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In Memoriam
Professor John Henneberry FAcSS FRTPI MRICS
1952 to 2021

John Henneberry grew up in the Lake District and went to school there. From there he went up to Cambridge, initially to read Economics, but he transferred to Land Economy for the second part of the tripos, graduating in 1974.

He came to Sheffield to take a two year MA in Town & Regional Planning and was sponsored by Manchester local authorities. He then worked in Manchester on the Community Land Scheme and also did some part time teaching at the Manchester Building College. This interest in teaching was one of the reasons why he returned to Sheffield where John took up a lectureship at Sheffield Polytechnic (now of course Sheffield Hallam University).

There John blended his teaching with research and, importantly his connections with government and the development industry, enabling him to see the key relationships between theory and informed and grounded practice. He qualified both as a chartered planner and as a chartered surveyor, a rare but really important combination. He also did important research with findings that had critical lessons for public policy. To recall just two pieces of work, First, a study of the relationship between transport investment and property values based on the Sheffield Supertram and, second, what lessons could we learn from the practice of impact fees policy in the USA for capturing land value and for mitigating the external costs of development on infrastructure needs (an interest initially sparked by his work on the Community Land Scheme in Manchester).

Over time, John's exploration of the theoretical underpinnings of our discipline and profession grew. He was keen to explore critically and analytically how economic instruments could be used to achieve planning outcomes, not the least to produce more inclusive as well as more efficient cities and regions. He was also keen to examine how professional and organizational cultures as well as economics shaped development outcomes and reinforced regional inequalities. He moved to The University of Sheffield to enable him to spend more time reflecting on these critical issues as well as developing the University's postgraduate courses in real estate.

Those who worked with him benefited enormously with the way he used his growing disciplinary breadth and depth to explore a wide range of challenging theoretical and policy issues. His eclecticism produced real insights into the operation of land and property markets, enabling us all, policy makers included, to see things more clearly and differently. He broke disciplinary and professional boundaries and was strongly committed to engaging with research users.

The range of issues he tackled is formidable: a few examples – continued work on land value capture, the equity implications of permitted development, new work on development and risk and on green investment and biodiversity, new work on developer behavior and cultures and most recently on the contemporary phenomenon of temporary land uses. This eclecticism is reflected in the wide range of those who funded his work including both Economic and Social Research Council and the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council as well as many government departments. It is also reflected in the wide range of disciplines he embraced working alongside botanists, hydrologists, psychologists as well as economists, political scientists, geographers, planners and landscape architects, impressing all colleagues with his keenness to work with them and to grasp debates in other disciplines. He was especially good at motivating colleagues and bringing them together to work on socially relevant research something, which was reflected in his appointment as Visiting Professor of Political Economy at the University of Keele.

As a result John had a formidable list of publications in the top refereed journals, key books and contributions to books, and major research reports for government departments. Alongside his own output John sat on many journal editorial boards, including as a lead editor, and was also editor of the major Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors research series.

His research was rightly reflected in promotions to a Readership in 1997 and a Personal Chair in 1998. It was also reflected in his election, following rigorous peer review, to major and prestigious national Fellowships including of the Royal Town Planning Institute and of the national Academy of Social Science. Alongside these accolades came prizes for outstanding papers and books, including in 2016, the Royal Town Planning Institute prize for research excellence.

But John was more than an extraordinarily outstanding scholar. He was also a very good citizen of the University of Sheffield, serving as head of department,

Dean, importantly when the Faculty of Architectural Studies merged with Social Science, all roles demanding energy, devotion, leadership, strategic thinking and diplomacy, attributes which John had in very large measure. But, above all, John brought a very collegial approach, placing collective values and aspirations at the heart of his leadership roles.

And John was also a good citizen in his wider academic and professional spheres, sitting on ESRC's Grants Board and chairing the RICS Research Committee.

So in mourning John's passing we have lost a gifted scholar, teacher and university leader. But above all, in remembering John's many achievements and gifts we remember, the way he so willingly helped all of us.

John was self-effacing, modest, generous to all and someone who put service to others above himself. All of us, without exception, remember his many personal kindnesses, the way he would always be unfailingly patient with us and interested in what we did, always ready to give us advice which was, yes, challenging, but also constructive, balanced and positive. He went out of his way to support us, whether the matter was professional or personal. His whole selfless approach was an inspiration to all, including younger colleagues starting out on professional and academic careers. It was also why John was a great teacher and much admired by all his students.

All of us who knew him have been enriched by John's presence in our lives. We know he will live on amongst us all in his legacy of thought and deed. Our world is a better place because John made it so. We have lost a good friend, someone who was a decent wise and honourable man. We are all the better for having known him.

John died of a heart attack on 28th July 2021. He is survived by his wife Rosemary, their two sons and their partners and grandchild.

Professor Tony Crook