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Afterword - It Has Been a Good Ride

Julian Conrad Juergensmeyer

Georgia State University College of Law, jjjuergensmeyer@gsu.edu

James Nicholas

University of Florida, jcnicholas@msn.com

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AFTERWORD
IT HAS BEEN A GOOD RIDE

Julian C. Juergensmeyer* and James C. Nicholas†

Chris Nelson has been an extremely important part of our professional lives since he, as he likes to say, “discovered” us in Montreal in 1985. (A close personal friend as well—but that is for another day and place.) We have discovered time and time again that he truly merits being internationally recognized as one of America’s top planners and urbanists. The articles in this Festschrift confirm that recognition.

But let’s go back to 1985. We (Jim and Julian, who were both then colleagues at the University of Florida) were conducting a workshop on how to “do” impact fees at the American Planning Association annual meeting in Montreal. After we had finished, a young man came up and introduced himself as a planning professor at Kansas State University. Both of us recognized him as an interested member of the audience since he had been one of the few to laugh at our jokes. He explained that he had to rush off to catch a plane but that he was very interested in impact fees, would like to collaborate with us, and would be in touch. We did indeed hear from him shortly thereafter and began collaborating on books and articles, co-teaching, conducting professional workshops and seminars, making scores of presentations, and offering professional consulting for attorneys, planners, and local governments. Our work together has spanned nearly 40 years!

Together with Chris, we wrote seven books, 13 articles, and were co-investigators for several university grants and contracts. The shocking thing to realize is that our collaborations include only the things he has done with one or both of us. Chris has produced more than 20 books, more than 300 articles, book chapters, and nationally distributed monographs, and nearly 100 grants and contracts totaling more than \$50 million. He has also founded more than a dozen planning programs and research centers at six universities, including creating what is presently the nation’s top-ranked online real estate program that is also the nation’s most diverse. In addition to his home unit in planning, Chris has had formal joint appointments in public administration at the University of New Orleans, public policy at Georgia Tech, finance at the University of Utah, and geography at the University of Arizona. He has also been an adjunct professor of social work at Southern University of New Orleans, a historically Black university, and adjunct professor of law at Georgia State University (more on that later). For presidents Bill Clinton and George Bush,

* Ben F. Johnson Emeritus Professor of Law, Georgia State University, and Emeritus Professor of Law, University of Florida.

† Emeritus Professor of Urban Planning and Law, University of Florida.

he served as a special advisor to HUD's Office of Policy Development and Research. Chris has served on innumerable commissions, committees, working groups, panels, and so forth. And he is generous with his time, having helped hundreds of governmental, civic, and professional groups address wide ranging challenges. Are there any planning academicians who have done as much or more?

Lists, of course, don't tell the whole story. Julian has had for the last 22 years the opportunity to co-teach with Chris many times. After 30 years at the University of Florida Law School, he moved to the Georgia State University Law School in Atlanta in 2000—one of the reasons being to work with Chris when he was then at Georgia Tech. For the next few years, before leaving for Virginia Tech, the University of Utah, and then the University of Arizona, Julian and Chris co-taught a growth management course that was cross listed by Georgia Tech and GSU with over a hundred Georgia Tech graduate planning and GSU law students. It was a wonderful experience for both them and their students. One thing Julian learned in almost every class session was how well Chris—though not a lawyer—not only understands planning law but can communicate with lawyers and law students about the law and planning overlap. Even after Chris left Atlanta he returned yearly or more often to teach in Julian's Land Use Control law class. An indication of the high esteem law students hold for Chris is that on numerous occasions over the years law students have asked him or Julian what law school he had graduated from, of course being none. As an aside, we note that Chris is a prolific writer for law journals in planning and urban policy. Anecdotally, only a few months before this issue was published, a professional planner who took the joint course in 2001 told Chris that it had shaped her professional life. It is also worth noting that thanks largely to Chris's efforts, a dual JD/Master of City and Regional Planning degree program was established by the Georgia Board of Regents between GSU and Georgia Tech. As far as we know it is the only such program between two universities in the country.

The three of us formed a triumvirate, often referring to ourselves as "The I Team," because of our impact fee work and borrowing from the then popular TV series "The A Team." We spread the gospel of growth management, infrastructure finance, and impact fees across the nation and even to foreign lands. Georgia Tech and the American Planning Association sponsored continuing education seminars that were conducted all over the United States in California (8 times), Colorado, the District of Columbia, Georgia (9 times), Florida (3 times), Hawaii, Illinois, New York, South Carolina (twice), Texas, and Washington state (3 times).

Together we proselytized impact fees in Canada, the United Kingdom (twice), and then on to Venice, Italy. Our theories have been presented not only in those countries but also Puerto Rico, Denmark, Brazil, and as far away as the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. As we noted at the time, it was tough work, but somebody had to do it. During these adventures, we were privileged to learn about those areas and from the attendees we learned more about our subject and gained more material for future publications.

But someone has had to look after Chris over the years. That responsibility often fell to Jim. He took Chris to the emergency room in Boston after an unfortunate exchange between a sharp clamshell and his tongue that required stitches. Jim also helped Chris recover after being mugged in Milan—though they still attended the opera that night because the perpetrators failed to take the most valuable items Chris had with him—tickets to La Scala. And Jim pulled Chris back from a busy London street just as he was looking left when he should have looked right, scolding Chris that we’ve lost too many Yanks that way. Between these escapades, Jim and Chris shared insights on comparative political economic theory, institutional behavior, and especially public choice outcomes often asking: “what were they thinking?”

As we have listed Chris’s accomplishments, we are confident readers will agree that IT HAS BEEN A GREAT RIDE FOR Chris alone and for the three of us together. Thank you, Chris, and congratulations on an incredible career—which is still going strong.