

In Memoriam

The world of commercial real estate, and Real Estate Media in particular, lost two key influencers in as many months.



Nina J. Gruen 1933-2017

Nina J. Gruen, known to readers of GlobeSt.com as Ms. Real Estate and to the wider community as a pioneer in studying the behavior of real estate users, owners and developers, passed away Sept. 15 at age 83 in San Francisco.

"Store Location and Customer Behavior," written jointly by Nina and her husband Claude and published by the Urban Land Institute in 1966, was the first of more than 80 articles she wrote or co-wrote applying behavioral analysis to real estate. It also came at the beginning of a half-century affiliation with ULI, to which she was elected in 1982 as the first woman to serve on the institute's board of trustees.

As EVP of Gruen Gruen + Associates, which she founded with Claude Gruen in 1970, Gruen specialized in the application of sociological, demographic and other social research techniques to marketing, planning and public policy problems. She designed and directed a broad variety of studies utilizing these techniques to probe into the attitudes, motivations, preferences and behavior of important groups for both public and private sector clients.

Gruen used these techniques to help define product and geographic markets for antitrust and land use litigation cases. She also analyzed the way in which alternative policies are likely to influence the economic well-being and land use of a community and region. Her work led municipal clients to adopt public policies and infrastructure programs that revitalized areas in California, Arizona, Oregon, Washington, Colorado, New Mexico, Florida, Illinois and Ohio.

Designated an honorary member of ULI in 1997, Gruen was also past president of the International Women's Forum-Northern California affiliate and an active member of the global organization. In 1984, she was the first woman to be elected president of the Western Regional Science Association.

Gruen was also a member of Lambda Alpha International, an honorary land economics society, and Commercial Real Estate Women/CREW SF. She was a frequent speaker on behalf of various real estate groups and was cited in the January 1993 cover story of REAL ESTATE FORUM as one of the country's 30 leading women in commercial real estate. Author of the "Ms. Real Estate" column since 2014, Gruen also served on the REM editorial advisory board.