



American Planning Association

**California Chapter
Northern**

Making Great Communities Happen

Paul C. Crawford, FAICP, nationally known new urbanist

Paul Crawford died at home in San Luis Obispo on Wednesday, May 21st, after a 17-month battle with glioblastoma, an aggressive brain tumor.

Born in 1947 in Chicago, Paul moved to California with his family in 1952. After attending College of the Sequoias, he transferred to Cal Poly (San Luis Obispo) where he graduated in 1971 with a degree in city and regional planning.

His planning career began as an associate planner for the County of San Luis Obispo in 1975. In 1980, at 33, he became the youngest planning director in the state. He served in that post until 1990, when he co-founded the planning consulting firm Crawford, Multari & Clark Associates, where he worked until his final days. Paul also taught planning at Cal Poly from 1980 to 2006 as an adjunct professor.

Paul consulted extensively with cities and towns in Central and Northern California, preparing general and specific plans and zoning ordinances. He and his work were known across the state and nation. He was actively involved in the Congress for the New Urbanism (CNU) and the Form-Based Codes Institute (FBCI), of which he was the founding board chair. He was a pioneer in developing the practice of form-based codes as an effective alternative to conventional land-use planning and zoning. Lessons learned in Vicksburg, Mississippi in 2001 (Mouzon & Greene) led to the first California adoption of a citywide form-based code (City of Sonoma, March 2003, Crawford Multari & Clark Associates, Moule & Polyzoides), followed in 2004 by the first SmartCode adopted in the US (for central Petaluma, by Fisher and Hall Urban Design, and Crawford Multari & Clark Associates). With Daniel and Karen Parolek, Paul co-authored the textbook *Form-Based Codes: A Guide for Planning, Urban Design, Municipalities, and Developers* (John Wiley & Sons, 2008).

Paul was an avid photographer. His slide shows were a regular part of family gatherings. In April 2008, he exhibited images of Italy at the Photo Shop in San Luis Obispo. *Northern News* recently published one of Paul's photos, *Siena, Italy, from Via dei Montanini* (in "Where in the World," <http://www.norcalapa.org/assets/chapter/newsletter/April07.pdf>.) He was also a spelunker and co-directed the caving film "The World Within" (1978).

On January 1, 2007, while he and his wife, Linda, were on a four-month sabbatical in Italy, Paul suffered a seizure that led to the brain tumor diagnosis. He fought his illness with hope, grace, and courage, and continued to work until early May 2008.

A memorial service was held Sunday, May 25th, at the Spanos Theatre on the Cal Poly (SLO) campus. A stranger scanning the audience might have thought he had stumbled into one of the best-attended planning seminars ever. Instead, writes former Crawford employee and Benicia Planning Director Charlie Knox, AICP, “the roughly 300 people gathered in San Luis Obispo May 25th came to celebrate Paul’s life. Friends from his boyhood in Visalia, Cal Poly days, and Sierra trips set a mirthful tone with stories of mass quantities of soda and junk food, and later, fine red wines; plus their early grasp of Paul’s immense ability to absorb and analyze—qualities that led to his preeminence in planning. Family members recounted how his photographs reflected his boundless love for people, their works, and the planet. Colleagues extolled his brilliance and drive to spread enthusiasm for placemaking to students, young planners, and the communities he served.”

“What came through most, though, was Paul’s capacity for compassion. His closest colleague expressed it playfully in recounting Paul’s experience with a mugger: after explaining to the impatient knife-brandisher the need to keep his ID and credit card for the next day’s travel, Paul fished some cash from his wallet. Later, when Paul realized he still had money left, he thought, “I think I kind of ripped that guy off.” We, too, were robbed—by Paul’s untimely departure. By the end of the ceremony it became clear that—although Paul’s death is an immeasurable loss—all who have known him have gained tremendously.”

Woodie Tescher, PBS&J, writes: “Paul was an important contributor to our profession. More importantly, he was a great human being.”

Alex Hinds, FAICP, Marin County Planning Director, writes: “As someone whose life luckily became intertwined with Paul’s—as a result of taking over his old job in SLO and co-teaching several classes with him at Cal Poly—I have been reacting to his passage on a very visceral level. No offense to my pals in the county planning director’s cabal, but it only took one meeting to realize that Paul was the coolest dude in the group.”

Tony Lashbrook, Town Manager, Truckee, writes: “I will forever be grateful for the opportunity to know and work with Paul. He was an outstanding mentor when I was a newly appointed County Planning Director 20 some years ago. He had a way of building confidence in young planners by recognizing developing strengths and accomplishments, even small ones. I can only imagine how many others in our field [benefited from the same positive influence] from Paul. He built our first development code, his quiet confidence convincing our commission, council and community that they really could implement their hopes and dreams. He will always be a part of the fabric of the Town of Truckee, and I know that Paul had this positive impact everywhere he worked.”

Other tributes and articles are posted at <http://www.cproundtable.org/paul-crawford/> and <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/news/local/story/367985.html>