

William Grigsby, City and Regional Planning

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Bill Grigsby

William (Bill) Grigsby, a former faculty member in the School of Design's department of city and regional planning, died on April 20. He was 94.

Dr. Grigsby was born and raised in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. He took undergraduate courses at Northwest Missouri State Teachers College, University of Kansas, and University of Colorado. Then, he received a PhD in economics from Columbia University. Dr. Grigsby served for five years in the U.S. Navy during World War II and the Korean War.

Dr. Grigsby joined the faculty of Penn's Graduate School of Fine Arts in 1955. In 1961, he became a research associate professor of urban studies in the School of Fine Arts, a joint position with the Wharton School's department of finance. In 1963, he published his first book, *Housing Markets and Public Policy*, with Penn Press, which staked out the still-fledgling field of housing policy. Four years later, he became a professor of city planning at Penn. Dr. Grigsby also had a secondary appointment in the Institute for Urban Studies. He was active in Penn's community, serving on several University Council and Faculty Senate committees throughout the 1970s and 1980s, including the Senate Advisory Committee, a prestigious position. In 1987 he published the book *The Dynamics of Neighborhood Change and Decline*, considered a definitive work in his field. In 1996, Dr. Grigsby retired from Penn and took emeritus status.

Dr. Grigsby's research, which was recognized by his colleagues in a paper published after his retirement, was instrumental in establishing neighborhood change as a sub-field of city planning. Dr. Grigsby studied the politics of housing markets and residential segregation, the effect of poverty on neighborhoods, and steps public leaders could take to alleviate negative effects of neighborhood change. "It is very important to note that Grigsby's contributions are so foundational to the modern field of housing economics and housing policy that many of the first-generation analysts like John Kain, John Quigley, William Wheaton, Richard Muth, and Anthony Downs do not bother to cite his works," said his colleagues in their paper in celebration of him. "Grigsby's contributions have become ingrained in the core of housing policy."

Dr. Grigsby was predeceased by his wife, Esther (née Olson). He is survived by his daughters, Anne Lanshe (Timothy), Laurie de Linde (Jorn), Sioux Xenakis, Karen Grigsby, and Astrid Dee Bennett (Joseph); seven grandchildren; and four great-grandchildren.