

# The Administrator

A PUBLICATION OF THE NORTH CAROLINA CITY AND COUNTY MANAGEMENT ASSOCIATION

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## Chapel Hill's Miller wins ICMA award for Excellence in Leadership

**T**own of Chapel Hill Deputy Town Manager Florentine "Flo" Miller was recently awarded the Assistant Excellence in Leadership Award in Memory of Buford M. Watson Jr., from the International City-County Management Association (ICMA). The award recognizes a local government management professional who has made significant contributions toward excellence in leadership while serving as an assistant to a chief local government administrator or department head.



Miller

Miller was presented with the award during the Sept. 13-16 annual conference of ICMA in Montreal.

ICMA's awards program recognizes creative contributions to professional local government management and increases awareness of the value of professional management to the quality of life in our cities, towns and counties. Miller received one of the organization's four Professional Awards, which recognize individual achievement by outstanding chief administrative officers, assistant administrators, academics, and others.

Miller received a Bachelor of Arts degree from UNC-Greensboro and Master of Public Administration from UNC-Chapel Hill. Previously, she served as assistant administrator for the County of Loudoun, Va. Outside of her professional work ethic, she has shown a deep personal commitment to community, and especially to youth and education in her home-

town of Kinston.

Current and former town managers tout her mentorship to department heads, attention to staff development, ability to listen and to communicate and to lead and support the leadership of others. Serving as a deputy manager means that Miller partners directly with Town Manager Roger L. Stancil. The position requires a deep understanding of the goals and style of the town manager and consciously complementing that style while pursuing those goals.

"It is a unique position that requires you to ask not what you might do, but what the manager might do," Stancil said. "It requires you to adjust your approaches and views sometimes to accomplish the manager's goals. It requires you to be forthright and have difficult conversations with the manager when you question what is happening. It requires you to be open to embrace change you never expected.

"I cannot believe there is a better deputy manager in the profession than Flo Miller."

Having worked in municipal management for 27 years and 20 years with the town of Chapel Hill, Miller well understands the legal and institutional setting of municipal management. Her work with every department in the town of Chapel Hill has provided her a broad knowledge of municipal operations as well as experience with a wide diversity of people.

"Her example has been important in more areas than work ethic," said Sonna Loewenthal, former assistant manager for Chapel Hill. "As a

woman of color in a field still dominated by white men, she has never made an issue of her gender or race. However, she has always quietly and simply provided an example and encouragement for other women and people of color."

Cal Horton created the position of deputy manager and appointed Miller to the position in 2004. In a nomination letter, Horton said that he trusted her values, understanding of community interests, respect for the town's governance structure and commitment to the highest standards of professional ethics.

"She is a management institution in the organization, trusted and respected by all who work for and with the town," Horton said. "She is the 'Gold Standard' of the town's organizational culture and ethics, the one who knows it all — literally all. The town has never had a finer leader."

Among her notable accomplishments is helping to shepherd the transit department through a period of dramatic growth during the last five years. She provided continuity, insight and professional staff work, and led the effort to create a participatory group process to address employees concerns.

Miller also has been the lead staff member working on technology enhancement, which is a key work improvement objective of the council and town manager. She worked with town staff, citizens, consultants and elected officials

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# Ethics Matter

## Celebrating 85 years of the ICMA Code of Ethics

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O. E. Carr, city manager of Dubuque, Iowa, addressed 100 of his colleagues gathered in Montreal in 1924 at the ICMA annual conference to present them with a code of ethics for the profession. Quite a remarkable milestone for the "city management profession" entering just its second decade and still very much a work in progress.

The significance of this contribution to the profession can be measured in two ways. First, Carr and his committee had the foresight and wisdom to recognize that a true profession is more than a body of knowledge implemented by experienced practitioners. A true profession is anchored in and guided by a set of commonly held core principles.

Those principles not only guide the individual's conduct but create a set of expectations

and a bond with society. Professionals act with integrity in the conduct of their personal and professional lives in order to merit the trust of those they serve.

Writing about the recent failures of the private sector management profession in an article published in Harvard Business Review last fall, authors Rakesh Khurana and Nitin Nohria reflected that "True professions have codes of conduct, and the meaning and consequences of those codes are taught as part of the formal education of their members. A governing body . . . oversees members' compliance. Through these codes, professional institutions forge an implicit social contract . . . Trust us to control and exercise jurisdiction over this important occupational category. In return, the profession promises, we will ensure that our members are worthy of your trust . . . On balance we believe that a profession, with well-functioning institutions of discipline, will curb misconduct because moral behavior is an integral part of the identity of professionals — a self-image most are motivated to maintain."

Taking that first step to create a core set of principles so early in its infancy was fundamental to the success of the local government management profession. Today, those core principles are taught in MPA programs, reflected in local government management practices, and enforced in a peer review process governed by ICMA.

Second, the principles outlined in 1924 are timeless. Our commitment today — to integrity; public service; seek no favor; exemplary conduct in both personal and professional matters; respect the role and contributions of elected officials; exercise the independence to do what is right; political neutrality; serve the public equitably and governing body members equally; keep the community informed about local government matters; and support and lead our employees — comes from that first code.

Even the inspiration for the new focus on sustainability has its very roots in the last tenet of the 1924 code:

*A City Manager will be known by his works, many of which may outlast him, and regardless of personal popularity or unpopularity, he should not curry favor or temporize but should in a far-sighted way aim to benefit the community of today and of posterity.*

Over the past 85 years, the Code of Ethics has been revised seven times to make it more relevant to the conditions of the day as well as to strengthen principles that perhaps were losing meaning and visibility to the profession. There is little doubt that the code — debated,

**Go to page 3 for quiz answers**

## Calendar of Events

**NCLM Annual Conference**  
October 25-27, 2009  
Greenville

**NCCMA Winter Conference**  
Feb. 3-5, 2010  
Sheraton RTP  
Durham County

**ICMA Southeastern Summit**  
April 15-16, 2010  
Courtyard Nashville Downtown  
Nashville, Tenn.

**NCCMA Summer Seminar**  
June 24-26, 2010  
Sea Trail  
Sunset Beach, NC

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# Water finance workshop to be held Oct. 22

This course, to be held in Montreat on October 22, is designed for elected officials, managers, finance officers, and department heads, the workshop is co-sponsored by the Local Government Training Program at Western Carolina University and the Environmental Finance Center at the School of Government, UNC-Chapel Hill.

Program topics will include: setting water

rates in North Carolina, monitoring utility finances, finding funding for

your infrastructure projects, promoting conservation among utility customers, avoiding potential pitfalls in regional partnerships in order to reap the benefits, and integrating “green” into your operations.

To register, go to <http://www.efc.unc.edu/>



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[training/2009/hot\\_water.htm](http://www.efc.unc.edu/training/2009/hot_water.htm) .

The course will get underway around 8 a.m. with registration and will end at 4:45. The schedule includes breaks and lunch.

## Miller honored by ICMA, continued from page 1

to develop a technology plan that addresses a wide variety of service needs, from connectivity to information dissemination to departmental productivity improvements.

Assistant Town Manager Bruce Heflin said that Miller is able to lead and equally able and willing to support the leadership of others.

“She is smart, politically astute, a good communicator, a good listener and particularly adept at working effectively behind the scenes to advance the goals of the manager and the organization.”

### **Knightdale & McConkey nominated**

The town of Knightdale and Town Manager Gary McConkey were nominated at the ICMA conference for the Community Partnership Program Excellence Award (for a population less than 10,000) for East Wake Television. The winning program was from British Columbia.

### **Svara honored; Appalachian’s Hoffman nominated**

Jim Svara, professor and director for the Center for Urban Innovation at Arizona State University, was also honored by ICMA. Svara,

formerly head of the Masters of Public Administration program at North Carolina State University and a former associate member of the N.C. City and County Management Association, was honored with the Academic Award in memory of Stephen B. Sweeney.

Nominated for that award was Marvin Hoffman from Appalachian State University. Hoffman is the director of Appalachian’s MPA program as well.

## Ethics, continued from page 2

challenged, and amended over time — has been, along with the implementation of a strong enforcement mechanism, a crucial element in defining and sustaining the profession.

It’s a source of inspiration for leaders. As ICMA’s current president, David Limardi, ICMA-CM, noted “The ICMA Code of Ethics has provided a profound foundational framework for leadership with character for the past 85 years. The 100-year legacy of professional local government management, a legacy of ethical, transparent, efficient, and innovative leadership,

has relied upon the Code of Ethics to provide a moral leadership compass. The code hangs in my office as a reminder to me and all who enter there of the ideals upon which our democracy was built. We owe a debt of gratitude to those who had the foresight and courage to author this historic statement of ideals.”

As the profession [returned] to Montreal this month to launch a year-long recognition and celebration of the code, we have an opportunity to share and learn from our experiences. We all face those defining moments in time — do I do

what is easy or do I do what is right? When you reflect upon such a moment in your career, how do the values expressed in the ICMA Code of Ethics support your decision?

—Martha Perego, ICMA-CM  
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