

Personal Journeys / Encore Careers

- Les White

Then

In 1995, at the age of 55, I retired from the position of City Manager of San Jose after over thirty years in city management or non-profits associated with local government work. I knew I would still want to do interesting work and so I continued to do so into my early seventies. During the post-San Jose era I have managed to do the following:

- Interim President of a United Way during a financial crisis
- Interim COO of a symphony during bankruptcy proceedings
- Vice Chancellor of a community college
- Executive Director of a military base reuse
- Interim Executive Director of a COG
- Interim city manager of four cities
- Interim Planning Director and Interim Public Works Director of two different cities
- About four dozen consulting assignments (organizational analysis, executive coaching and executive evaluations) for cities and non-profits

I mention all of these to illustrate that there is life after city management (and sometimes it is city management)! It has been very rewarding to have functioned in a variety of leadership positions and to have done consulting work in various administrative environments. It demonstrated (to me at least) the portability of city management leadership and management skills.

Now

Now, I have toned my life style down a few notches. However, I must say that I would take on an interesting local government assignment if asked but it is not something I actively promote. I am enjoying changing speeds and a different pace of life in my "sunset" years. I spend quality time with Marilyn, my spouse, of the last 51 years. We work out together at a boutique gym three to four times a week. We do travelling, primarily in the States, and I love photography and gardening plus a book club I joined. I also like managing my mutual funds and a few stocks I own. I have become better at doing home projects too (well almost). Then, there are always those precious hours to spend with family and friends. As with my work back then, I try to keep learning curves going through my photography, gardening and non-fiction and fiction reading.

I have been fortunate to have enjoyed a blessed career in the most interesting of professions and work at keeping some of that enthusiasm and enjoyment in my more tranquil pursuits now.