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University of La Verne

**Southern California Chapter of the American Society for Public
Administration**

**A 50 Year Personal Perspective
By Ron Loveridge**

Thank you for the invitation to speak to the Southern California Chapter of the American Society for Public Administration.

Tonight I will do something I have never done before. I will look back 50 years. I will share and highlight my take, my view on significant ideas and directions for city governance.

I will draw on the experiences and perspectives of a city elected official--33 years, and as a local government/UC political science professor--nearly 50 years.

But first, let me offer a quick biography.

Some 75 years ago, I was born and raised in the Bay Area. Concord was my home town. When my parents moved to Concord, residents numbered about 5,000, now there is over 100,000. As in Lake Wobegon, there were two churches, Catholic and Presbyterian. And in the town plaza was a Carnegie Library.

Both my parents were graduates of University of Pacific. My father was a civil engineer at Columbia Steel in Pittsburg for 31 years. As a young man, he was a world class athlete, tying the world's record in the 100 yard dash.

My mother was a homemaker, community activist, and in many ways my role model. She organized an AAUW chapter, held every leadership position in the local Presbyterian Church, and was on the Mt. Diablo Unified School Board for fourteen years. I often tell the story.... Over and over, my mother taught that the purposes of life were found in service to others.

Until I went to college, my life in Concord was centered on family, school, sports, church, small town activities, and Lake Tahoe. In retrospect, this time was a version of Happy Days in a working class suburban town in the East Bay.

In 1960, I graduated from University of Pacific both as student body president and as number one in my class. Among many memories, four stand out: poster for election as

Sophomore Class Representative; quarterback for intramural football championship; initiated and led the establishment of a campus wide honor code; choice of a course in Marriage and Family or Philosophy. Took Philosophy; met my wife; now married for 53 years.

Upon graduation, I seriously considered two choices, a CORO fellowship or a graduate fellowship to Stanford. If I had chosen CORO, I would likely be a member of Northern CA Chapter of ASPA. Instead, I completed a PhD in Political Science from Stanford in 1965.

My graduate adviser, Professor Heiz Eulau, was the chief investigator for a major research study on city council decision making in the Bay Area. He asked if I would take a look at city managers. I directly interviewed 40 city managers. I read nearly everything written about city managers. And I used the research study results of interviews with almost every council member in the Bay Area. Out of this research work came my dissertation and a book on city managers.

It was the Fall Quarter, 1965 that I began as Assistant Political Science Professor at University of CA, Riverside. Why go from the academy to elected office? I know of no other UC professor in a city elected office. Professors devote their careers to field and not to place.

Let me offer five reasons that are complex, personal, and likely unique.

First, what I did in the classroom and what I did by way of research was related to local politics and policies. For every class, I required field research papers. I taught/supervised the Department's local and quarter away intern programs--I estimate that I have placed over 1,500 interns. I also taught campaign classes. My academic work therefore connected me to place.

Second, I was frequently asked to help. I was invited because I was an expert on place. Local requests were many. They included charter reviews, service club talks, advice for political campaigns, resource for ad hoc task forces, charter member of the City's Environmental Protection Commission, and so forth. Thus, over time, varied community invitations connected me to place.

Third, In terms of political outlook, I came of age in the 1960's. Robert Kennedy was my political hero. I wanted to make a difference. And doing something about smog I saw as a personal, political, and professional obligation.

Fourth, Riverside offered an opportunity to make a difference. Robert Dahl, a highly respected Yale political scientist, framed his presidential remarks to the American Political Science Association around what is the ideal size of a city. His pivots were large enough to have the resources to make a difference and small enough to be able to

participate in its decision making. His number was from 200,000 to 300,000. Riverside is such a city.

And fifth, cities are exciting places in which to make a difference, to dedicate your best efforts. To illustrate, read Harvard Economist Edward Gleaser's recent book, *The Triumph of the City*. Note its subtitle: *How Our Greatest Invention Makes Us Richer, Smarter, Greener, Healthier, and Happier*.

There is also an important how. You go from the academy to elected office by winning elections. They are complex art forms that have been extensively studied by academics. They are crucibles for testing yourself and your ideas. Local elections are most often determined by friends and neighbors. My first Council election I knocked on 4,500 doors. Each door is a tutorial--you are different because of this exchange. For an academic, there are striking differences between voters as statistics and those who answer the door.

It is also a time of conflict and intense personal pressure. It is not easy. I remind my students that if you win an election by 60 percent that is good. However, it also means that if you have ten people in a room, six are for you and four are against.

For the record, I faced election 13 times, beginning in high school, and have been successful in each election.

Elected office has offered extraordinary opportunities to make a difference, for many people and in many ways. I was excited very day as Mayor to go to the office--it was fun.

I was honored to be President of the League of CA cities in 2004--that year we passed Proposition I A statewide by almost 85 percent of the vote. I was honored to be President of the National League of Cities in 2010. I was honored to serve for 18 years on the South Coast Air Quality Management District Board and on the CA Air Resources Board for eight years. In 2013, I received a life time achievement award from the Coalition for Clean Air. I was honored to serve for over 25 years on the Southern CA Association of Governments Regional Council, and for ten years I chaired their State of the Region Report. In 2005, I received the Tom Bradley Award from the National Association of Regional Councils for "outstanding leadership in promoting regional approaches." I take particular pride in in two other awards. One was the 2004 International Economic Development Council's Leadership Award in Public Service. "It recognizes an elected official who, for more than ten years, has served as a strong public advocate for economic development." And the other was the 2012 Who's Who in America Neighborhoods Leadership Award from NUSA/Neighborhoods USA.

Before taking up ideas and approaches, let me comment on Riverside. When I first ran for the City Council, my overall theme was Pride in Riverside Again. There is Pride in

Riverside Again! See my 2012, and last, State of the City Address. You can find it on the web site for UCR's Center for Sustainable Suburban Development (or CSSD). Better yet, come visit Riverside. Stay at the Mission Inn. Experience our downtown. Go to our four campuses--UCR, CBU, LSU, and RCC. See the Historic State Citrus Park. My favorite marker is an award the City received in 2012....

Knox Mellon, former CA State Preservation Officer, once said after a talk I presented, "Loveridge is different from other politicians. He reads books." In the remarks that follow, I will integrate a number of books into our conversation.

Let me begin with the final paragraph from City Managers in the Legislative Process...a book I wrote, published in 1971:

"The city manager, in conclusion, will continue as an able administrator and improve his position as a political executive in Bay Area cities. He will thrive as a respected professional and urban generalist, a necessary link between amateur politicians and expert administration. However, the most important recommendation this study invites is that city councils need to redefine the policy role of the manager. City councils should see the manager as a policy partner and not as a rival or servant. For the quality of city life will increasingly depend on the manager's ability to bring his expertise and information to bear on the process and content of public policy."

Noteworthy, this specific perspective has not changed since I wrote City Managers in Legislative Politics.

With a focus on cities, I will look back over the past 50 years. I will draw on the experiences and perspectives of both an elected official and a UC political science/local government professor.

The objective is to identify and talk about the most important ideas/themes that framed my understanding of city governance and that framed my personal approach to city governance.

It will be divided into two parts.

First, I will identify 14 ideas as a way to understand city governance. At the city level, what is notably different about who gets what, when, and how?

And second, I will identify 10 ideas that highlighted my approach to city governance. I will specifically draw on a column from Western City written in 2004 when I was President of the League of CA Cities.

How can we understand city governance?

1) Cities are important. They are the wealth of nations. They are where economic development takes place. They are where quality of life is experienced. They are where services are delivered. They are where people live and in the language of Benjamin Barber (If Mayors Ruled the World),"where they learn and love, work and sleep, pray and play, grow and eat, and finally die." Also, all politics is local is an important explanatory concept--but that is another talk.

2) Economic growth, challenge of governance, and defended space are the three imperatives of city politics. These three themes are identified and effectively explained in an often used textbook, now in its 8th edition, by Dennis Judd and Todd Swanstrom. The book is titled, City Politics: The Political Economy of Urban America. They say that "The fabric of city politics in America is woven from these three strands." And I agree.

3) The city policy process is divided into three stages: formulation, approval, and implementation. These three stages are persuasively framed in a book by Francis Rourke, Bureaucracy, Politics, and Public Policy. Noteworthy, electeds and appointed are involved in each stage. The dichotomy between policy and administration is a fiction. The most compelling analysis I have read can be found in a book by James Svava titled, Official Leadership in the City.

4) Shared governance must be the new policy approach between electeds and appointed. The boundaries and relationships are uncertain. In my view, it is the city manager's most important assignment. Ed Banfield and James Q. Wilson (City Politics) once said that city government does two things: provide services and manage conflict. One answer to shared governance is in that distinction. Electeds should emphasize managing conflict and appointed providing services.

The role of electeds has expanded, marked by increasing expectations. They serve on many organizations beyond city hall, especially regional groups. A personal story--when I was first elected to the city council.... Things have changed.

5) Pragmatism rather ideology or partisanship represents the new style of city mayors. They must get things done. They look to mediating conflicts rather than provoking them. They share the imperatives of a good city. They represent a pragmatic caucus.

And thanks to Hiram Johnson, local elections are nonpartisan in CA. Party differences do not define council votes. The saying goes, "There is not a Republican or Democratic way to fill potholes." Let me tell the story of John Holmes, a past Riverside City Manager....

6) Cities are policy laboratories. There should be a constant search for best practices. Sociologists call this diffusion of innovation. There are many sources of best practices: web sites, conferences, visits to other cities, magazines, city associations like League of

CA Cities and the National League of Cities. As Mayor, I emphasized the quest and standard of best practices. For example, let me tell you the story of 311 in Riverside....

7) Access is what distinguishes cities from other levels of politics--county, state, federal. Residents can directly participate. To illustrate, I use this story when talking to high school students....

Also important, residents can directly observe how a city is doing. You cannot do this for the county, state, or federal levels. As a city resident, I know how my trash is picked up, if my neighborhood is safe, or if potholes are filled.

Likewise, at the city level, elected and appointed officials can directly see the results of their work. To wit, bricks and mortar projects are not legislative or policy abstractions.

8) In the future, a successful city will also be digital city. Lt. Governors of CA have little to do. Gavin Newsom has, as I understand, only three staff members. However, he has time to write, and he has written an excellent book called *Citizenville*. It offers many good ideas for what makes for a successful digital city. I would encourage you to attend the April 25th conference at UCLA on the digital city. As cities, we will compete, participate, and succeed in a world of apps.

9) Social capital is a concept central to the good city. *Bowling Alone* written by Political Scientist Robert Putnam remains as a must read. Based on extensive research, Putnam concludes, "Social capital makes us smarter, healthier, safer, richer, and better able to govern a just and stable democracy." Social capital is the best marker of a healthy civic infrastructure. It is a diagnostic call and a prescriptive call in the quest for the good city.

10) Place-making is important. In 2011, the Michigan Municipal League published a collection of superb articles titled, *The Economics of Place*; the Foreword begins, "Place shapes us. Place defines us. Place is what forms our identities, our attitudes, and our relationships....No longer is it sufficient to build places that are merely functional and safe. Our place-making aspirations must be as high and as grand as our economic goals because they are bound together." City success is often measured by college graduates. You keep talent by developing quality of place. In *Rise of the Creative Class*, Richard Florida emphasizes the importance of place for the creative class. It is also a message of smart growth and new urbanism. And it is a message of walkable urban versus drivable suburban.

11) Southern CA is a complex and diverse place. I frequently quote political columnist Dan Walters who said, "Southern CA is the most complex and diverse economic, political, and social society in the history of mankind." It is who we are. It is our strength. It is our policy future.

12) Sustainability is the overarching policy framework for the future. It is centered and defined by the three E's, economy, environment, and equity. I agree with former NY Mayor Michael Bloomberg who said, "Around the world, people increasingly recognize that our planet's future largely depends on making our cities sustainable." As to how to make this happen, I would strongly recommend a new book, *The Guide to Greening Cities* by Johnston, Nicholas, and Parzen.

13) Cities cannot look to the state or national governments for help. We are on our own. Success will depend on what we can do for ourselves, especially regionally. Cooperation should become the new form of competition. This is the message of the most important book I have read in the last fourteen years: Bruce Katz and Jennifer Bradley, *The Metropolitan Revolution: How Cities and Metros Are Fixing Our Broken Politics and Fragile Economy*.

14) Finally, three quick editorial views on cities in CA--first, the loss of redevelopment and its 5 billion dollar investment in affordable housing, economic development, and infrastructure is a devastating loss, and especially to place-making.

Second, future budgets face ever rising costs from pensions and public safety. For most cities, police and fire make up over 2/3 of the general fund budget. Noteworthy, public safety unions are also the most important participants in council campaigns--i.e., endorsements, money, and manpower.

And third, where has Mayor Brown gone? In reviewing his first term, cities are seemingly dismissed as unimportant. They were nowhere mentioned in his 2014 State of the State. The Governor has closed down redevelopment, cities are not at AB 109 table, increased funding has been focused on poor schools, not poor communities, and there has been no attention to the highest crime/most dangerous cities in the country like Oakland and Stockton or to help the bankrupt City of San Bernardino.

Now, let me identify the ten ideas that highlighted my approach to city governance when I was Mayor and a City Council member.

1) Make a difference. The most difficult question every candidate faces is, "Why are you running?" My short answer was to make a difference. Robert Kennedy often quoted Shaw: "Some men see things as they are ask why. Others dream things that never were and ask why not." In my view, that's a good start on a political philosophy.

As to a specific agenda to make a difference, I would call out Suzanne Morse's framework in *Smart Communities*. It is an important, well written book, citing many success stories. She emphasizes seven key leverage points: Investing Right the First Time, Working Together, Building on Community Strengths, Practicing Democracy, Preserving the Past, Growing Leaders, and Inventing a Brighter Future.

2) Set time boundaries. When first elected, former Brea City Manager Wayne Wedin told me, "Demands on a council member are like a sponge. They take all the time you have and ask for more." Most electeds have three lives: personal, political, and professional. You must be watchful that political demands do not overwhelm your personal and professional lives. And as FDR once pointed out, if you can't sleep at night because of political trials, don't run for office.

3) Encourage teamwork and partner with administrators. Elected officials and appointed staff must work together. City success depends on effective teamwork. As Mayor, my conversation with every city manager went as follow....

4) Be a facilitative leader. In a council/manager city, the mayor should be a facilitative leader, accomplishing objectives by enhancing the efforts of others. Leaders who are most effective bring together the right people to create visions and solve problems. For any elected mayor, I would strongly recommend a close reading of James Svara's book, *Facilitative Leadership in Local Government*.

5) Set personal and policy goals. Many people know the expression, "If you don't know where you are going, any path will get you there." Without goals, elected officials become the victim of events. The next demand, the next crisis controls the agenda. Every year as a Council member and as Mayor, I set goals for the coming 12 months; they offered a policy and political agenda for making a difference.

6) Identify and understand your city's resources. In his speech "The Key to Building Cities," James Rouse, visionary urban developer and planner explained, "Every city...has resources that are not being used to fulfill their potential. By identifying that potential and organizing the pieces in relationship to one another in a constructive, interactive way, a new life can be created in that city." This remains one of the best maxims for all of us interested in the future of cities. Rouse gave this speech in San Diego in 1981--it was the first and best speech I heard as an elected.

7) Envision a good city. There are many visions of the good city. I have dedicated myself to realizing Robert Kennedy's vision of the good city: "The city is not just housing and stores. It is not just education and employment, parks and theaters, banks and shops. It is place where men should be able to live in dignity and security and harmony, where people can see and know each other, where children can play and adults work together and join in the pleasures and responsibilities of the place where they live."

Directions need to be identified in terms of economic development, quality of life, and building an inclusive community. Measurements of success are found in William Hudnut's *Cities on the Rebound: A Vision for Urban America*, in which he offers a 21st-century look at the fundamentals of a successful city.

8) Foster social capital. One book that I have closely followed is Robert Putnam's *Bowling Alone*. It centers on social capital--face-to-face networks and norms of trust and reciprocity. Putnam explains the importance of social capital to the success of a city, its economy, its neighborhoods, and its schools. I agree with his basic argument that the higher the level of social capital, the more successful the city.

9) Recognize the importance of your region. The 21st Century is the century of the region. We no longer live in a walled city. The region has emerged as the basic focus of competitiveness in the global economy. Also, the future of cities depends on our success in the regional arena; too often in the past we have not effectively engaged its rules, opportunities, and resources. Katz and Bradley in *The Metropolitan Revolution* offer a must agenda for the economic and social success of Southern CA. In brief, city leaders must also be regional leaders.

10) Compete in the global marketplace. We all compete in the global marketplace. Think of it as a giant shopping mall where "best in the world" products are selected. As Katz and Bradley underscore, "...there is now an imperative...to trade and globally engage as never before."

Rosabeth Moss-Kanter wrote a compelling book in the early 1990's that remains remarkably relevant, and timely. It is titled, *World Class: Thriving Locally in a Global Economy*. She writes, "Cities need their own foreign policy.... An action agenda for cities starts with core local strengths as the foundation for a global vision that embodies the opportunities of a new century and builds bridges to help people reach them."

Thank you for this evening of looking back at the past 50 years. This talk will be on the CSSD website at UCR.

I now welcome any questions or comments.