



Long Island Section of the
American Planning Association
New York Metro Chapter



Making Great Communities Happen

LI Section of NY Metro Chapter Marks 20th Anniversary of Arthur H. Kunz Memorial Scholarship



The Long Island Section of the NY Metro Chapter of the APA recently marked the twentieth anniversary of the Arthur H. Kunz scholarship fund—a program that has become an important tool for professional development in the region. The fund was established to memorialize Arthur H. Kunz, a noted Long Island planner who died suddenly in 1993 at the age of 59. Arthur was the assistant director of the Suffolk County Planning Department starting in 1969 and became the director in 1989. He also served in neighboring Nassau County where he was appointed chief planner in 1958. He served at a time of significant development on Long Island when the population of the two counties more than doubled to almost three million people. Professionally trained at Virginia Polytechnic Institute, Arthur was committed to preserving and enhancing Long Island by balancing growth and development with environmental protection.

News of his death stunned the planning community. Arthur was a highly respected professional who was universally viewed as competent, nonpartisan and a man of great integrity. In addition to his knowledge and experience in the planning field, he had a friendly personality and was always willing to help others. Most notably, for many budding planners he was a mentor and role model.

Arthur was a long-time member of APA and an enthusiastic attendee of the annual national planning conference. He greatly enjoyed mobile workshops and seeing new ideas in practice. He always enjoyed showing a slideshow of the photographs he had taken on mobile workshops upon return from each year's conference and sharing what he had seen so that others could learn from his experience.

In 1993 the LI Section decided to memorialize Arthur in a manner fitting his contribution to the planning profession. According to then Suffolk County planning director Stephen M. Jones, a memorial fund was established to help in the purchase of books and other resource materials for a research library located in the offices of the Suffolk Planning Department. The Arthur Kunz Memorial Library is still an important asset for planners and researchers across the Island and includes many unique historical documents, as well as reference books and PAS Reports. In 2005, the LI Section turned to the Long Island Community Foundation, nonprofit, charitable organization, to manage the scholarship fund and guarantee permanence for this important legacy.

The memorial fund was expanded in the mid-nineties to also provide scholarships to planning students. This awarding of the scholarships became an annual event of the LI Section that remains a highly popular

program. In addition, the scholarship was expanded to also provide opportunities for new planners (up to five years on the job) to attend the APA national conference. Typically, up to three scholarships of \$1500 are awarded each year to cover the cost of the conference, APA membership and expenses. The only additional requirement is that awardees attend at least one mobile workshop at the conference. *“Arthur spent most of his time at national conferences attending mobile workshops. He believed that one could learn so much more by seeing good planning in action,”* says Tom Isles, AICP, a longtime colleague of Arthur's.



Left to right: 2015 Arthur Kunz Memorial Scholarship recipients Gabrielle Alper, Emily Humes & Megan Porter, with Section Director Sean Sallie, Treasurer Kathy Eiseman and Secretary Ann Fangmann.

The scholarship program has made a significant impact on the development of the planning profession on Long Island. Over thirty planners have benefitted from the program since 1995. These individuals have gone on to serve in a variety of roles in both the public and private sector. One recipient was Sarah Lansdale, AICP, the current planning director of Suffolk County, *the very same position held by Arthur at the time of his passing.* Sarah was a part-time graduate student and brownfields coordinator for Sustainable Long Island

when she won a scholarship in 2002. According to Ms. Lansdale, *“Mr. Kunz had an incredible impact on the planning profession and our local APA chapter. His legacy continues through this scholarship award to cultivate the next generation of planners in our region. I am honored to be part of this group of planning professionals who have benefitted from Mr. Kunz’ dedication to professional advancement.”*

One of the 2009 recipients was Maxwell Sokol, AICP, at that time a planning student at the Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation. Mr. Sokol reflected on the experience by saying *“I have a profound appreciation and respect for the work of the Arthur Kunz, and I was honored to have the opportunity to attend the 2009 APA National Planning Conference in his memory. My experience at the Conference not only reinforced my commitment to making Long Island a more sustainable live/work/play destination, but it also inspired me to give back to the planning profession by immersing myself in the admirable work of the APA NY Metro Chapter and Long Island Section.”* Kathy Eiseman, AICP, who is the Treasurer of the Long Island Section recalls Max’ enthusiasm following the conference. *“The excitement he radiated when speaking about the conference was really inspirational! I felt that the scholarship had made a meaningful difference for Max and his future career in planning.”* Perhaps this is true, since today, Max is a Lead Planner with WSP | Parsons Brinckerhoff and President of the APA NY Metro Chapter.

Recent scholarship recipients, Alex Wallach, AICP, NY Metro Chapter Professional Development Officer, and Emily Humes, Planner with the City of Long Beach, remarked on the opportunity to attend the National Conference by saying, respectively, *“The Arthur Kunz memorial scholarship enabled me to attend my first ever National Planning Conference in Atlanta. It was my first trip outside the northeast region, and it really opened my eyes to the innovative and inspiring ways planning is conducted around the country.”* and

“Receiving this scholarship to attend the 2015 National Planning Conference afforded me an experience that I wouldn't have otherwise had.”

Current Long Island Section director Sean Sallie, AICP, points out the success of the scholarship as both an important means to honor the past while building the profession for the future: *“Over the years, the scholarship program has helped to inspire young planners through exposure to other creative and innovative professionals, and success stories from around the country. The scholarship program remains very competitive among new planners and planning students, and it is truly rewarding to see this level of interest and dedication to the profession. It is exciting to think what the future holds for the field of planning here on Long Island given the professional talent that has come through the program.”*

Members of the American Planning Association's Long Island Section of the New York Metro Chapter are private and municipal planners, public officials, and concerned citizens that work or reside in Nassau or Suffolk Counties. The Section offers numerous educational and social events including workshops, panels, guest speakers, and joint meetings with other professional groups. For more information about our Section, and to get involved, please visit www.apalongisland.org.