For the first time, one book brings together stories that capture the complex and changing profession of city management.

Those involved in the study of public management in general or local government administration in particular will find *Spending a Lifetime* a valuable look into the dynamic and demanding field of city management.
Spending a Lifetime: The Careers of City Managers

Spending a Lifetime begins with an overview of various factors that influence the careers of city managers, including the political environment in which they must operate. Also discussed are the competitiveness of the city management job market and the growing presence of women and minorities in the profession.

The book then explores the wide-ranging world of city management through the fictionalized stories of four professionals who follow common career paths. Each story focuses on a midcareer manager facing issues typical in today's rapidly changing society.

The Long Server: Ben Anderson intended to spend several years in different cities on his way to one with a large council-manager organization. Why does he spend almost his entire career in one midsized city?

The Lateral Mover: Ralph Powell moves quite often but usually to other cities in the same population range. He faces many challenges upon becoming the first city manager in several cities that he serves.

The Single-City Careerist: Sammy Wilcox moves up the hierarchy in one city government over the span of his entire career. His story illustrates the complex legal environment of cities and how family issues influence managers' careers.

The Ladder Climber: Anna Lane starts as an intern in city government and progresses to a top city manager position in a large government. Her story of networking and hard work also illustrates some unique challenges facing female city managers.

Career Path to Be Determined: The career of Frank Vargas is a work in progress. Frank is mentored and promoted by a long-term city manager and now faces decisions about his future in the profession.

In the final chapter, the authors offer observations on lessons learned by the managers in the stories and how each ultimately helped his or her community.

What faculty are saying about Spending a Lifetime: The Careers of City Managers

The narratives capture the varied realities of professional public administration practice in the multidisciplinary arena of community governance.

Chester A. Newland, Duggan Distinguished Professor, University of Southern California

The authors' realistic tales add texture to class discussions about local government decisions and career paths, enhancing the learning experience of students planning their own careers in city management.

David N. Ammons, professor of public administration and government, School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

This book is a very important contribution to public service literature and is a must read for those seeking to become city managers or already in the profession.

Stephen E. Condrey, adjunct professor, School of Public and International Affairs, University of Georgia

About the Authors

Douglas J. Watson is professor and director of graduate programs in public affairs at the University of Texas at Dallas. He served as city manager of Auburn, Alabama, from 1982 to 2003 and has written extensively on local government issues in books and journals. Rollin J. Watson has held a number of teaching and administrative posts in higher education and served as president of two colleges. In 1999, after 11 years as president of Somerset Community College in Kentucky, he retired to teach and write full-time.
City managers take direction from and report to city council members on a broad range of issues, including budgets, record keeping, labor relations, and city policies. (© Martha Tabor/Working Images Photographs. Reproduced by permission.) City managers must have college degrees. Courses in economics, sociology, statistics, urban planning, political science, finance, and management may prove essential. However, most city councils and mayors prefer to hire individuals who have master's degrees in public administration. While city managers spend most of their time in offices, they are in constant contact with the public and with others in government. Sometimes they travel to meetings and conferences. Where to Go for More Information.