



IN MEMORIAM

Francis Violich
Professor of City and Regional Planning, Emeritus
Professor of Landscape Architecture, Emeritus
Berkeley
1911 – 2005

Francis (Fran) Violich, professor emeritus in the Department of City and Regional Planning, and the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of California, Berkeley, passed away on Sunday, August 21, 2005 in his home on Tamalpais Road in Berkeley at the age of 94.

A second- generation American born to Croatian parents in San Francisco on March 16, 1911, Violich was raised in a home near the south side of Golden Gate Park. He acquired his interest in landscape architecture through his mother's passion for gardening and the natural environment. After graduating from Lowell High School in the City, he attended UC Berkeley where he learned how to understand the environment as a whole, both the natural and the man- made. He graduated from the Department of Landscape Architecture with a Bachelor of Science degree in 1934.

In 1936 Violich was awarded a fellowship for graduate studies in city planning at Harvard University and Massachusetts Institute of Technology, where he acquired a greater understanding of the social component in design and how to develop urban places to resolve the problems of social inequity. His study tours of Europe and Yugoslavia in 1937 and Latin America in 1941-42 established a multi- cultural approach to his California- based professional practice, teaching, research and community activities. In 1941, he returned to UC Berkeley where he was offered a joint appointment in the Departments of Landscape Architecture and City Planning. As a faculty member, he specialized in comprehensive approaches to land use planning and urban design at the local level, emphasizing the relationships between social and cultural issues. He was chair of the Department of Landscape Architecture from 1962 to 1964.

In the late 1940s and 1950s he led in the formation of Telesis, an interdisciplinary environmental group with strong social concerns. This visionary group of Bay Area city planners, architects, and landscape architects, including Vernon DeMars, Corwin Mocine, Geraldine Knight Scott, Jack Kent and Garrett Eckbo, advocated rational interdisciplinary planning of the environment at all scales from region to dwelling. It provided the groundwork for establishment of the Department of City and Regional Planning at UC Berkeley in 1948 and helped to pave the way for the formation of the College of Environmental Design (comprising the Departments of Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Visual Studies, and City and Regional Planning) 10 years later. In 2001, the American Planning Association awarded national historical landmark status to the Telesis group designating it as "The first volunteer- based group to bring multiple fields together successfully in a comprehensive approach to environmental development in a regional context".

In June 1976 Violich retired from the University after 27 years of service. At his retirement, Donald L. Foley, chairman of the Department of City and Regional Planning, stated: "We would particularly stress his broader contribution to the College of Environmental Design and to the campus in his persistent advocacy of a comprehensive approach to environmental design . . . In his teaching and administrative service... and in his own professional practice and research work, he actively personified the interdisciplinary approach that also served as a model for the college. We would also stress his distinctive contribution in promoting interest in Latin American planning and in exerting a pervasive influence on the character of urban planning and environmental design in Latin America. . . . Single-handedly, he proved remarkably effective in attracting and advising Latin American students. He has served as planning consultant to Sao Paulo and Caracas, and as adviser to educational programs in Venezuela and Chile, to the Peace Corps, the Pan American Union, the Ford Foundation and other organizations concerned with urban planning in Latin America."

Violich's first book, *Cities of Latin America: Planning and Housing in the South* was published in 1944. His second book, *Urban Planning for Latin America: the Challenge for Metropolitan Growth*, published in 1987, drew on his 40 years of professional and educational work relating U.S. methods to Latin American needs as their cities evolved at an unprecedented rate into vast metropolitan regions.

His book *The Bridge to Dalmatia: A Search for the Meaning of Place*, published in 1998, relates this theme to postwar reconstruction and planning of urban places in Croatia, and particularly on its Dalmatian coast. In an interview with Vladimir P. Goss, Violich recalled: "It occurred to me that my father and my grandparents had built a cultural bridge from Dalmatia to California. There came post- cards and letters, then I myself went 'across the bridge.' The concept of the bridge, in my mind, applies to the foreign people who come to the U.S. and bring us their cultural concepts and in that way both enrich and take away from the Anglo- Saxon culture which is more materialistic and individualist, breaking up families and shifting the economic gain into the hands of the few." *The Bridge to Dalmatia* "is both an environmental eco- history and an attempt to understand the urban anthropology of Dalmatia, a region inheriting and living multicultural experience over at least two thousand years." This work led Violich to establish an active exchange program between the urban planning departments of UC Berkeley and the University of Zagreb in 1996.

In 1992 the American Institute of Planners designated Violich a National Planning Pioneer. In 1997, Violich was recognized as cofounder of the Department of City and Regional Planning, and in 1999, the college and its alumni honored him with a Distinguished Alumnus Award in recognition of outstanding accomplishment.

In recent years, Violich enjoyed an activist role in participatory planning in the City of Berkeley, focusing on its general plan, downtown, the waterfront and the restoration of parks to their ecological origins through volunteer action. He was also involved in landscape and planning issues on the UC Berkeley campus, and in San Francisco's Embarcadero Freeway replacement and redesign of the Ferry Building Plaza.

He is survived by his five children, Antonio, Carmen, Francesca, Frano and Mario and 13 grandchildren. Fran's wife, Mariantonia S. Violich, preceded him in death in 1989. The College of Environmental Design has lost one of its wonderful founding visionaries.

Peter Bosselmann
Mary Anne Clark
Michael Southworth