northern Section Board. In addition, since 2010, Stephen has also hosted a monthly Brown Bag Lecture Series of interest to local and statewide planners.

After receiving his planning degree, Stephen was hired by the County of Humboldt and then the City of Fortuna where he served as a long-range planner. During his tenure in Fortuna, he coordinated a complete overhaul of the city's general plan and zoning regulations. He also successfully sought grant funds for the development of a regional park master plan that is currently being implemented.

Stephen has also been an outstanding and highly engaged member of the Board of the Northern Section of the California Chapter for over ten (10) years, contributing to the Section's programs and activities. His long tenure of providing frequent, high quality educational and networking programming to planners in the North Coast and Redwood Regions of California is an invaluable contribution and has helped to improve the practice of planning in this region.

- **Dave Bobart, Planner, AICP**

David Bobardt has over 36 years of experience in planning and CEQA. After obtaining a

Master of Planning from the University of Southern California in 1986, David started his planning career working for Cotton/Beland/Associates in Pasadena. He spent the next 31 years serving the public sector, with the Cities of Glendale and Moorpark, rising in the ranks from Planner to ultimately Community Development Director for the City of Moorpark. Notably, David prepared Glendale's first Air Quality Element and was instrumental in managing all long-range planning efforts. My fellow PEN Board member Margaret Sohagi experienced first-hand David's ability to adeptly administer a planning department, citizens committees and at the same time, provide excellent litigation support for the inevitable land use disputes that sometimes followed. David has been an APA member since 1983 and an AICP member since 1989. He assisted two CA planning conferences by overseeing the Mobile Workshops in Pasadena in the 1990s and assisting with Programs in Santa Barbara in the early 2000s.

- **Bill Figge, Caltrans, AICP**

Bill Figge worked for Caltrans for over 38 years, including as Deputy District Director for Planning and Local Assistance. Bill most recently planned the local Housing Listening Session with APA California and the California Planning Roundtable to discuss concerns and ideas relevant to implementation of recent state housing bills. Bill developed a two-part series on Public Benefit Planning, which examined incentive zoning strategies to deliver more public benefit amenities with new development. The Better Buzz morning series he developed with his co-chair has examined the implementation of a new community plan and planning for arts and culture in a fun and innovative format. Bill also developed informative programs that examined topics including the leading development proposals for the San Diego Sports Arena site, climate change impacts on regional water planning, and planning for health.

- **Steve Gerhardt, Urban and Environmental Planner, AICP**

Steve is versatile. His 30-plus years of planning experience includes the preparation of citywide general plans, specific plans for neighborhoods and corridors, healthy community strategies, environmental analyses, and bicycle and walkability programs, to name just a few. His recent work focuses on healthy and sustainable communities. One example is the City of Long Beach's transportation plan, prioritizing transportation modes that improve livability and sustainability.

He is currently the Executive Director of Walk Long Beach, which seeks to bring environmental health and sustainability to all neighborhoods.

Steve has been active in APA Los Angeles Chapter for 30 years. He served terms on the Board between 1985 and 2015 and currently leads an APA program tour of the new Long Beach International Gateway Bridge.

Steve holds a B.A. in Environmental Science from UC Santa Barbara.

- **Clifford Graves, Urban Development Advisor, FAICP**

Clifford Graves has over 40 years of experience in planning, urban development, development and finance. He has served with public agencies at all levels of government, including the Office of Management and Budget and HUD in Washington, D.C. He also served as CAO for the County of San Diego, Executive Director for the San Francisco Redevelopment Agency, and management positions with the cities of Los Angeles and Carson and the East Sussex County Council in the U.K. Cliff is an adjunct professor at the USC Price School of Public Policy, and has also taught at the University of Maryland, Howard university, UC Berkeley, and San Diego State University.

- **Christopher Gray, Deputy Executive Director, Western Riverside Council of Governments, AICP**

Christopher Gray is 'Transportation Planner Extraordinaire' having devoted the last 25 years

as a transportation planner in both the private and public sectors. He has a Masters in Urban and Regional Planning and is currently the Deputy Executive Director at the Western Riverside Council of Governments, where he directs the operations, facilitates multiple committee meetings, and is the liaison to all member agencies' elected officials. Christopher previously worked for Fehr & Peers on large-scale programs, including a research initiative related to impacts of autonomous and self-driving vehicles and stays at the forefront of all forms of emerging and alternative transportation technologies.

Christopher has been on the Inland Empire Section of the American Planning Association for the past decade, serving in multiple positions including Awards Program Manager and Section Director.

- **Samuel Hertzberg, Senior Planner, San Mateo County Parks Department, AICP**
Sam Herzberg has 30-plus years of public-sector planning experience specializing in regional and County park planning including: master plan development, grants preparation and management; planning and implementation of long-range capital improvement projects; developing regional sustainability initiatives and natural resource plans; and performing CEQA/NEPA environmental review, to name just a few!. He has been a civic engagement leader and planning facilitator within the profession, including multiple San Mateo County and Bay Area community and regional environmental agencies and organizations. Over his long-tenured planning career, Sam has been a mentor to many planning interns and students from San Francisco State University, Stanford University, and San Jose State University.

- **Steve Mitchell, City of Modesto**
Steve is a (Central) Valley Guy, committing his 42-year career to improve the City of Modesto's quality of life. As Planning Manager, he steered city development through several housing and economic cycles. He still managed to bring such innovations as form-based zoning, a downtown plan, a cannabis program, and sophisticated project tracking software. Through it all, Steve kept his sense of humor and compassion for his community. He retires this year.

Steve's leadership of the Section's Central Sierra retreats highlights his many contributions to Central Section.

- **Leighann Moffitt, AICP**
Leighann Moffitt has over 37 years of professional planning experience and has been involved in hundreds of projects, most notable overseeing the preparation of multiple large Sacramento County specific plans, the County's Climate Action Plan, and the Implementation of the County's Housing Element. Leighann helped form and served as Interim Director of the South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Agency. She also led an update of the American River Parkway Plan, which was awarded the CA APA Focused Issue Planning Award in 2007.

- **Susan Peerson, Continuing Lecturer, UCSD, FAICP**
Susan's impact on San Diego as a landscape architect, City Planner, San Diego Planning Commissioner, UCSD Campus Planner, APA Section board member, and award-winning academic over the last 35 years has been continuous and substantial. Her professionalism, commitment to public service, and leadership in every engagement are widely acknowledged in the region.

She's probably unique in having risen rapidly through the San Diego City Planning ranks and later serving as City Planning Commissioner under two mayors. Along the way, as Campus Planning Director Sue helped guide UC San Diego through a period of rapid physical and academic growth. Now, as a Distinguished Lecturer there, she's sharing her insights with a new generation.

Susan is also active in APA. As a San Diego Section Board Member, she has spearheaded new outreach to local community colleges, encouraging pipelines to planning careers for their students. She also served on the 2022 National APA Conference Committee.

- **Victoria Walker, Community Development and Planning Consultant, Solutions-MRG**

Victoria Walker has devoted her career to innovative planning endeavors at the local level for some 43 years, after receiving a Master of Architecture at UC Berkeley. Her work with Contra Costa cities is prolific and includes General Plan and Zoning Code updates, and Design Guidelines and Plans for the Cities of Walnut Creek and Concord. She has served as project manager for the preparation of several comprehensive Specific Plans and major development projects for Walnut Creek as well as the Concord Downtown Specific Plan. As a result of these planning efforts, both of these Contra Costa cities moved towards a predictable and consistent review process, allowing for streamlining of projects adjacent to the BART stations

Currently, Victoria is a consulting planner for *Solutions-MRG*, where she consults on planning policy and project implementation. Victoria continues to coach and mentor young planners and others serving in City government, and is dedicated to fostering the next generation of young women planners and leaders.