

In Memory of Nina J. Gruen

By [Brett Widness](#)

September 18, 2017

Text Size: [A](#) [A](#) [A](#)

Longtime ULI leader Nina J. Gruen, who pioneered the use of behavioral research to predict market demand for commercial and residential real estate, passed away on September 15, 2017. She was 83. Gruen and her husband, Claude Gruen, joined ULI in 1971, not long after founding Gruen Gruen + Associates, a renowned San Francisco-based firm that continues to provide research-based consulting and implementation services to the real estate industry and land-use policy makers.

Gruen, who remained active in ULI throughout her career, was elected as the Institute's first female trustee in 1982, and was named an honorary member in 1996. For the past several years, she served on ULI's Urban Development Mixed-Use Council and ULI San Francisco's advisory board. During the 1990s, she served on several ULI product councils and committees, including the Entertainment Development Council, Commercial and Retail Development Council, Investment Committee, Communications and Publishing Committee, Council Coordinating Committee, and ULI Executive Committee. In the 1980s, she chaired several product councils, including the Council Leadership Council, Development Services Council, and Development Policies and Regulations Council.

"Nina represented all that is good about ULI and did so in the most authentic way," said ULI Americas Chairman Trish Healy. "She spoke her mind, added value, did so with humor, and never backed down from pursuing issues she thought needed to be addressed. Her contribution, including her support of women leadership, made a difference to so many of us. She was an original, and she will be missed."

"Nina was a treasure. Her analyses of consumer behavior helped greatly to inform countless urban planning and development decisions, leading to better outcomes in cities across the nation," says ULI Global Chief Executive Officer Patrick L. Phillips. "ULI was enriched by Nina's enthusiasm, wit, and willingness to volunteer her expertise and time. We will miss her."

In an interview for an "[Executive Interview](#)" video series produced by ULI San Francisco, Gruen said, "ULI has impacted my career greatly. All through the 70s, I learned so very much. What I loved were all the sessions on mistakes made and lessons learned. That was just wonderful for my career. Do I learn as much [now]? No. But what I do learn is the perspective of the various groups: the planners, the architects, the consultants, the developers, the financial people. It is a wonderful opportunity to learn what people in all these other professions are thinking."

"Store Location and Customer Behavior," written jointly by the Gruens and published by the Urban Land Institute in 1966, was the first of more than 80 articles Nina Gruen authored or co-authored concerning the behavior of real estate users, owners, and developers. Her first book, *Low and Moderate-Income Housing in the Suburbs*, co-authored with Claude Gruen, was published in 1972. Her most recent book, published by Amazon in 2015, is titled *Believe It or Not: The Challenges Facing One Professional Woman a Half Century Ago*. She wrote "[Why Women Need a Sense of Humor When Crashing an All-Male Organization](#)," an article based on the book, for *Urban Land* magazine in January 2016.

Gruen served on the State of California Transportation Department's Airspace Advisory Committee for 15 years and was its chairman from 2002 through 2005. She was also an active member of the International Women's Forum and president of its northern California affiliate from 1995 to 1996.

She is survived by her husband and several children and grandchildren. A celebration of her life will be held at [Temple Emanu-El](#) on Sunday, October 15, 2017. In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to Temple Emanu-El.



Nina J. Gruen was elected ULI's first female trustee in 1982

[SHOW COMMENTS](#)

Loading next post...