

## NAHRO International Research and Global Committee News!

### An IRGE members observations from *Learning from the City*

By Ron Clewer

Held at the University of Chicago on March 31, this day long, regional dialogue on the global urban agenda was packed with incredible presenters and information. As one of five regional convenings, co-hosted by HUD in collaboration with civic, governmental, educational, and philanthropic partners the intent is to pave the way to Habitat III, by meeting three primary goals:

- 1) To provide an interactive forum for scholars, practitioners, philanthropists, students, and thought leaders to share local challenges, models, and lessons learned over the last 20 years related to housing and sustainable urban development;
- 2) To stimulate dialogue about connections between local and global urban challenges, and uplift local practices to inform the U.S. policy agenda;
- 3) To strengthen connections among urban development practitioners, scholars, and funders across the Midwestern region.

In my opinion the conference exceeded its goals – I believe connections were strengthened, dialogue was stimulated and the forum of thought leaders and housing policy makers and practitioners was certainly interactive.

My take away, aside from the motivation for continued improvement in our work and the need for increased policy alignment, didn't come from the mayors or other leaders, it came from Tyrone Galtney in a Q&A session following discussions on grassroots engagement. His passionate plea was both riveting and accusatory. His questions (condensed), "Where are the professionals if we are talking about grassroots? Where are the poor? Where are the parents of the children we lost in the street? Why are they not in this room if grassroots movements are important?" And then he asked why is this taking so long, stating conditions haven't changed substantially since he was a boy in the Robert Taylor Homes...



Photo by Robert Kozloff/The University of Chicago

Tyrone reminded me that while we all seem to want the same outcomes – improved neighborhoods where residents are safe and happy, engaged and employed our difference is time. As housing professionals we speak in months, years and even decades. Our residents, trapped in our troubled neighborhoods, are speaking in terms of now, today or tomorrow. Perhaps the best thing we can do, next to continued real engagement with our residents and neighbors, is to determine how to interpret across that barrier of time and help people sooner. I learned. I was inspired.

It was good to see other NAHRO members, Alan Zais and David A. Northern present for these thoughtful discussions. NAHRO membership is essential in the continued advocacy, support for and implementation of policy that aligns with timely resolution for the conditions in our communities. If you have an opportunity to attend any of the 4 remaining convenings, your time will be well spent.

*What is Habitat III? Habitat III is the third United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development which will take place in Quito, Ecuador in October 2016. The UN convened the Habitat I conference in 1976 in Vancouver. Twenty years later, at the Habitat II conference in Istanbul, Turkey, world leaders adopted the Habitat Agenda as a global action plan to create adequate shelter for all. The goal of Habitat III is to provide a New Urban Agenda or roadmap for sustainable urban development for cities across the globe and HUD is Engaged in these efforts.*

*What is the Convening? "Learning From the City" was one of five convenings co-hosted by HUD across the United States with civic, governmental, educational, and philanthropic partners. The convening has three goals:*

- 1) To provide an open forum to scholars, practitioners, philanthropy, students, and thought leaders for the sharing of local challenges and lessons learned in the last 20 years since Habitat II;*
- 2) To stimulate dialogue about connections between local and global challenges, and uplift local practices to inform the U.S. policy agenda.*
- 3) To strengthen connections among urban development practitioners, scholars, and funders across the Midwestern region.*

*The convening consists of panel discussions and keynote speakers focused on four themes: Investing in People and Communities for Upward Mobility, Securing Housing Options for All, Responding to Shocks and Building Resilience, and The Role of Big Data in Shaping Regional Policy.*

*The audience and participants at the convening will include scholars from the Midwest region along with policymakers, community development practitioners and advocates, and members of the philanthropic community, students and the next generation of urban development practitioners, as well as interested members of the public.*

## **Lange Award Nominations**

*By Gary Clewer*

The IRGE Global Exchange Committee would like your help with for submitting nominations for the 2016 John D. Lange Award!



Left to Right, IRGE VP Julie Brewen, 2015 Lange Awardee Kerron Barnes, NAHRO VP Carl Ritchie, NAHRO CEO Saul Rameriz

The annual award furthers the work of NAHRO and recognizes a person in the housing and community development field who has made an outstanding contribution toward international understanding and exchange of international experience. To learn more of the Lange Award, its history and how to nominate, please visit <http://www.nahro.org/lange>.

## **Dr. Tom Manion, Memoriam**

*Alan Zais*

Tom Manion, CEO of the Irwell Valley Housing Association in Manchester for over two decades, brought an indelible mark for NAHRO, speaking at many NAHRO programs and plenaries and being the first British citizen to receive the NAHRO John D. Lange International Award for his work with housing groups in Europe, Hong Kong and China. Tom was also a distinguished professional fellow of the Chartered Institute of Housing, a fellow of the Royal Society of the Arts and was awarded the Cabinet Office's Public Servant of the Year award in 2003.



At the NAHRO 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary plenary, Tom showed a picture of Seaman Fleet, the lookout for the Titanic on the night it sank. Would you give this man another job as a lookout, he asked the audience? Tom said that he absolutely would, because he knew that man would absolutely never make that mistake again. And this is the value Tom found in our greatest work resource—people. Tom invested in his staff of over 170 people with a gold standard that brought use of a music room, free healthcare at their home (staff sickness level was less than .5% annually), a gym, personal coaching and more. Staff did not have offices but met in informal lounge areas and otherwise spent all of their time among the residents. “I hate the term human resources”, he said. “it sounds like mining for humans.” He would say that his managers had to be sociologists, talkers and listeners. “Some people are frightened of talent or manage through bureaucracy. If that’s the case, I say kick them out.”

And Tom had a Gold standard for residents. A resident who paid their rent on time and followed the lease would be the first to receive upgrades such as kitchen marble countertops—and could even choose the one they wanted for their home. His first month on the job was evicting a family that had removed all the doors in their building to use for a pig roast. Never again; he personally attended every eviction so residents would understand what was happening and why. He had no patience for burdensome bureaucracy. Once a government official cited the association for an exit sign that was not within exact regulatory measurement from the floor. Tom's response was to hire the kids at the site to paint a mural for the hall that boldly showed the way to the exit.



He believed in going beyond providing affordable housing, saying the management is easy but the community development was hard, “spend all of your money on health and education in your communities.” In speaking of his creativity and talent NAHRO Past President Betsy Martens said that “some people think outside the box, but with Tom there is no box.”



Tom had his own rock band, played for residents, released music CDs, and published books. His international work helped shape housing thought and policy, and he helped in bringing shelter and care to many lives. He made a difference. He died suddenly on Easter Sunday, and will be missed.



Thank you to Beth Abbit, Manchester Evening New, “*Tributes to Irwell Valley housing chief Tom Manion after his sudden death*”, March 29, 2016 and Inside Housing, News, Views and Jobs in Social Housing, “*Manion On A Mission*”, November 2, 2012, which were used for this article.