

Laura Venable Shinn
(February 23, 1964 to July 20, 2021)
Obituary



Laura Venable Shinn, age 57, of San Diego, died July 20, 2021. She was cycling to work at San Diego State University (SDSU) and hit from behind by a car driven by an individual in police custody.

Laura's parents met in Germany while her mother was serving in the U.S. Foreign Service and her father was with the Central Intelligence Agency. Laura was born in Alexandria, Virginia and grew up in Brazil, Mexico and northern Virginia. She received a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Virginia in 1985 and then worked for two years in Albuquerque, New Mexico with a private architectural office. She augmented her education with a Masters of Architecture in 1989 and a Masters of City and Regional Planning in 2001 from The Ohio State University Knowlton School of Architecture.

Laura met Steven Shinn at the University of Virginia. They have known each other for 40 years and were planning their 35th wedding anniversary for next year. They have travelled together through 26 states and to more than 15 countries, including Mexico, Burkina Faso, Ethiopia, Australia, Jordan, Lebanon, Israel, West Bank, Syria, Belize, Guatemala, St. Lucia, Tunisia, Tanzania, and Morocco. She always enjoyed experiencing new cultures and communities.

Laura lived in Columbus, Ohio from 1987-2013 and she worked with Schooley Caldwell Associates as an architect, the Columbus Neighborhood Design Assistance Center as the Associate Director of Design, and The Ohio State University as Director of Planning. She moved to San Diego in 2013 and served as the Director of Facilities Planning for SDSU. During her entire professional career, she lived in inner urban neighborhoods or downtowns and promoted walking, cycling or taking public transit to work. During her career, she focused on walkable neighborhoods, sustainable environments, and humanizing campuses and neighborhoods by focusing on spaces connecting buildings.

She advocated for civic service by serving on numerous boards in Ohio, including the Columbus University Area Commission, German Village Commission, Brickstreet Arts, Creative Living, Village of Powell Historic District Review, Friends of the Lower Olentangy Watershed, and American Institute of Architects (AIA) Columbus. In San Diego, she served on the boards of AIA San Diego, AIA California and the New School of Architecture & Design.

Laura was interested in fashion and an avid creator of her own clothes. She began cycling twenty years ago with the Cowtown Cyclers in Columbus and joined the Recyclers in San Diego. She often cycled to work in Columbus and San Diego and enjoyed inline skating in both cities.

She is survived by her husband, Steven Shinn, of San Diego. She was preceded in death by her parents, Chuck and Pat Venable, of Albuquerque. She has cousins and family in California and Connecticut.

A virtual Zoom memorial service will be held in August for her friends and family. In lieu of flowers, donations in Laura's memory can be made to either of two San Diego organizations promoting public transit, and safe streets or the OSU Knowlton School of Architecture Scholarship Fund or the San Diego State University Laura Shinn Fund for Sustainable Growth:

- <https://sdbikecoalition.org/donate/>
- <https://www.circulatesd.org/donate>
- https://www.giveto.osu.edu/makeagift/?&Source_Code=ENG_ARC-0-OneSchoolFund-ON-S&fund=312560
- <http://sdsualumni.org/ShinnMemorial>