

Remembering GORDON W. SCHULTZ **Transportation Planner and Modeler**

Gordon Schultz was a unique individual and an outstanding contributor to the transportation planning and demand modeling profession. His individuality perhaps started early: Gordon grew up as an only child in a gritty Detroit suburb. After public schooling there, in the interests of educational betterment, he received further education at the hands of strict Catholic Nuns. It was from the University of Detroit that he obtained his B.S. in Civil Engineering in 1961.

His formal academic training in transportation planning was at Northwestern University, where he received his M.S.C.E degree in 1962. There he shared space with Ev Carter and Jere Hinkle. It would not be quite appropriate to characterize that grouping as “The Three Stooges” but it must have been quite a triumvirate. In any case, Gordon never ceased learning.

After Northwestern, Gordon first went to work at the Tennessee Department of Highways. As Chief of Urban Planning, he directly supervised the transportation study teams in various cities of the State and had responsibility for all Tennessee urban transportation planning. Gordon claimed to have locked dithering local planners in a room until they came out with population and employment forecast allocations to traffic analysis zones so that demand analysis could proceed.

It was reputedly while Gordon was driving through Tennessee countryside on highway department business that he spotted his bride-to-be Carolyn on a porch playing an autoharp. (The reality may be a shade more mundane, but equally effective.) Not too long after they moved to the Washington D.C. area, Gordon and Carolyn purchased a home and acreage in Bull Run Mountain Estates, then on the furthest reaches of the Northern Virginia exurbs. Besides fine hospitality, their spread featured cacophonous peacocks and the occasional clutch of wild turkeys.

Being a Tennessean, Tom Deen had recruited Gordon for his burgeoning Transit Planning Department at Alan M. Voorhees & Associates. Memorable on-the-job training included the day Al Voorhees wandered into his office armed with nothing more than an AAA map and wanted a rationalized bus route plan for Tampa by afternoon. The Client apparently liked it but did note that one route had been sent down a canal. At AMV Gordon played a major role in route selection and ridership forecasting for the Washington Metrorail system. Later in his career he was a champion of employing models and quantitative network analyses for planning transit services designed to most effectively serve users, pre-existing and future.

Joining the nascent R. H. Pratt Associates in 1969, Gordon modestly eschewed a spot on the masthead, but following incorporation served as Secretary/Treasurer, Principal, and right-hand-man straight through until absorption into Barton-Aschman Associates in 1977. Adventures ranged from a Coverdale & Colpitts Client locked at plane time in the office bathroom to an hour of detainment in a Denver hotel, late for a project wrap-up presentation, because the Bank of America had miscalculated the company credit-card limit.

Wherever he worked, Gordon trained. It's hard to tell who learned more, his assistants, his associates, or his Clients. He was mentor to Bill Allen, David Kurth, Bob Schulte, “many of us here in Atlanta” (Guy Rousseau), “a whole generation of Houston modelers” (Rod Smith)... the list goes on.

Gordon was always enthused about advancing the state of the art in a practical manner. As groundbreakers before him had developed and advanced trip generation, distribution, and

assignment techniques, Gordon was in the forefront of doing the same for mode choice modeling. Gordon's models worked and he was deeply interested in their use in practical planning.

He applied the Traffic Research Corporation stratified curves for Metrorail forecasting in the late '60s, led development of probit models for WashCOG in the early '70s, moved into multinomial logit modeling in the mid-'70s for the Twin Cities, and of course continued on into nested logit and all the rest. Gordon was thrilled to work with the late Jim McLynn on the intricacies of logit mathematics.

He was fascinated with the potential of sketch planning procedures for quick-turnaround policy planning and transportation corridor identification. Staying in the background, as he often did, Gordon with Bill Allen devised a sketch-planning procedure in the pre-GIS 1980s to successfully represent Buenos Aires colectivo-bus network characteristics. It required no more than zonal data, spatial formulae, and UTPS program UMODEL code.

It was real-world model applications to enlighten decisionmaking that turned Gordon on. He was not only a world-class travel demand modeler but also a skilled analytical transportation planner. While long-range planning applications were his usual venue, he took special pleasure in applying analytical processes to short-range and operations planning.

Gordon's first chance to develop a comprehensive travel forecasting model set from "a" to "z" came in New Orleans while with Barton-Aschman. He prepared as elegant and internally consistent a model set as the traditional 4-step process would allow and wrote the most comprehensive model development and calibration report imaginable. If you have a copy of that New Orleans report, hold on to it.

Somewhere along the line Gordon became known in certain circles as "the Senator." It was something about his having been light-heartedly addressed as such at a critical point in getting seated in a Houston restaurant, resulting in impeccable and highly solicitous service. You'll have to get the whole story from Bill Davidson.

From Barton-Aschman Gordon moved on to Comsis and finally Parsons Brinckerhoff. All the way along he disseminated good practice by example. One of his final efforts was a key role in the original design of the New York region's award-winning activity-based model set, recognized as the first activity-based model to be used for conformity analysis.

Gordon developed or had a major influence on mode choice models and full travel demand model sets in Atlanta (multiple model generations), Chicago, Columbus, Denver, Hartford, Honolulu, Houston, Minneapolis-St. Paul (multiple generations), New York, Riyadh, Seattle, Shanghai, Tucson, Washington, D.C. (multiple generations)... again the list goes on. He developed travel surveys, estimated transit mode of access models, prepared transit operating cost models, conducted TDM studies. Data collection designs and travel models developed by Gordon have become state standards.

Though he could make professional encounters uncomfortable for fools, blowhards, and the intellectually lazy, Gordon left behind a string of friends practically everywhere he worked. He will be sadly missed by the transportation planning profession and many, many individuals whose paths have crossed his.

Following are selected memories and testimonials from a number of these lucky persons:

Gordon was at AMV when I came in 1968. I remember him well, and fondly. His wit never ceased to make my day. --Angela Mulloy

He will be very missed in the transportation planning business. --Bill Allen

I will always remember Gordon as a brilliant pragmatic engineer who was a true "character". I learned a great deal working with him during the first part of my career. --Phil Shapiro

Gordon certainly knew how to cut through the BS and get to the bottom line...what a guy! --Matt Citron

Gordon was a quintessential character, while at the same time a Tennessee gentleman. He was definitely one of those for whom the mold was broken after his creation. --Lew Grimm

I will always remember the significant contributions that Gordon made in my professional development, particularly during the first two years after I was out of graduate school. He brought a great deal of insight and pragmatism to a field that was dominated by people who too often got caught up in the technical aspects of travel demand forecasting and lost sight of the transportation planning and decision making aspects of our profession. I will always be indebted to him. --Neil Pedersen

...Not only insight and pragmatism, but a sense of humor that allowed him not to get too caught up in the numbers... He also rode with me on the roller coaster at the Mall of America. What a guy. --Steve Wilson

I fondly recall Gordon from my early days at BAA, spinning his modeling wizardry in an office crammed with more reports and print-outs than I thought humanly possible to fit in an office and still retain the ability to move, let alone function. Over the years, I have heard many, many professionals say how they turned to Gordon for help on particularly important and vexing problems. --John Hodges-Copple

I learned a tremendous amount from Gordon... I owe a large part of what I have been able to achieve to him. --Bernie Alpern

I'm deeply saddened with the loss of another great mentor and friend. --Bill Martin

It's funny, but... I just happened to be looking at some of Gordon's old model documentation from Phoenix in 1984 for guidance on how to do some documentation I'm working on - he sure did good work. I was lucky to have a chance to work with both of you. --Bob Schulte

If you could think it, Gordon could model it. --Bill Davidson

Gordon was definitely well-known, well-respected, and well-liked. I've now lost two of my mentors... but their lessons live on in my memory. --David Kurth

Gordon was a gentle, kind friend who was a joy to be with: A wise, superb professional and mentor to all he worked with. --Sam Zimmerman

...he was such a highly creative and funny guy! --Jim Hogan

...I was fortunate to discover Gordon and Bob Braswell, both working for the Tennessee Highway Dept at about the same time, and persuaded them to come to AMV... Gordon went on to become one of the really skilled transport model people in the profession. --Tom Deen

We have lost a gentle friend and scholar. A leader in our profession. --Keith Lawton

Gordon and I were good friends; I worked with him as a client and as an associate. He had a very positive impact on me and my career. --Foster de la Houssaye

...a special person in many ways. --Fred Gorove

We didn't overlap... but I heard many stories over the years. I learned the Schultz approach to modeling from David Kurth and others. --Tom Harrington

My own memory picture of Gordon... a face whose lines had been deeply etched by his squinting to avoid the smoke from the cigarettes that almost without a break dangled from his lips... He punched a pocket calculator with both thumbs at a ferocious rate and usually cackled triumphantly when the number on the screen came up at just about what he had predicted, which happened much more often than not. Behind that smokescreen, though, was an original, intuitive, brilliant mind and a sharp sense of humor. The profession has lost a giant. --David Miller

Beyond all of Gordon's technical and theoretical brilliance, his highest and best attribute was a tremendous command of common sense. We should not forget. --Ron Milone

...I have lots of fun memories of working with him at Comsis. --Kim Fisher

Gordon was one of a kind. I'll never forget the Benson & Hedges 100's, peacock ties, and Gordon's wonderful sense of humor. While I had not seen him in years, I remember him fondly. The world is now a poorer place in his absence. --Marty Wells

I was working for the Tennessee DOT as a transportation modeler when Gordon was hired (he was just out of school)... I have always considered it a privilege to work in the field with folks like Voorhees, Schultz... (The Fathers of Transportation Modeling). --Jerry Faris

...a pleasure and inspiration to work with... --Dave Levinsohn

I shared [the first draft of these remembrances] with Larry Dallam and Nacho Diaz last night. We all benefited from Gordon's work here in the Twin Cities Metropolitan region. We also always found him a good friend and supportive colleague. If I remember correctly he worked on three of our Travel Behavior Inventories: 1980, 1990, and 2000. --Steve Alderson

I see the [official] Obit mentions the NY BPM model that Gordon did so much to make a reality. I don't know if he was aware, but it recently received a Transportation Excellence in Plan Award

from FHWA, noted as the first activity-based model to be used in the US for conformity analysis. Gordon's unique and powerful combination of creativity and pragmatism, as well as his openness to the good ideas of his colleagues made the success of this project possible, and my experience as "Bobby, Mister Project Manager" (it still rings in my ear!) especially rewarding , --Bob Donnelly

...One thing I valued most about Gordon was his desire and ability to work closely with younger staff just learning travel demand modeling. He did this with both clients and Barton-Aschman members. I... remember most our trips to Shanghai ...he enjoyed most working with the Chinese technical staff trying to learn how to do modeling. He was often more frustrated with corporate rules and constraints... than... with trying to teach someone how to do modeling. --Bill Martin

I went to Tennessee a couple of weeks before ... He was a good friend and we will all miss him here [PB Atlanta], as will the profession. --Larry Saben

I didn't know Gordon as long or as well as many of you... I guess most of my career we were competitors. Nevertheless, I am struck by how well my impressions of Gordon match what everyone else says... He was a great modeler with a practical approach, and was truly helpful to me and to others. I really enjoyed my dealings with Gordon. It's a great loss... Tom Rossi

Gordon showed up in Houston circa 1977 at the birth of serious transit planning for our area. He mentored a whole generation of Houston modelers & made the mode split voodoo transparent and useful. Although he was probably still in his thirties, he seemed to be the wise old gnome to all of us twenty-somethings. You never had to worry about Uncle Gordon's numbers, 'cause they were unbiased, consistent & based on the best data & methodologies available. He exemplified team work & brought out the best in all those he worked with. He brought a focus & off-beat sense of humor to everything he did with us. I don't know what we would have done without him. Looks like the Good Lord decided He needed to put in the A-Team for his planning work in Heaven! --Rod Smith

Truly the last of the old guard who could do it in his head. --Steve Lockwood

That's for sure -- you ought to have played chess with him!... --Mike James

...I still have fond memories of seeing him and talking with him in the BA DC offices, and especially recall his tremendous sense of humor. He was able to blend his great grasp of transportation demand modeling with a down-to-earth understanding of the many foibles of using and miss-using models---and of the people who do both. --Darwin Stuart

...he always wanted to have fun!! I remember some group meeting... we had about 2 hours free before dinner. Gordon's question was -- did we want to play tennis or go running??? I thought that was pretty good, considering those that went with him were probably only half his age!! He always thought he was young at heart! And, so pragmatic. I went to an interview with him, and he just oozed practicality from within! ...a remarkable man! --Cathy Chang

...He was a great leader in his profession and an all around super nice guy... --Fred Schweiger

...a great inspiration not only in my career but also in my life... Frank Navin

Gordon... was widely appreciated in the transportation planning community as an expert, teacher, mentor, and friend... I spent close to half of my professional career working in close association with Gordon, at AMV, at R.H. Pratt Associates, at Barton-Aschman, and to some extent while Gordon was with Comsis and PB... Without him my career would have been much different, and I suspect not for the better. --Dick Pratt

The above are only a sample of memories and testimonials that passed in or out through one email address and one phone line. Specifically not represented in these messages are Jim Ryan and Mark Scheibe, who were focused on getting to Tennessee to be with Carolyn Schultz and represent the transportation planning community at Gordon's service. Thanks Jim and Mark.

And last but not least this wonderful testimonial from Guy Rousseau:

To Gordon with Gratitude: While Gordon remains the "grand-father" of the Atlanta model, he is also remembered as a very intelligent man who sought to add to his knowledge throughout his life, and instilled the importance of that in his work. Since Gordon left us on October 5, I have spent some time reminiscing and reflecting upon all the things he did for the Atlanta modeling community. Throughout the years, Gordon, without hesitation, gave his time, attention, support, and encouragement regarding all of our modeling activities and pursuits, and especially through all the "ups and downs" of our modeling work. He allowed many of us to "carve our own niche" in regional travel demand modeling after exposing us to a variety of modeling endeavors, while providing the appropriate amount of guidance, intuitively knowing when we needed it. He instilled in me, and in many others, a passion for travel demand modeling, providing us with so many opportunities in our careers to understand the intricacies and dynamics of a model. He encouraged us to venture further out into this amazing world of activity-based and tour-based modeling, making us more aware of the shortcomings and discrepancies of the 4-step trip-based approach. He exemplified to us the value of having a balanced modeling work program. And he did so, quietly, humbly and unassumingly, without need for praise or recognition. The Atlanta modeling community, and other groups and individuals too numerous to mention, have benefited from Gordon's time, expertise and many talents. To me, he is the epitome of the "modeling leader". It is his shining example that has influenced many of us to try to do the same in our own careers. His legacy lives on.

(Introductory sketch and compilation by Dick Pratt)