



In memoriam, Judith Innes, UC Berkeley planning theorist

The following is excerpted from [CED Berkeley News](#).

“Judith E. Innes, Professor Emerita of City and Regional Planning at the University of California, Berkeley, and an authority on collaborative approaches to urban planning and decision-making, died of lymphoma at her home in Davis, California, on April 14, 2020. She was 78.



“Innes began her academic career in the 1970s working on social indicators, but by the early 80s she had come to question rational technocratic models of decision-making and had turned to the study of how knowledge was actually used in practice.

“Observing how data were used — or not used — in reaching decisions, she came to see the world as a complex, adaptive system where interventions have unpredictable results; experts can mobilize biases; and myth, narrative, and personal experience can be powerfully persuasive. She used these insights to create a new paradigm for planning, addressing the challenges posed to traditional practices by the many voices and competing versions of reality that confront planners today.

“Innes authored, co-authored, or edited four books, more than 50 articles and book chapters, and two major monographs. Often ahead of the times, Innes’ writings were



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frequently controversial, [then] became required reading.

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“Innes was active throughout her career in leadership positions for the planning profession and the university. She was a member of the Planning Accreditation Board, reviewing academic planning programs in universities across the US. She also was a prominent leader in the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning.

“At UC Berkeley, she served two terms as director of the Institute of Urban and Regional Development, where she helped to secure and manage extramurally funded projects that included community development efforts, action research, and community-based learning.

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“An engaging teacher, she was a much sought-after mentor of graduate students, many of whom are now faculty members themselves and credit her for transforming their academic careers.

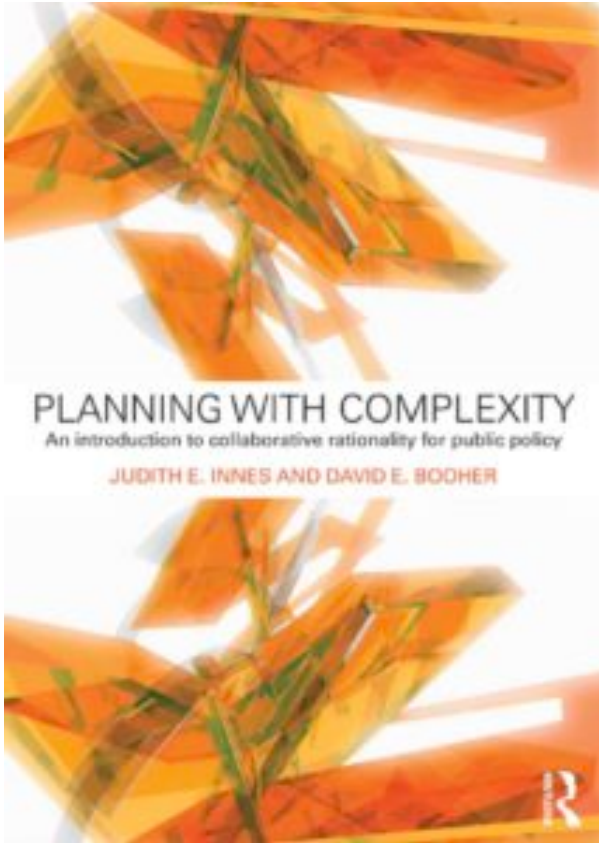
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“Innes received her BA in English literature from Radcliffe College, Harvard, and her Ph.D. in urban and regional planning from MIT. She taught as a lecturer at Tufts University and was a visiting lecturer at Berkeley before joining the Berkeley faculty as an assistant professor in 1976, rising through the ranks to full professor. She retired in 2011. A memorial event will be held on the Berkeley campus in fall 2020, Covid-19 permitting.”

[**Read the full obituary here.**](#)



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To read about Innes' approach to collaborative rationality, [go here](#) to read a review by Professor Lawrence Susskind, AICP, of MIT, of "*Planning With Complexity*," an extraordinary book by Judith E. Innes and David Booher published in 2010.

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