

## Eye on Evanston: Thoughts on Design | An overdue salute to Diane Korling, a founding member of Design Evanston

by Robert Teska and Jack Weiss, Design Evanston May 18th, 2022

When Design Evanston published its book *Evanston's Design Heritage* in 2020, one important planner was missing from the collection of essays: Diane Korling was not available to be interviewed for the book because of a serious injury.

We've since researched and written her story and belatedly present it here.



Diane Korling

In 1980, Diane was a founding member of Design Evanston. She devoted her career to environmental concerns focusing on the location and design impacts of diverse projects throughout the United States.

Beginning with a bachelor's degree from Northwestern University and a Master's Degree in City and Regional Planning from Illinois Institute of Technology, she went on to provide environmental inventories, assessments and design recommendations for the Illinois Division of Highways and the Illinois State Toll Highway Authority pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act, and for numerous national and regional engineering consulting firms including her own firm, Diane Korling and Associates.

Her project proposals encompassed the Florida Everglades, Illinois wetlands, stormwater management, air and water quality management, noise impacts and endangered species, often supervising specialists in a variety of environmental disciplines. In the Chicago area, she prepared environmental assessments for 14 Metra rail stations.



Fox

River Path Credit: Jeff Linamen

Though her name may be unknown to most, thousands of bicyclists and walkers have enjoyed the results of Korling's leadership and planning for both the Fox River Path and Illinois Prairie Path.

Diane taught environmental courses to architectural, engineering and planning students at the Illinois Institute of Technology from 1968 to 1972 and again from 1975 to 1982 and Environment of the City at DePaul University. She was also a guest lecturer at other Illinois universities.



Illinois Prairie Path Credit: TrailLink

Since 1981, when she founded Diane Korling and Associates at 1914 Orrington Ave., Diane has managed land resource planning for transportation and related development. Though she has since retired, Diane was a planner and writer, with specialized consulting associates in biology, ecology, forestry, history, land economics, landscape architecture, sociology, soil and water conservation, wildlife, wetlands delineation and mitigation.

Among her notable accomplishments, Diane was a member of the American Planning Association, the Illinois Association of Environmental Professionals (President, 1984) and the Society of American Military Engineers.

She was the founding director of the Fox River Path, Director of the Illinois Prairie Path, and Chairman and then President of the Kane County Regional Planning Commission.

*Design Evanston's "Eye on Evanston" articles focus on Evanston's design history and advocate for good design. Visit [designevanston.org](http://designevanston.org) to learn more about the organization.*

Source: *Evanston RoundTable*