



Dear Colleagues,

The Urban Mastermind award honors scholars who make an outstanding—and longstanding—contribution to the Institute’s research assets and expertise.

The Mastermind designation brings unique attention to those who, year in and year out, enhance our collective capabilities to conduct objective research that helps expand opportunities for all, reduce hardship among the most vulnerable, and strengthen the effectiveness of the public sector.

All that the Urban Mastermind award is intended to spotlight – commitment, endurance, collegiality, mentorship, and scholarship – is embodied in G. Thomas Kingsley, this year’s Urban Mastermind honoree. At last week’s all-staff meeting, we recognized Tom for his many contributions to the Urban Institute. After reading more about Tom, I hope you will join me in thanking him for his years of tremendous service. Tom joined the Urban Institute in 1986 following service in New York City government (during the Lindsay administration),



in Indonesia (for the United Nations Centre for Human Settlements), in India (for the Ford Foundation), and for the Rand Corporation. He brought to Urban a deep understanding of what on-the-ground practitioners need and want from research, and has taught all of us how to design and conduct work that delivers on those demands.

In his three decades at Urban, Tom helped build influential domestic and international programs. He directed our Public Finance and Housing Center from 1986 to 1997; codirected the Ford-funded Urban Opportunity Program, which produced four books on urban policy in America; and founded the

National Neighborhood Indicators Partnership (NNIP), a network of 30 local data intermediaries that furthers the development of advanced data systems to enhance decisionmaking in local governance and community development.

Tom helped launch and build Urban’s International Activities Center (now International Development and Governance), including major projects in Indonesia, India, Jamaica, and the Czech and Slovak republics that informed those countries’ efforts to restructure local government functions, promote urban economic development, and reform housing institutions.

Tom has been a prolific author of influential Urban Institute reports and briefs, journal articles, and book chapters. Four Urban Institute books exemplify the breadth of his contributions to both knowledge and practice:



- *Strengthening Communities with Neighborhood Data* (2014), with Claudia J. Coulton and Kathryn L. S. Pettit
- *What Counts: Harnessing Data for America's Communities* (2014), coedited with Naomi Cytron, Kathryn L.S. Pettit, David Erickson, and Ellen S. Seidman
- *Housing Markets and Residential Mobility* (1993), coedited with Margery Austin Turner
- *Urban Economies and National Development* (1991), with George E. Peterson and Jeffrey P. Telgarsky

In recent years, Tom's research has focused on analyzing patterns of neighborhood poverty and distress. He has investigated the impacts of the foreclosure crisis, drawn lessons from the US Department of Housing and Urban Development's HOPE VI program for urban policy and the future of public housing, assessed American Indian housing needs and programs, and provided analytic support to the Annie E. Casey Foundation's major place-focused initiatives. Currently, Tom is working on an assessment of the Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) program, advocating for data-driven international development, and contributing to NNIP activities and research development.

Tom has mentored dozens of colleagues during his 30 years at Urban, several of whom are senior researchers here today. His dry humor, indefatigable good spirits in the face of adversity, talent for turning challenges into opportunities, unfailing common sense, and uncommon decency all make Tom a wonderful person to work with and learn from. He inspires many to carry his example with them through their own careers, both at the Urban Institute and in institutions around the world.

Please join me in thanking Tom for all he has done and continues to do.

Warmly,

Sarah

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