

Personal Journeys / Encore Careers

- David Morgan - July 2010

My Encore Journey

As I explore my next life phase after full-time city management, I am trying to create a vital "encore" and maintain a public service contribution. I would like to share my initial experience which is still unfolding.

What kind of experiences have I pursued in my encore?

I "semi-retired" in July 2009. I had served the City of Anaheim for 35 years. The final 17 years were spent as Assistant City Manager for 9 years and City Manager for 8 years. Since my departure I have pursued a number of new ventures:

- 1) I have been part of establishing a new MPA Program for Chapman/Brandman University.
- 2) I have associated with Cooperative Personnel Services (CPS) headquartered in Sacramento as an Executive Consultant working on Executive Recruitment and Organizational Development efforts.
- 3) I have served as a member of the Anaheim Public Utilities Board. Anaheim provides Electrical service as well as water to the community.

I also have seen (and paid for) two of my daughters weddings and seen my youngest, my son, graduate from the University of Arizona. Life has remained busy and meaningful.

What has gone well, and what has not?

Overall things have gone well. The consulting work has allowed me to get to know some other organizations and kept me connected to people in the business. A wild card complication related to the new MPA program was a recent controversy around some intern work done by a couple of the program's students. They compiled information regarding City Manager pay and benefits in Orange County and this information is now being used as part of a local campaign and newspaper to criticize a perceived lack of transparency. While I had no involvement in that work, I am distressed that MPA students were used in this fashion. This work allows me to stay involved with people on the way up in their careers.

My Utilities Board work is rewarding and allows me to stay engaged on a limited basis with the City of Anaheim.

What has surprised me or what lessons have I learned?

I don't know that I have been surprised by this, but transition is a personal journey that each of us will travel in our own unique way. For me, life continues to move at a fast rate. I had hoped things would slow down more than they have but I am responsible for this. I hope to change that in my second encore year. I purposely diversified my life in a busy way "out of the blocks". I believed that it would be better to be too busy than not busy enough in my first year. I am more at peace now to get involved with interests outside of the business.

What are some helpful tips that I can offer other managers as they pursue their hopes and dreams in their next life phase?

I suggest that you be patient yet ambitious with yourself about your next phase. It will be a "work in progress" until you get into a new rhythm. You should have a general game plan but keep things loose enough for new and unexpected opportunities. You have lived your life in the service of others and you can continue to do so. Give yourself permission to look out for yourself and your family in a more focused way. Create opportunities to stay connected with friends and colleagues.

Enjoy the journey!
