

David Morrison, M.D.  
*An Overview of Four Decades with City Managers*

For 40 years, David Morrison has been working with city managers. His work began at The Menninger Foundation when he directed and designed a seminar, *Toward Understanding Human Motivation and Behavior*, for City Managers. In this weeklong seminar experience, Morrison became an admirer of the mission of the city management profession and concerned about the stresses within their role. While at The Menninger Foundation, he also developed and conducted seminars for city managers on managing stress. One of the stresses, particularly at that time, was the loneliness of the job.

In 1978, Morrison began a group of Chicago's north shore city managers who met monthly to discuss the challenges of their work. Much of the discussions were about city councils' and citizens' interesting and often infuriating behavior. Over the years, this group has continued as new members join when others retire or move out of the area. Two ICMA Presidents and three ICMA Board Members have been long time members of this group. In addition to the original group of managers, a second group encompassing the greater Chicago area began, and two more are in the planning stage.

Through the decade of the 1980's, Morrison consulted to the City of Phoenix. He met with the city manager, department heads, and city council members on once-a-month visits. These consultations helped resolve conflicts between different departments (for example, fire and police) and with individuals who found themselves in difficult and/or stressful situations.

In the 1990's, Morrison consulted to the City Manager of Highland Park on a very aggressive corporate campaign by a rebellious police union. Although this was a contentious public encounter, it was successfully settled and resulted in a stronger police department.

The consulting work with cities and specific departments has continued. It has been further developed by his son, Daven Morrison, who has an active practice working with cities (always with the city manager) throughout the Chicago area. In the last three years, the Morrises have developed a six-day *5G Leadership Academy* for department heads and city managers to help address the challenges in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Additionally, a 2012 one-day seminar for city managers and their department heads, addresses the importance of *leadership presence*.

Although the greater part of Morrison Associates' practice has been primarily with CEOs and leadership teams in private industry, the information and understanding from that work has often been interesting and welcomed by the city managers. For Morrison's part, it has caused him to have even more respect and admiration for the *city management profession* as their executive and leadership skills are equivalent to executives in private industry, at the same time as they operate within a public fishbowl, which is much more challenging.