

CAREER AWARD

The EDRA Career Award is given in recognition of a career of sustained and significant contributions to environment design research, practice, or teaching. Candidates in the area of design research shall have produced a body of work that provides significant insights into the relationship between environment and behavior. Candidates in the area of practice shall have made significant and lasting contributions to the planning and design of the environment through the application of design research. Candidates in the area of teaching shall have made positive, stimulating and nurturing influences upon students over an extended period of time and have inspired a generation of students who have contributed to environmental design research.



Lynn Paxson, Ph.D. Professor, Architect, Advocate, Mentor, and Leader

A lifetime EDRA member and supporter, Dr. Lynn Paxson’s educational background, her professional career in architecture and design, and her rich academic career of teaching, research, practice and activism illustrate in remarkable ways what EDRA has long stood for. That is: both recognizing and demonstrating the importance of the designed environment in supporting and enhancing everyday life and, as importantly, the lives and cultures of those who are far too often marginalized. And, continuing to value and respect the role architecture can play in these endeavors. Since the early 1970s to the present, Lynn Paxson has sustained a significant history of environmental design research, practice, teaching and design.

One of the most notable comments about Lynn Paxson’s work, worldview and commitment is best expressed in one of her nominator’s letter’s: Johnpaul Jones, FAIA writes, “According to the Native American communities, we express our belief that the environment is made up of more than just one world. It is composed of four worlds

that always need to be respected and considered in whatever we do as human beings: the Natural world, the Animal world, the Spirit world, and the Human world. This is a simple message, but one that leads to making a difference in environmental design — an approach that comes from experience.” Lynn’s work and contributions acknowledge and embrace these worlds, and make a difference in environmental design research and practice.

As an educator, Lynn has been a professor at Iowa State University (since 1991), and with her focus area and expertise, as a visiting professor in the School of Architecture and Planning at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque. A champion of the idea that PEOPLE are the center of the design process, Lynn’s experience in teaching more than 100 social and cultural design classes, history of Native American Architecture classes, and studios showcase investment in hands-on participatory processes. Her main focus is students’ understanding architecture and design as a cul-

tural phenomenon. Through teaching, research, service and mentoring, she brings students into actively working to find solutions to complex environmental problems. Her students relish the first-hand field experience she offers in her teaching beyond the design studio. All her nominators spoke to the power of message in Lynn's teaching and participatory approach. As a community designer, Lynn has brought Iowa students to many Native American communities with service learning projects in her option studios. These have included projects for the Houma in New Orleans, the Nez Perce in Coeur d'Alene, and the Arapahoe in Oklahoma and many others. Such opportunities demonstrate commitment, resilience and engaged professoriate.

As a change agent and mentor, Dr. Paxson speaks truth to power and holds institutions to the highest standards of inclusivity and diversity, mentors junior faculty, supports the Native American studies program as a teacher and advisor, and serves on myriad committees on and off campus.

As an advisor, Lynn has supported hundreds of students as they go through school, as academic advisor, professor and dissertation committee member. She is unique in her ability to address all aspects of students' and colleague's concerns, from the personal to the academic to the professional.

Lynn received numerous recognitions that spoke to the impact of her commitment in diversifying and extending the inclusion of architecture and design programs, including ACSA recognition for work in diversifying the architecture curriculum through the incorporation of native cultures and issues, recognition for research on contested public space research and participatory design and action research, and mentoring and teaching excellence awards from Iowa State University.

Lynn Paxson's professional design work experience with two major architecture firms in New York as a designer and, as a lead space programmer/strategic planner for Gensler/NY ranges from master planning to interiors. She brings life,

meaning and commitment to the interdisciplinary collaborative process. She participated in the design process team for the Smithsonian American Indian Museum, and is currently collaborating with colleagues to develop a database and a national exhibition of contemporary indigenous architecture and is also co-editing a book on the subject.

An engaged researcher, Lynn Paxson is a co-author, along with Mark Francis and Lisa Cashdan, of one of the earliest books on community gardens and neighborhood open spaces: *Community Open Spaces: Greening Neighborhoods Through Community Action and Land Conservation*. This work received a 1986 Merit Award from the Society of Landscape Architects. She has continued writing about public space and contestation in other publications and presentations.

Lynne Paxson is an authentic integrative practitioner. She weaves her teaching, research, service and practice into meaningful outcomes. In particular, Lynn brings her expertise relative to Native American architecture, culture and experience to bear in her teaching and her service at the university and beyond. She has showcased the struggles over public space in Native American contexts in respect to memorials and sacred spaces, more recently with the co-editing of an anthology, *Contemporary Indigenous Architecture: Local Traditions, Global Winds*, to be published by University of New Mexico Press.

As many aspire to, but few do, Lynn continues to combine, in a holistic and synergistic way, research, practice and teaching, and does so broadly within the field of environmental design. She has truly lived a commitment to social change and justice.

Lynn Paxson received two undergraduate degrees (psychology and environmental design) from the University of Colorado at Boulder. She then pursued graduate work in environmental psychology at the City University of New York as well as additional architecture studies at CUNY.