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Karen Chapple¹ **GO: 11**

Michael Teitz, 1960s

This essay is the fourteenth in a series on the recipients of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning Distinguished Educator Award, ACSP's highest honor. The essays appear in the order the honorees received the award.

Perhaps a little prematurely, Michael B. Teitz won the ACSP Distinguished Planning Educator Award in 1998. He simultaneously received the Jay Chatterjee Award for Distinguished Service to the ACSP Award, the third person to receive the award. Only Mike and Genie Birch have received both of ACSP's highest awards. The awards came on the occasion of his retirement, a couple years prior to his sixty-fifth birthday. But he actually wasn't retiring; he was taking a new position at the Public Policy Institute of California (PPIC) as Director of Research and Senior Fellow, invited, unsurprisingly, by his former student David Lyon. This moment of transition aptly epitomizes his life: recognition by one institution as an institution-builder as he peripatetically moves on, drawing on his social network, to an opportunity to build another.

My first meeting with Mike was nearly by chance. The Department of City and Regional Planning (DCRP) at the University of California, Berkeley, had told me I was their top admit to the PhD program, so I flew out from New York quite spontaneously to visit. Of course, none of the faculty had time to meet—except Mike. I still remember the moment I introduced myself, when he exclaimed, “Of course we must talk!” and invited me into his office for an hour. Mike's penchant for welcoming new, stranded, or orphaned students

Michael Teitz, 2018

was seemingly limitless. At DCRP, where most of the faculty ranged from self-aggrandizing to workaholic, he brought deep and abiding respect and empathy for students, single-handedly creating a climate of civility.

Born in London just a few years before World War II began, Mike learned early to stay open to new opportunities, embrace chance, and to keep going. In a recent oral history conducted by the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley, he reflected:

When the world is deeply uncertain, you take nothing for granted. On the other hand, the present is always there, and you act within it, and you deal with it as it comes. I didn't have a life plan, if you like. (Teitz 2018, 75)

And the opportunities kept coming. Channeled into an economics track in high school, he transitioned easily into the London School of Economics; a small notice on a bulletin board there brought him to geography in Wisconsin for his Master of Science. Then Walter Isard offered to support him to do a PhD in regional science, a field being invented at Penn, where Mike received the second PhD in that discipline.¹

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Then, chance landed Mike at Berkeley. A phone call from Mel Webber, who was actively recruiting faculty who could provide a more rigorous and analytic approach to planning, brought him to a department engaged in a lively debate among its divisions: physical planning, urban systems, and policy. Much of Mike's subsequent career was dedicated to developing analytical rigor and intellectual foundations for the field. Arriving in the 1960s, he (and other freshly minted PhDs across the country) inherited a studio-based curriculum intent on designing the "good city." For Mike,

The problem with planning is that it's basically an ideology, which you can trace back to the nineteenth century, to the people who were inventing ideal communities, or utopian communities, and especially to Ebenezer Howard, who invented the idea of the garden city. But in general, what it was was a reaction against the industrial city, and a belief that it was possible that the industrial city was disorganized and chaotic, and therefore, cities should be planned ahead of time, and designed. (Teitz 2018, 64)

Mike turned out to be particularly well suited for this challenge. He began by teaching location theory, asking students to map the yellow pages (a 1960s version of what we call urban analytics today). Studio courses became an exercise in empiricism and analytics rather than design. New courses emerged regularly: first methods offerings, and then a series of courses on regional economics, with timely seminars on emerging phenomena such as local economic development.² In his last couple of years in the department, Mike turned to planning history, albeit with misgivings that he was too young to contemplate the past. Throughout the decades, he took joy in how brilliant the students were, while bemoaning the gradual loss of the sense of community between faculty and students (Teitz 2016, 2018).

But Mike was not just building a planning curriculum. He chaired the department for four years in the 1970s and helped engineer the separation of ACSP from the American Institute of Planners late in that decade, then serving as ACSP president. Long consulting stints, first working with the RAND Corporation in New York on rent stabilization and then in Saudi Arabia, provided some respite from campus; at home in Berkeley, Mike co-founded Berkeley Planning Associates and played an active role in it for almost two decades. Crowning this career of institution-building was a stint as Chair of the Berkeley Division of the Academic Senate in 1992 to 1993, followed immediately by a part-time move to PPIC to develop its strategic plan. As Mike observes, "Our institutions are not there by accident; we make them" (Teitz 2016, 55).

All the while, Mike was building his own intellectual niche. Two early papers, "Heuristic Methods for Estimating the Generalized Vertex Median of a Weighted Graph" (Teitz and Bart 1968) and "Toward a Theory of Urban Public Facility Location" (Teitz 1968) addressed problems in location theory

and helped legitimize planning as a science. The heuristic methods piece has been cited nearly a thousand times across many different disciplines, by well-cited articles in operations research, geography, transportation, regional science, business, applied math, and computer science, and continues to garner citations each year.³ Yet, even while embracing planning rationality and positivism in his own work, Mike never lost sight of the Counter-Enlightenment push for group identity and place attachment (Teitz 1985). In his later career, Mike also produced a series of reviews (of economic development theory and practice, planning in the United States, poverty, and regional planning) that became instant classics (Teitz 1993, 1996, 1997, 2012; Teitz and Chapple 1998). Notable across all these articles is their search for theoretical foundations across a wide range of disciplines, as well as the absence of advocacy, revealing Mike's ongoing concern with planning's lack of theory, as well as the destructive, yet inevitable, role of ideology in planning (Teitz 1988). Perhaps as a result, even though he had left-leaning inclinations, his writing rarely touched issues of social equity (Teitz 2018).

Although the records have long since disappeared, DCRP folklore has it that Mike served on more PhD dissertation committees than any other faculty member in the department, probably about hundred over a thirty-five-year career.⁴ With Berkeley the clear leader in producing faculty for planning programs around the country (Sanchez 2013), Mike arguably has had the single biggest influence on planning education of any educator. No doubt, he would suggest that we gather more data before making such a claim. Nonetheless, we can credit Mike with spurring and supporting—and perpetuating through his institution-building—an astonishing number of conversations across a great variety of venues over his rich and wonderfully serendipitous career.

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Notes

1. Aficionados of regional science struggled to define it; Teitz (2018, 62) calls it a "high-speed collision between mathematical economics and geography and planning."
2. Mike credits PhD student Phil Shapira with actually creating this particular course.
3. Just looking at the articles which have gained over two hundred citations, Teitz and Bart (1968) is cited in the following journals: *Operations Research*, *Management Science*, *Transportation Science*, *Natural Computing*, *Meta-Heuristics*, *Journal of Algorithms*, *GIS and Computer Cartography*, *Location Science*, *Marketing Science*, *Annals of the American*

Association of Geographers, Networks, Naval Research Logistics, Regional Science, and Geographical Analysis, among others.

4. He never did fully retire: he most recently served on a PhD exam in March 2019.

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