



Karin Foster
May 21, 1977- September 30, 2013



It was with a heavy heart that we have compiled this collection of tributes, remembrances, and photos about our freight transportation colleague and dear friend, Karin Foster.

For those of us who had the good fortune to work with her, Karin's hallmark trait was her passion for her profession. At every meeting, conference, and public function she attended, her enthusiasm and commitment to freight planning was readily on display and burst forth. And you could discern from the gleam in her eye that Karin was taking everything in and thinking "This is good stuff and I can't wait to put it into practice!"

In a short amount of time at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments and Transportation Planning Board (TPB), Karin dramatically advanced the agency's consideration of freight. A sampling of the major and groundbreaking initiatives she was instrumental in organizing and orchestrating includes:

- *TPB Freight Subcommittee (one of the nation's most successful MPO freight advisory committees)*
- *TPB Focus on Freight monthly newsletters*
- *National Capital Region Freight Plan (2010)*
- *Regional Freight Forum: Identifying Regional Freight Transportation Priorities (2011)*
- *TPB Freight Around the Region initiative (2013)*
- *TPB Top 10 Freight Project List (ongoing)*

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In addition to her work within her own agency, Karin enjoyed a national stature and was a highly active and exemplary member of the Transportation Research Board's Urban Freight Transportation Committee. She was a committee officer (as official Secretary) and she took her committee appointment very seriously. She made substantive contributions to the committee, and she was always ready to help organize social gatherings, too.

Karin Foster was a *freight champion* in every sense of the phrase and a freight planning practitioner of the highest caliber. While it is incomprehensible that she is no longer physically with us, Karin's career achievements and memory will always inspire us and bring a smile to our faces.

Sincerely, Ted Dahlburg
Chair, TRB Urban Freight
Transportation Committee

Transportation Research Board Mid-Year
Committee Meeting, July 2013 w/ Barbara
Ivanov and Bill Eisele



Thoughts on the loss of our colleague and friend, Karin Foster

From Marygrace Parker

"Be the change you want to see in this world", Mahatma Gandhi said. For those of us who had the great fortune to work with Karin Foster and call her "colleague" and "friend", we know that she lived these words fully. Although her time among us was far too brief, within that brevity are truly great accomplishments. On a professional level, Karin brought not only her keen intelligence and dedication to her work, but moreover her passion to enhance transportation, particularly in the area of freight. As Karin learned of the importance of freight and its role in our economy, she drove herself and others to undertake the work and make the changes necessary to effectively integrate freight into transportation planning and programs. From her earliest efforts at the Baltimore Metropolitan Council to her work at the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments where she authored the first National Capital Region Freight Plan and where, through her tireless and innovative efforts in working with their Freight Subcommittee, Karin left with us as a Freight Program that is a model of a

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I-95 Corridor Coalition Freight Academy, 2008

strong, effective and collaborative relationships between public and private sector freight stakeholders in the country.

Karin's passion and her tireless drive to improve transportation, and herself and to give more to others, led her to reach out to advance change beyond her day to day work environment – whether working with committees at Transportation Research Board, the I-95 Corridor Coalition Intermodal Committee, the Council of Supply Chain Management Professionals, or as a graduate of the I-95 Coalition's "Freight Academy", giving her personal time to serve as an advisor and mentor to subsequent Freight Academy program offerings and participants. To read Karin's resume, one would think you were reading that of someone who was well into their 50s, not just a mere 36 years old – it is impressive!

Her passion for freight was preceded by work she undertook in the environmental area, where she sought there also, to effect positive change and never lost sight of the need to reduce the carbon footprint – such as getting visitors such as myself to the DC area to commute around town to meetings by bicycle to illustrate her point that such a mode is every bit an effective means of DC transportation as the Metro, a car, a bus, a cab....!

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*I-95 Corridor Coalition Freight Academy, 2008
w/Sarah*

In her personal life, Karin extended this same commitment to change for the better, as she volunteered many hours mentoring disadvantaged youth and dedicating time to travel to Latin America to assist with community based health projects.

Those who knew Karin are left graced by her endless list of “h” factors – honesty, humanity, humility, hard-work, humor.... This loss to all of us can only be categorized as yet another “h” factor – “horribly” too soon. While her untimely passing has left all of us and the world – both the larger world and the transportation world – at a loss, we are left with the legacy of her work and how she touched it and all of us. During her all too brief time, her shadow, in the words of the writer Kahlil Gibran, “cast a light upon our faces.”

*Marygrace Parker
I-95 Corridor Coalition*

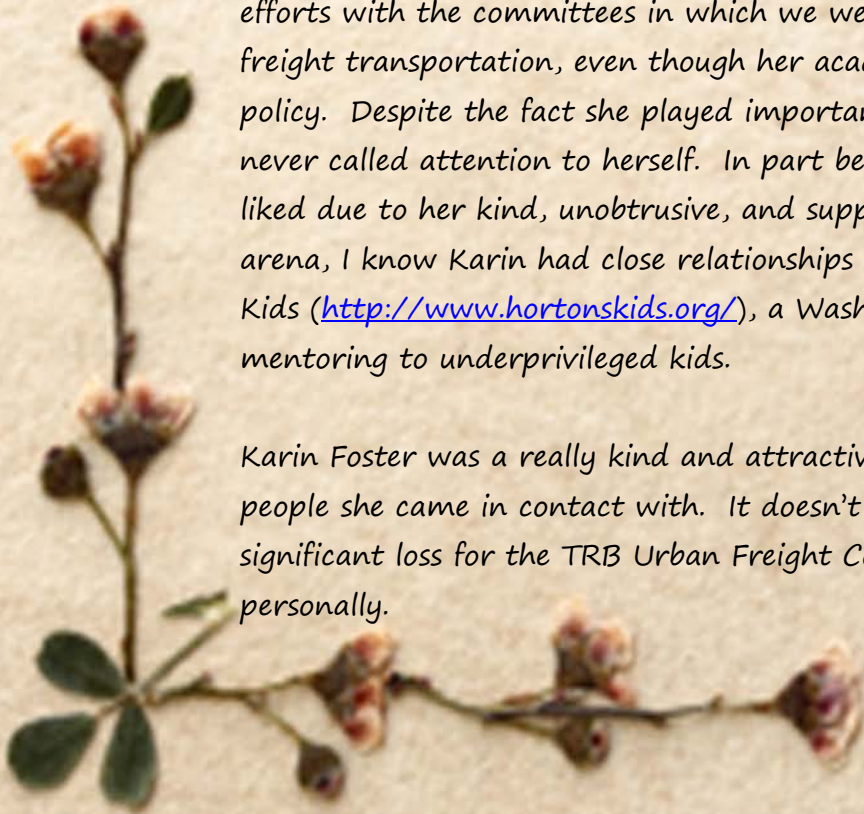


Tributes from the Urban Freight Committee Members

Most of my strongest memories of Karin are tied to my personal relationship rather than my professional relationship with her, but what I'll say is that Karin was a very kind human being who selflessly worked to ensure various professional events she was involved in, whether it was the TRB Urban Freight Committee, the CSCMP National Capital Area Roundtable, or the MWCOG (Washington, DC MPO) Freight Forum, were all well-organized. This may seem like a relatively small thing, but Karin's efforts helped ensure the events she helped organize brought people together and were highly beneficial to the attendees. I know I personally benefitted many times from Karin's organizational efforts with the committees in which we were both involved. Karin was also a strong advocate for freight transportation, even though her academic background was in environmental policy and public policy. Despite the fact she played important roles in various freight-related professional groups, she never called attention to herself. In part because of that, she was someone that was deservedly well-liked due to her kind, unobtrusive, and supportive personality. Outside of the freight transportation arena, I know Karin had close relationships with her brothers' children, and was involved with Horton's Kids (<http://www.hortonskids.org/>), a Washington DC-based volunteer group that provides educational mentoring to underprivileged kids.

Karin Foster was a really kind and attractive human being, and she positively touched the lives of most people she came in contact with. It doesn't seem fair that she's no longer with us. Her death is a significant loss for the TRB Urban Freight Committee, and I know I miss her both professionally and personally.

Carl L. "Chip" Millard III

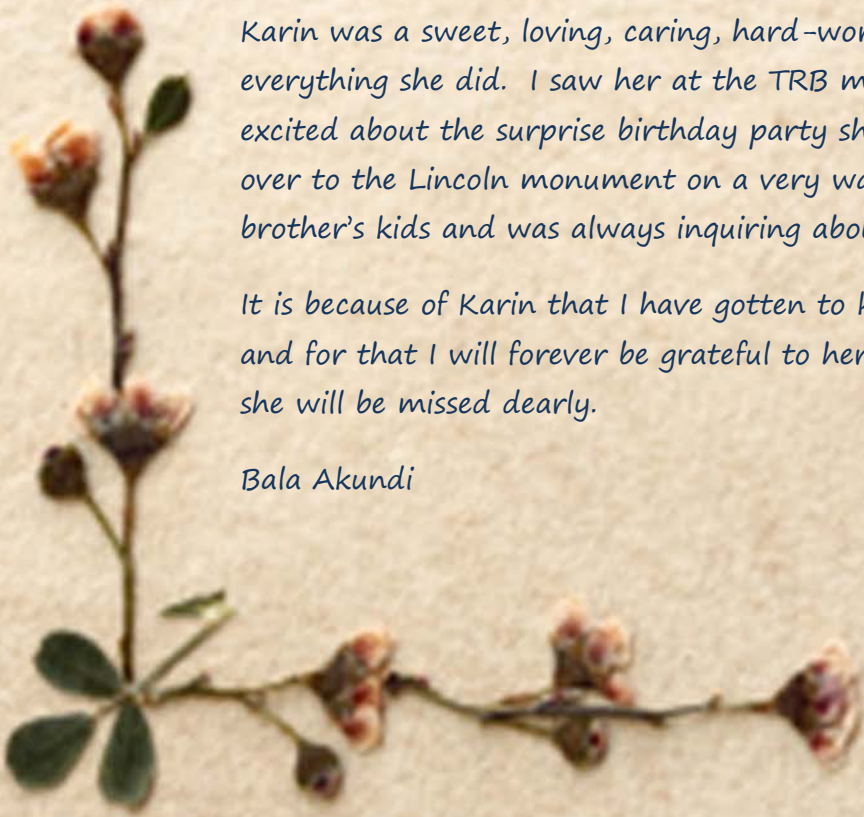


On the morning of October 1st, Akiko sent me and Karin an email asking if one of us would like to volunteer to be featured in the member spotlight section. My first instinct was to reply to Karin and ask that she go first because she was involved in freight planning a lot longer than I have been. In fact Karin is the reason I am involved in freight – she was the freight coordinator for the Baltimore Metropolitan Council before she left to join the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments to start their freight program. I never got to send that email to Karin because a few hours later we learned of the shocking news that she had passed away. It saddens me deeply to be writing this tribute for the member spotlight instead of the work she was doing to bring freight stakeholders together and identifying and promoting freight projects in the region.

Karin was a sweet, loving, caring, hard-working girl. She put a lot of energy and enthusiasm into everything she did. I saw her at the TRB mid-summer freight meeting in July where she was so excited about the surprise birthday party she had planned for her dad later that weekend. We walked over to the Lincoln monument on a very warm and muggy afternoon. She loved her family and her brother's kids and was always inquiring about mine.

It is because of Karin that I have gotten to know and work with so many of you in the area of freight and for that I will forever be grateful to her. She was a valuable member of the “freight family” and she will be missed dearly.

Bala Akundi



Dear all:

I join in this tribute to Karin, and it is my sincere hope that fond memories of her will comfort her closest friends and colleagues and remind all of us of her sweetness.

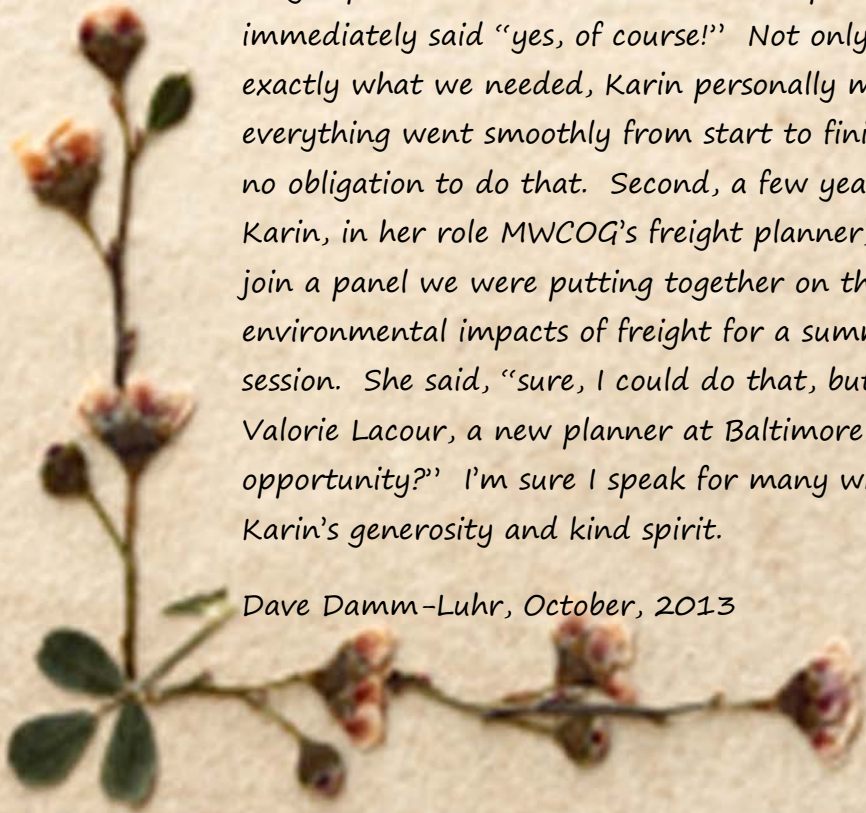
Blanca Arenas

Two clear memories of Karin stand out for me. First, while the Volpe Center was working with the Baltimore City DOT, we needed a large waterfront space to accommodate the crowd expected meeting at a capstone project meeting from nearby neighborhoods. We turned to Karin, who was then the freight planner for the Baltimore Metropolitan Council, who immediately said “yes, of course!” Not only was BMC’s space exactly what we needed, Karin personally made sure that everything went smoothly from start to finish, though she had no obligation to do that. Second, a few years later, I called Karin, in her role MWCOG’s freight planner, asking if she could join a panel we were putting together on the social and environmental impacts of freight for a summer TRB session. She said, “sure, I could do that, but why not give Valorie Lacour, a new planner at Baltimore City DOT an opportunity?” I’m sure I speak for many when I say I’ll miss Karin’s generosity and kind spirit.

Dave Damm-Luhr, October, 2013



I-95 Corridor Coalition Freight Academy, 2008



While I didn't know Karin well, I did want to make a couple observations about my interactions with her. Whenever we met, her caring, pleasant and dedicated personality was always present. She was always supportive and ready to help our committee. She will be greatly missed, and it is difficult for all of us to come to grips with the fact that she is no longer with us.

Bill Eisele

I met Karin and got to know her when I attended TRB's mid-year committee meeting in Washington DC last July. I happened to step out of the National Academy of Science building when Karin and Bala were also taking a little break from the meetings. They invited me for a short walk to the Lincoln Memorial. We took turns taking photos with the Einstein statue in front of the NAS building, and took more photos at the Memorial. Along the way, Karin told me how she knew and worked with Bala, that she lived in a walking distance to one of the hotels where TRB's annual meeting is held, and that she was from California and sometimes thought about going back.

The time I got to spend with Karin was very brief, but I appreciated how welcoming she was to me in her mild and friendly manner. Unfortunately, I got to know more about her through this tribute, but as I read remarks made from her closest friends, I realize that her sweetness and sincere nature made such tender impressions on everyone who knew her. I am grateful that I had a chance to get to know Karin.

Akiko Yamagami

