



“To Provide a Service”

Don Liner’s Career at the Institute of Government

The mid-seventies were the days of large, inaccessible mainframe computers, observes Charles D. “Don” Liner. Only the larger counties and cities had them, although others were beginning to use minicomputers, which were just small mainframe computers. No one on the Institute of Government faculty knew much about computers, and there were no Institute programs or services for local government computer officials.

Don was trained in economics, not computers, and his normal work at the Institute was in public finance, but he worked with three data processing officials to organize the North Carolina Local Government Information Systems Association (NCLGISA) as a resource through which information technology professionals in local government could find solutions to common problems and learn from one another. Creating this group “was just something that needed to be done,” Don says in his matter-of-fact way.

The revolution in information technology that soon followed proved Don correct. The advent of the personal computer in the late seventies and early eighties, and of networking and the Internet in the nineties, has intensified the need for training and cooperation. In the late seventies, the Institute began providing computer training through a joint project with North Carolina State University. NCLGISA, whose first conference was attended by fewer than twenty officials, now is a thriving organiza-

tion with more than three hundred members representing almost all local governments that have information systems departments. Don currently serves as faculty coordinator for the association, and his collaboration with it continues to be a source of pride.

After nearly thirty years of providing these and other services as an Institute faculty member, Don has entered UNC-CH’s phased-retirement program. For the next three years, until he reaches full retirement, he will continue to teach, do research, and be available to Institute clients for advice and consultation—but on a more limited basis. Don is enjoying the mix of work and personal projects afforded by part-time employment. He also is relishing the prospect of more travel. If you visit Don at the Institute, you will see several stunning dry-mounted photographs on his office walls. Taken by Don on trips to various parts of the world with his wife, Camilla “Kitty” Tulloch, they illustrate his love of travel and the beauty he finds in the places he visits.

Don came to the Institute in 1971, straight from graduate school. Before attending graduate school, he was an officer in the U.S. Navy and later an economist with the federal government. At the Institute, Don has focused on public finance, including state and local taxation, finance of public schools and other governmental functions, and state and local government fiscal relations. For more than twenty-five years, he taught in the Economic Development Course, and he continues to serve on the steering committee for the course.

In addition to teaching, Don served as director of the Institute’s Municipal and County Administration program in 1998–99 and as editor of *Popular Government* from 1988 to 1992. His research and writing have addressed a wide variety of topics, including taxation, school finance, coastal area regulation, highway financing, and economic development. He edited *State and Local Government Relations in*



Charles D. Liner

Place and date of birth	Chattanooga, Tenn., May 16, 1940
Education	B.S. in economics and business administration, University of Tennessee at Chattanooga, 1961; M.A. in economics, George Washington University (Washington, D.C.), 1967; Ph.D. in economics, Washington University (St. Louis), 1972
Military service	Officer, U.S. Navy, 1961–64
Career	Economist, U.S. Department of Defense, U.S. Department of Commerce, 1965–68; assistant professor of economics, Department of Economics, UNC-CH, 1971–77; professor of public finance and government, Institute of Government, 1971–present
Areas of specialization	State and local taxation, finance of public schools and other governmental functions, and state and local government fiscal relations
Family	Wife, Camilla “Kitty” Tulloch; sons, Stephen and David Liner



continued from page 39

North Carolina, which grew out of the Institute's work with a statewide study commission.

The future holds many challenges in the areas he has covered in his work at the Institute, Don says. The most fundamental challenges include adapting North Carolina's state and local tax system to meet the needs of the next century while achieving an equitable distribution of tax burdens, and fulfilling the state's promise that all children will have the school resources needed to provide a sound basic education.

Don's associates at NCLGISA face an equity problem of another sort, he notes. As information technology develops, local information technology professionals will have to continue sharing knowledge and working to ensure that small counties and municipalities keep pace technologically with their larger counterparts across the state.

Don's work in public finance will undoubtedly be an important Institute legacy for many years to come. "Don has always cut through passing trends and short-term concerns to focus on the essence of economic policy proposals," says Michael R. Smith, director of the Institute. "He has a deep understanding of North Carolina and government relations, which he has used to help public officials see the historical context for contemporary issues." Of his nearly three decades of work at the Institute and its effect on state and local government, Don says simply, "I am just trying to provide a service." This modest comment speaks volumes about Don's commitment to the Institute and to the people of North Carolina.

—Jennifer Henderson

FOLLOWING UP ON . . .

"How We Die in North Carolina"

Popular Government, Spring 1999

A year ago the boards of medicine, nursing, and pharmacy sponsored a historic conference, described in the Spring 1999 issue, to consider the difficult question of how health care professionals can help people who are terminally ill obtain the kind of care they want. In fall 1999 the boards adopted a *Joint Statement on Pain Management in End-of-Life Care*. The statement tries to correct misperceptions that prevent some health care professionals from acting forcefully enough to relieve pain. It advises physicians to tell patients and families that effective pain relief can be provided but that such relief carries risks, including the hastening of death. All providers are to look first to the "expressed desires of the patient" regarding pain control.

The statement addresses several important points and emphasizes two: (1) the Board of Medicine will assume that the amount of opioids prescribed for a dying person is appropriate if the physician follows appropriate medical guidelines, understands pain relief, and keeps records of the pain management plan; and (2) a nurse may adjust medication levels within the boundaries of the prescriber's plan and the health agency's protocol.

By clarifying and putting in writing what many North Carolina professionals have considered standard practice, the boards aim to reduce providers' fears of discipline and, as a result, to protect patients from unnecessary suffering. North Carolina appears to be the first state whose health boards have cooperated in such an effort.

—Anne Dellinger

For a copy of the statement, contact the Board of Nursing, phone (919) 782-3211, Web site www.ncbon.org; the Medical Board, phone (919) 326-1100, Web site www.docboard.org/nc; or the Pharmacy Board, phone (919) 942-4454, Web site www.ncbop.org.

"North Carolina Marriage Laws: Some Questions"

Popular Government, Winter 1998

"No Social Security Number? No License"

Popular Government, Spring 1999

In the past two years, *Popular Government* has published two articles that could be classified under the heading "What's Wrong with North Carolina Marriage Laws and Why They Need to Be Fixed." The first described several major problems in the state's marriage laws. The second dealt with the recently enacted requirement that applicants for a marriage license enter their Social Security numbers on the application, and the effect of this requirement on persons—mostly foreign nationals—who do not have such a number.

The 1999 General Assembly dealt with the issues discussed in both articles. Regarding the Social Security number requirement, the General Assembly amended Section 51-8 of the North Carolina General Statutes to provide that applicants without Social Security numbers could sign an affidavit to that effect and then be issued a license (S.L. 1999-375). To deal with the multitude of other problems with the marriage laws, the General Assembly authorized the Legislative Research Commission to undertake a study of the laws (S.L. 1999-395). This study is to include an examination of who is authorized to perform marriage ceremonies, the role of the register of deeds in issuing marriage licenses, and the marriage of persons under age eighteen, all matters discussed in the 1998 article.

—William A. Campbell

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