

IMPACT AWARD FOR HOUSING



JERILYN PERINE

HPD COMMISSIONER 2000-2004

CHPC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR 2006-2018

Jerilyn Perine's impact on housing over her five-decade career is unparalleled in New York City. Jerilyn is a true housing policy luminary; she has dedicated her career to public service through housing policy and community development, to the mission of improving housing conditions and opportunities for fellow New Yorkers, and to being a mentor, collaborator, and teacher to many.

Jerilyn's career began in the era of New York City's decline. As a born-and-bred New Yorker, her career in planning and housing policy was always treated as a vocation to save her city. Her first planning work involved surveying burned-out or looted buildings to see what businesses remained in Central Brooklyn. Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Jerilyn worked her way up through HPD in many different roles in development, preservation, and code enforcement. Her different roles shaped her vision about the essentiality of housing and her belief in the role and power of HPD as the shepherd of the City's housing stock. Her career has been driven by the mission that all New Yorkers must have access to housing as essential shelter, as a generator of wealth, and as the foundation to happiness.

Further into her career, Jerilyn was appointed Commissioner of HPD by both Mayor Giuliani and Mayor Michael Bloomberg. Under Mayor Giuliani, she designed and managed programs to return tens of thousands of tax-foreclosed buildings to local, private ownership and prevent future cycles of abandonment. She successfully negotiated with HUD to save more than 500 small buildings purchased through HUD's scandal-plagued 203(k) program. She negotiated a settlement to end a long-standing legal battle over the fate of the City's community gardens, which preserved gardens and allowed more than 3,000 units of affordable housing construction to proceed. After September 11, 2001, she stayed downtown for over a week, day-and-night, turning HPD into a relief center looking after everyone who sought refuge there.

As Bloomberg's commissioner, Jerilyn was the author of the first New Housing Marketplace Plan, a pioneering plan that marked a shift in NYC's housing policy from the in-rem era to a new phase of booming demand. With demand for housing increasing and availability of buildable sites decreasing, the Housing Plan focused on using government tax incentives and subsidies to leverage private investment to create new affordable housing, setting an affordable housing target for the first time. The plan focused preserving existing rental housing, investing in the clean-up of old industrial land to spearhead the regeneration of the Brooklyn waterfront, and saving distressed neighborhoods.

Collaboration was a guiding tenet of Jerilyn's leadership at HPD and later at CHPC. She is passionate about international engagement and diverse perspectives informing housing to fight NYC's tendency toward insularity. She was a proud member of the International Brownfield Exchange working alongside leaders in Germany, Austria, Spain, Northern Ireland, and England to exchange information, establish new working relationships, and develop, test, and communicate best practices about the redevelopment of former industrial areas. She established and chaired the Mayor's Neighborhood Investment Panel which included housing professionals from New York's banks, philanthropic organizations, research institutions, academia, and the non-profit and for-profit development industry, in an unprecedented effort to restructure HPD's programs and monitor the ongoing effectiveness of the Housing Plan. She organized biannual conferences on housing policy in collaboration with the New York University Furman Center for Real Estate and Urban Policy and the Federal Reserve Bank of New York.

Jerilyn's impact on housing is almost outweighed by her impact on the people she has managed, mentored, and supported. The legacy of her career spreads to thousands of people including employers, employees, friends, colleagues, HPD and CHPC fellows and staff, graduate students of her housing program at Columbia University's School of International and Public Affairs, and many other teaching venues. When she would return to City Hall or HPD after leaving the public sector, she would be greeted with excitement and warmth by everyone from the mayor to the mailroom staff.

After her extraordinary tenure in public service, Jerilyn took over the helm of CHPC in 2006, which was seen at the time as a trustworthy research organization that needed a shift in direction to maintain its relevance. Jerilyn's leadership solidified its future for decades to come. Her focus was to reinvigorate the audience for CHPC's work and find inventive ways to convey fresh approaches for housing policy, based on current realities. She set up a new paradigm for CHPC by blending big-vision projects with detailed technical recommendations for government agencies. Under her leadership, CHPC made video games that explored challenges related to developing and managing apartment buildings and put on huge national housing exhibitions. CHPC's audience expanded exponentially, the board became more diverse and younger, and the organization collaborated with housing practitioners and policymakers from Israel to Japan, England to Australia. CHPC's research renewed interest in new housing typologies, launched housing pilots, paved the way for a host of zoning changes that have improved affordable housing development, and shaped new approaches to transitional housing and the use of private activity bonds. She instigated and launched CHPC's Strategic Impact Fund which gave the organization the ability to rely on more consistent funding for the first time. She made CHPC relevant, innovative, impactful, financially sustainable, and exciting.

Jerilyn has all the qualities we should hope for our public servants. She is passionate and dedicated, yet tough and will not tolerate bullshit. She has an incredible balance of being a visionary who also knows how to make change happen. She has an uncanny ability to appreciate every facet of a residential building; she simultaneously sees its history, its cultural significance, its financing, its architecture, the zoning, housing, and building codes that shape it, and its residents and how housing intersects with their lives.

There is absolutely no doubt that Jerilyn Perine has had an extraordinary and outsized impact on housing in New York City. We are so happy that we get the opportunity to honor her today to mark just a fraction of our gratitude for her.