Terrance Reynolds Williams, architect who helped shape lower Manhattan, dies at 77

Terrance R. Williams, visionary behind projects that informed the landscape of New York City including the creation of the South Street Seaport, the rezoning of Tribeca, and the Theater District, died of cancer on May 16th in Manhattan. He was 77 years old.

Most recently, Williams was a full professor at The Catholic University of America School of Architecture and Planning in Washington, D.C. During his 16 years at Catholic, he served as the Associate Dean for Graduate Studies, Thesis Director, Director of Urban Design, and led travel programs to many American cities as well as programs in Cuba, Slovenia and Venice.

Williams’ career spans more than forty years and four continents. In addition to teaching, he served as the Deputy Director of the Mayor’s Office of Lower Manhattan Development in New York. He led the 25-person design team for a city within a city, Shahestan Pahlavi in Tehran, Iran and a project for Sanaa University in Yemen for I.M. Pei. Returning to the U.S., he founded The Williams Group in New York City. Just prior to joining to the faculty at Catholic University, he served as the Architect for the University of Virginia.

Williams was especially proud of his contributions preserving myriad landmarks in New York City as a part of the Lindsay Administration. His work included preventing a 700 ft. high office building from being built over Grand Central Terminal, saving more than 60 blocks of 19th century butter and eggs loft structures from demolition in Tribeca, and establishing the design guidelines for the South Street Seaport.

During his career, Williams received numerous national and international awards. He was a Fellow of the American Institute of Architects and served as president of the New York Chapter in 1986.

Born in Coos Bay, Oregon, in 1938, son of Ephriam Thomas Williams and Margaret Reynolds Williams, Williams received his BArch degree from the University of Oregon and his Master’s degree in Architecture from Cornell University. He is survived by his daughter, Margaret Williams.