

## **Profiles in Leadership and Civic Success: Charleston SC and Knoxville TN**

**James Dossett**

As we begin to understand more of the workings of human society, it becomes obvious that among the best laboratories for studying the ways in which we live and play are the cities in which we live. These communities, ranging in size from the hundreds to the millions, offer rare glimpses into the motivations and perceptions that have made us the spectacular animals we have become. As we have evolved, so have our cities. And as we change, our cities certainly reflect those changes. Under this assumption, what better way to understand the changing nature of humans than to understand how we relate to the physical spaces in which we live? These changes can come from technical advances, as when steel construction methods and the invention of the elevator allowed us to build upwards to heights never before imagined, changing our urban landscapes forever. Or they can come from broader economic changes, as when the industrial revolution altered forever the political, social, and economic appearance of our cities.

Another aspect of our cities that demands our attention is when and why we see massive migrations of people into or out of our cities. Recognizing these migrations as they occur, and understanding the social, economic and political factors behind them, gives us the ability to tailor and construct our communities and cities to be more efficient, effective and attractive for residents and businesses alike. The question then arises: "What can we do to assure that our cities, and consequently our society survive these migrations and come out prosperous and healthy places to live?"

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### **Five Migrations**

As we enter the 21<sup>st</sup> century, we find ourselves in what has come to be known as the fifth migration in American history. The first migration, occurring from 1600-1775, was primarily a migration of Europeans seeking either religious freedom or economic success. This migration, centered in the Northeast, gave rise to such cities as New York and Boston and cemented them as places of economic opportunity and cultural diversity — a distinction that survives today. This migration was also characterized by those who took part — the young, the ambitious, and the tough — and this reputation is one that would stay with Americans throughout their history. After independence in 1776, hard times descended upon the new nation, and the 1780's saw the beginning of the second major U.S. migration, lasting until around 1890. The second migration, punctuated by the survey of the continent in 1787 and the depression of 1789, saw the same groups, a generation removed, heading West past the Ohio and into the vast interior of the virgin continent. In 1862, with the passage of the Homestead Act and the issuance of railroad land grants, this migration was fast-forwarded by the federal government, symbolizing the triumph of 19<sup>th</sup> century expansionist thought. Interestingly, the second migration was both native and foreign, with Americans, Europeans, and newly freed slaves blazing the trails west in search of wealth and social mobility. As in the first migration, it was a distinct lot who participated in this migration, perpetuating the image of the American as tough and ambitious; in their drive for economic success, these individuals closely tracked the prevailing attitudes and motivations of the earlier age of discovery, colonization and expansion.<sup>1</sup>

The third migration marks a distinct shift in U.S. migratory patterns in that the third migration saw the return of vast portions of the population to major urban areas. As the industrial revolution fully took hold in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, agricultural workers throughout the world began migrating en masse to the production centers of national economies seeking higher paying, more stable employment in factories and, for the first time, in the service sector. In 1920, the federal census revealed for the first time that a majority of Americans were living in urban areas — a stark contrast to the agrarian dreams of those such as

Thomas Jefferson. A second phase of this third migration came between 1940 and 1970 as millions of blacks left the South and the rural lifestyle for the West and Northeast, for new factory jobs resulting from the war effort; they also sought a chance to escape the discrimination and prejudice inherent in Southern life. This massive minority migration once again altered forever the social and racial makeup of all American cities, not just those of the American South.<sup>2</sup>

The fourth migration, undoubtedly, was initiated by the rise of the automobile in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. As automobiles became accessible to all strata of society, people began to move outwards, beginning the massive suburbanization of the United States and leading to the current, uniquely American, problem of sprawl. The automobile, however, was not the only factor in this massive flight to the periphery. The federal government, as it had in the second migration, facilitated this mass movement through two programs. The first, the interstate highway system, made virtually all parts of the nation fair game for development and, coupled with the 1934 creation of the Federal Housing Authority (FHA), created an effective demand for this uncontained growth. With the people, so went the jobs, and an era of urban degeneration began, especially in those areas where an industrial heritage was not firmly in place. This industrial flight was felt particularly hard in the American Southeast where antebellum agriculture had only recently been supplanted by industry.<sup>3</sup>

Beginning in the 1970's, a fifth American migration began. Accompanied by an energy crisis, a recession, and the withdrawal of the Federal government from urban affairs, this migration is symptomatic of the simultaneous increase in frustration over the lowered standards of living in American cities and the ever-increasing wealth and mobility of the American workforce. Similarly, this migration is unique in that it is not dominated by any single group or motivated by any technological advance, but is characterized instead by the unique social dynamics and implications behind this movement. Uniquely, the fifth migration is not a product of pure economics, but rather motivated by a combination of economic opportunity, cultural diversity, and ready access to those facilities (like airports, business centers, and recreation) which have become a fixture in our post-modern, Easy-

Bake culture. Unlike previous migrations, the fifth migration is comprised of Americans from nearly every stratum of American society. Young professionals and students are a major portion of this migration, searching not only for promising employment opportunities but for also a cultural, economic, and social diversity not found in the suburbs of Gen-X's upbringing.

As our population ages and the baby boom generation becomes the senior citizen population, we see an ever-increasing number of older people on the move as well — some moving out and many just moving around, seeking out factors such as a more agreeable climate or areas with tax codes more suited to a fixed income. Similarly, the fifth migration is heavily influenced by a middle-aged population seeking stable investments in high-value real estate whose value they perpetuate by their movement into speculated geographic areas of interest like the South and the Rockies. For example, between 1990 and 1996, Atlanta's population grew by more than half a million people, translating in more than 1,500 new Atlantans per week — a stunning rate of growth fueled by Atlanta's new prominence in regional, national and international business and finance. The South as a region has seen similar growth as well. Between 1990 and 1995, four of nine Americans had relocated. Though many were local relocations, with interstate relocation accounting for about 18.5% of all movers. While a small percentage, 18.5% of 107 million still equates to about 20 million interstate relocations. Interestingly, the South was the big gainer in population, gaining more than 2 million out-of-region residents in that same time frame while all other regions posted net population losses ranging from 261,000 in the West to 1.3 million in the Northeast.<sup>4</sup> Many of the features already discussed as attractive to the fifth migration are, similarly, present in many of the South's growing cities. Factors such as climate, low property values, low taxes, proximity to recreation, urban revitalization, and cultural opportunity and diversity are abundant in many quickly growing southern cities like Atlanta, Charlotte, and Nashville and, coupled with the new environment of electronic business — where high-priced, urban real estate is no longer a prerequisite to success — these cities have become magnets of the fifth migration.

As Americans became more affluent they became more mobile as well, and as lower-income and minority families gain access to the coveted suburbs, the migration out continues, creating a new area called by Wolf in *Hot Towns* the “ubiquitous exurbs,” communities beyond the suburbs but retaining many decentralized suburban characteristics. A positive trend in the fifth migration, however, is that many of those young mobile students and professionals are finding revitalized urban areas as attractive as their parents find the exurbs, so while the older move out, the young seem to be moving in. The question then becomes: if the young professionals are the future of our cities, what are they looking for and how do cities create such an environment in pre-existing physical spaces? Wolf’s answer to what those involved in the fifth migration are looking for is a surprisingly short and homogeneous list:

- 1) nearby recreation
- 2) upgraded environmental quality
- 3) security and safety
- 4) reduced living costs
- 5) low taxes
- 6) access to family
- 7) high quality cultural, medical, and educational institutions
- 8) good real estate investments
- 9) skilled labor and available jobs
- 10) high quality, safe public schools
- 11) an easily accessible regional airport<sup>5</sup>

What this list reveals are the motivations behind the fifth migration — security, culture, and opportunity — which are not unique to the fifth migration. What is unique however, is the importance of this migration within a slow-growth society, and the environmental factors and implications of this migration. Environmentally, the fifth wave is taking place in a post-modern, globalized, highly mobile, information-based world in which the catch phrases are no longer “*location, location, location*” but rather, “*connection, connection, connection*,” and high-

tech, high-dollar business can be conducted just as well from Paris, Kentucky as it can be from Paris, France. The implications for cities are profound. The fifth wave represents an opportunity for cities, large and small, to compete for the most affluent, educated, and successful sector of our population on a level never before seen. What this means for cities is that they must, in order to ensure their futures, engage in active programs to promote, revitalize, and attract desirable businesses and residents.

### **Urban Planning and Civic Leadership in the Southeast**

As this wave began in the 70's, cities in the Southeast, such as Atlanta and Charlotte, still recovering from industrial flight and the stigma of the civil rights movement, slowly came to realize the potential of the fifth migratory wave in revitalizing the economy, the population, and the prestige of the "land that time forgot." In turn, many Southern cities adopted a new strategy that would come to be known as place-marketing — that is, tailoring ones growth to meet the demands and expectations of your targeted demographic. In this case, the targeted group is the affluent and educated. Cities in the South, however, are not the only places looking to take advantage of this mass movement of educated and skilled workers. The globalization of the world economy combined with advances in telecommunications and transport has made every city competitive in this new market. Cities have been forced to change the way they do business and the way they present themselves to the world, as the world has become their market. Cities such as Charleston with its Spoleto Festival U.S.A. have responded to this changing demand, coupling with other world cities to present to the rest of the world an appearance of worldliness and cosmopolitan living. As with other cities around the world, such as Glasgow in the U.K., Southern cities were forced to reevaluate who they were and what they had to offer — why people would want to relocate, invest, or visit their cities. By asking these questions and by acting upon their answers, cities chose to become proactive in affecting their own futures rather than letting the future happen as the cities and their leaders made reactive adjustments. Likewise, cities were forced to change the way they do business. In this new era where all cities,

large and small, compete on a more level playing field, cities began to act more and more like the businesses they were trying to attract. Cities began to formulate an understanding of what they had to offer and whom their strengths should be offered to, actively marketing their unique characteristics to an increasingly educated and wealthy customer base. Likewise, cities began to see the value of strategic planning, that is, understanding the economic, human, and physical resources available to them, and planning to use those resources to create a better future for themselves and their children. As an extension of strategic planning, cities also began to adopt another idea previously unique to business, strategic market planning — a “proactive method for places to respond to the challenges of intensifying place competition...a guiding force in helping to develop a places future by empowering people to effectuate and better control their own destiny. As sellers of products, places can use this planning method to better understand who they are and what they can be.”<sup>6</sup>

While planning at the city level gives the municipal bureaucracy a direction in which to move, there are a few other essential elements to a place-marketing strategy that have been widely used by cities. First is the re-inventing or re-shaping of a city’s image. In the South, this often took the shape of changing public perception about the region as a whole. By selling itself as a vacation and tourist area, the South was able to shed some of its negative image resulting from a less than stellar civil rights record. All this has taken time, and it continues today in “Virginia is For Lovers,” and “Smiling Faces, Beautiful Places” campaigns, but has seen modest success culminating in the 1996 Summer Olympics in Atlanta, the self-proclaimed “Capital of the New South.” Economically, the South was able to recreate itself as an industrial manufacturing center by securing several auto manufacturing facilities in Tennessee (Saturn), South Carolina (BMW), and Kentucky (Toyota). Similarly, more and more high-tech and finance companies are calling the South home — Charlotte is known for its financial institutions and the Southern Appalachian area was designated a Technology Corridor, though this distinction is often dubious.

As with all other competitive endeavors, in the highly competitive business of selling and marketing places, some places win and some

places lose. While this new market is seen by many as a zero-sum game — one city's gain is another's loss — the South has generally benefited. This general success over the last twenty years can be attributed directly to two factors. First, the physical and human attributes of the South and its cities most closely matches Wolf's list of factors influencing relocation decisions among fifth-wavers. Secondly, many cities in the South, including Charleston, South Carolina and Knoxville, Tennessee, have been guided by city leaders who understand not only the processes involved in selling their cities but also display a charisma and vision which has made them effective community, social, and economic leaders. While the purely physical aspects of this success are easily identifiable and easily understood — a milder climate, less population density, an expanding infrastructure, etc. — it is the second factor, effective leaders, which demands more attention. The problem with attributing success to "leadership" or "vision," however, is that terms such as these are ambiguous and subjective and thus cannot be properly defined. Therefore, before any credit, or discredit, can be handed out to Southern civic leaders, an examination of what makes a leader effective and the procurement of these qualities in Southern leaders is essential.

So what makes a leader successful? Hundreds of books, studies, and journal articles have addressed this question with hundreds of different conclusions being drawn. The most successful studies of leadership have focused on two aspects of organizational leadership — first is the success of the organizations they lead, and second are the characteristics and skills the leaders of successful organizations display. This second aspect, the characteristics successful leaders display, is the focus of Kenneth Cadenhead and George Fischer's article "Leader as Artist," in which the authors draw parallels between successful leaders and successful artists. Their findings and assumptions are profound and lend clarity to the identifying of essential leadership characteristics. The first characteristic identified is "vision," the elusive and ambiguous quality that many claim to have but few seem to possess. To better understand the concept of vision, Cadenhead and Fischer liken the vision of a leader to the vision of Michelangelo when seeing a block of stone and exclaiming, "I see an angel imprisoned in that



stone, and I must free it!” The ability for a leader to understand the potential of an organization and to pursue those possibilities within an organizational framework is a hallmark of vision. Vision, however, must be better understood in the context of leading a highly diverse city and bureaucracy in a common, mutually beneficial direction. A leader with vision must not only have a vision himself; he must convince those around him of that vision and understand how to disseminate the goals of that vision to all levels of an organization.<sup>7</sup> Likewise, a leader must understand the tools he has to work with, he must understand the composition of his organization and how best to arrange his resources to perform tasks efficiently, effectively, and equitably. The leader must also understand the human component of his organization. A leader must be able to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of individual parts of his organization and arrange them in such a fashion that all parts of the organization are, and feel, a vital part of the organization.<sup>8</sup>

Another important aspect of leadership is perspective. A leader must first realize that his perspective is unique in that the leader of an organization, by design, is privy to more information than any of the constituent parts, providing a unique perspective from which an effective leader can develop a vision for the success of that organization. A leader must be able to translate this perspective and how it relates to the overall vision and the missions of the organization’s constituent parts.<sup>9</sup> Likewise, a leader must be able to adapt effectively to change both within the organization and within his vision for the future of the organization. Often times, it falls to the leader to be the initiator of change, which is not always easy inside pre-existing organizational structures, particularly in the public sector where status-quo and standard operating procedures are the rules bureaucrats live by. Initiating change can make many within this framework uncomfortable and adversarial, a situation in which a leader must rely upon the other tools in his kit — vision, perspective, etc. — to resolve. Change is an integral part of developing a city and must be first understood, then embraced. An effective leader anticipates and facilitates these steps within an organization in order to effect change in concordance with a well-defined mission.<sup>10</sup> Finally, a leader must be ready and willing to grow person-

ally and professionally. A good leader must understand that as he grows and experiences his surroundings more fully he must incorporate those experiences into a personal style of leadership that should change and grow while carrying the organization with him. Finally, Cadenhead and Fischer identify ten qualities identified with good leaders, and organizations:

1. Vision is essential.
2. A well-executed design is more likely to yield good results.
3. Relationships among constituent parts affects the whole.
4. Rules for effectiveness vary considerably.
5. Creativity brings freshness to process and product.
6. Style generally evolves with experience.
7. Conflict is inevitable.
8. Relationships with the outside world impact behavior.
9. Financial concerns impact performance.
10. Change is inevitable; planned change linked to vision is possible.

Clearly, the fifth migration in the U.S. is creating a huge relocation market, and clearly, cities throughout the world, and particularly the South, have been actively engaged in tailoring their physical, economic, and human environments to match what fifth-wavers say they want. Hence the massive boom in place-marketing and place-making in municipalities, states, and regions around the nation. So, if this strategy has been universally applied, why is success so hard to come by? Simply stated, there is a serious lack of competent leaders within the highest echelons of Southern municipal governments, particularly within the executive. With a few exceptions, Southern cities, though perhaps more economically prosperous, are still lacking a sufficient number of Wolf's characteristics of a successful fifth-wave city. The exceptions to this rule, however, are what demand focus, for while the same pre-existing organizational, economic, social, and cultural struc-

tures that have spelled doom for many cities have been utilized by competent leaders and either transformed into strengths or diversified out of prominence by thoughtful growth in new areas of business and industry. Therefore, it is my assertion that the varying degrees of success in re-inventing and re-creating Southern cities in a climate of young, affluent relocation can be attributed to the leadership characteristics displayed by Southern mayors. Those who have successfully incorporated Cadenhead's and Fischer's qualities of leadership into their styles have been those who have been most successful in re-creating their cities to match the needs and desires of fifth-wavers.

Two cities that have been able to create success for themselves, to varying degrees, behind competent leaders have been Charleston, South Carolina and Knoxville, Tennessee. Both cities saw hard times for a long time before things started to get better, and both cities have been forced to reevaluate their traditional roles in the regional, national, and international market. Both cities are college towns. The University of Tennessee, Knoxville is UT's largest campus with over 30,000 students and a highly diversified student body. Charleston is the home of a much smaller university, the College of Charleston, but the college's liberal influence on the town is evident and produces an enticing mixture of Southern tradition and fifth-wave culture and fashion, a trait that has not been ignored by marketers. Both cities were important within their states, but lacked any real significance in regional or national arenas and were all but invisible on the international economic radar. And, in the 1970's, amidst federal withdrawal, an energy crisis, and a failing economy, both cities began a self-evaluation and began to form strategic plans for their futures. Although federal funds had been withdrawn, both Charleston and Knoxville still relied heavily upon the federal government. Charleston was home of several key Navy facilities while Knoxville was supported through the Tennessee Valley Authority and the Oak Ridge weapons facilities, the birthplace of America's enriched, weapons grade fissionable material. And eventually, both Charleston and Knoxville lost many of these federal jobs in the eighties and nineties. But while Charleston and Knoxville both began to realize the potential and necessity in attracting fifth-wavers at about the same time, the two cities took very different paths,

with respectively different outcomes. It is these processes, and the people behind them that prove most valuable in evaluating the performance of these cities and their leaders.

### **Build It, And They Will Come**

In 1987, when Victor Ashe became mayor of Knoxville, the city was in the doldrums. The national economy had recovered from the recessions of the 1970's and early 1980's, but that recovery was slow to "trickle down" into small southern cities. Locally, coupled with liberal spending on grand downtown projects such as the World's Fair Park site (and its darkly ironic centerpiece, the SunSphere), that translated into high unemployment, a shrinking tax base, poor service delivery, and fiscal mismatch that poised the city on the brink of collapse. Taking the mayoral reigns from Randy Tyree in 1987 was certainly not an easy thing to do, but Ashe, often called "The Bulldog" for his focus and tenacity (a sculpture of a bulldog graces the outside of the mayor's office to remind visitors of whom they are dealing with), dove right in, took control, and began to make changes to the city.<sup>11</sup> One key element already identified as integral to success in leadership, vision, is important to note here. While Ashe certainly has a vision, as a visit to the city's website will suggest — it is graced with utopian visions of a 21<sup>st</sup> century Knoxville enclosed in glass, filled with muddled-faced residents pointing out to their muddled-faced children some great achievement of the city's fathers, just out of frame — many observers and residents remain unconvinced of Ashe's vision of Knoxville as a center for technology and trade. (For one thing, Knoxville's largest employer is the service sector.) What Ashe is banking on for his vision is the incoming dollars afforded to Knoxville as a federal Empowerment Zone, meaning millions of dollars for Ashe's revitalization projects, which are many. By all accounts, Ashe is a place-maker; that is, Ashe focuses on the spatial and visible realm of public service — revitalization, streetscapes, and redevelopment and re-imaging. What Ashe's detractors contend, on the other hand, is that his bulldog reputation and strict adherence to his vision tend to overshadow process concerns such as: "Who gets to have a say? How are issues debated? What is the framework for resolving disputes?"<sup>12</sup>

One cause openly championed by Ashe has been revitalization and beautification. Since the 70's, Knoxville's downtown has been floundering, and numerous attempts at revitalization have failed. Victor Ashe, however, with the backing of Empowerment Zone money, has embarked on what translates into a mayor's shopping spree. One of the most striking examples of this has been the \$160 million World's Fair Park and Convention Center project. The scope of this project is almost beyond belief for a city with a population of only 180,000 and growing only at around 6% since the 1990 census. It includes:

- Several underground parking facilities
- A Winter Garden glass enclosed, year-round conservatory/greenhouse
- Renovation of existing convention facilities
- An entertainment and restaurant facility
- A walkover of Henley Street, with "shoppertainment" facilities and eateries
- A 415-room hotel
- A 33 story office building with 50,000 square feet of retail space and the top five floors devoted to penthouse residences
- 157 high-tech apartments designed to appeal to technical professionals
- Revitalization of Market Square
- Reuse and renovation of the SunSphere
- Construction of 88 carriage-style houses as a residential transition between Fort Sanders and World's Fair Park<sup>13</sup>

For any city, place-making plans of this magnitude would be impressive, but for a city of Knoxville's proportions, this is monumental. But these aren't the only plans already in the works. Ashe is also spearheading a multi-million dollar waterfront revitalization, the transformation of the Old City, a previously undesirable location, into a mini-downtown, and the recycling of the TVA building as a "Digital Crossing" designed to attract high-tech firms. Clearly, Ashe is an ad-

herent to the “build it and they will come” school of thought, investing in projects like the Women’s Basketball Hall of Fame which graces the Riverview with a forty-foot basketball and hoop, and the Gateway Center, an all but invisible site designed to pay homage to the concentration of high-tech industry in the area — perhaps to be housed in the multitude of new office space and “high-tech” apartments. What this all points to for Victor Ashe, and for Knoxville, is a date in the not-so-distant future when Ashe and his organization will face the music — whether it is a waltz or a death march, only time will tell. But, if history is any indicator, Ashe’s focus on his vision, his inflexibility, and a growing cry of inequity over the process may leave the flowers in the new Winter Garden withering and eateries in the Henley Street “Walk-over” moving back out to the suburbs with their sprawling malls and food courts. Or, it could pay off, and Knoxville in 2020 could be unrecognizable to those of us remember with longing empty downtown streets and late nights at the Mercury Theater.

Fourteen years later, the verdict is still out on Ashe’s effectiveness as a leader, despite an unprecedented fourth term and an impressive public approval rating. While Knoxville has seen some very real effects of Ashe’s programs, among them a greatly improved bond rating, lower unemployment, lower crime, and a marked improvement in service delivery, Knoxville’s main problem still lies in providing the two major factors that entice high-tech firms to an area — a skilled workforce and a high quality of life. Perhaps Knoxville and Victor Ashe should focus more on the development of their human resources first, and pursue an, historically, more successful “build it because they’re coming” strategy.

### **Build It — They RSVP’d**

Charleston and its mayor, Joseph P. Riley, Jr., have taken a vastly different approach to the development and diversification of Charleston’s economy and image. Elected in 1975 and serving an unheard of seventh term, Riley brought with him, from the beginning, a vision of where and what he wanted Charleston to become, and to a large extent, has succeeded. So what has made Riley’s vision and Charleston’s development so much more successful than its Appala-

chian counterpart? The first factor in this is the composition of Riley's vision. From the beginning, Riley recognized the potential of the historic significance of Charleston and has convinced the community of it as well, ushering in some of the toughest historic preservation codes in the country. Riley saw how Charleston's preserved history along with its proximity to some of the East's most pristine beaches could add up to a substantial tourist business — Riley's commitment to this vision, and his ability to mobilize local, state, and federal resources, have all made Riley's endeavor wildly successful.

Riley's tenure has not been without hard times, however. In 1989, Hurricane Hugo tore through Charleston, flooding most of the city and causing billions of dollars of damage on and around the peninsula that forms the historic center of the city. In the early nineties, Charleston suffered what could have been a crippling blow when massive defense cuts closed the Charleston Naval Base and Naval Shipyard, a major employer and source of income for the area. Riley, however, was able to soften the blow through his charisma and his ability to mobilize and solicit resources from the public and private sectors. Likewise, Riley's ability to adapt his vision to the changing environment was critical in his efforts to minimize the effects of these potentially catastrophic events. Another important factor in Riley's success as a leader in Charleston has been his grasp on the composition of his organization. Above all things, Riley is a master of human relations, able to motivate and administrate, and proudly touts himself as a "Mayor as an Urban Designer."<sup>14</sup> And design is just what Riley has done. Projects of revitalization and beautification around the city are monuments to Riley's vision — Waterfront Park, the South Carolina Aquarium and Marina District, as well as an impressive record in improving the city's low-income housing stock through the construction of scattered-site public housing, some of which actually have attracted private redevelopment. Similarly, Riley has shown a dedication to preserving and creating green spaces in Charleston, saying parks "give oxygen to the city, soften the hard edges of urban life, invigorate us, give us peace and repose. No city has too many."<sup>15</sup>

In pursuit of vision, Riley has been careful not to ignore other, more meat-and-potatoes issues of urban management like service

delivery, economic diversification, and crime reduction. When Riley hired Reuben Greenberg to be chief of police in Charleston, the decision was met with some skepticism, but Riley's choice of Greenberg has been one of his wisest decisions to date. Greenberg's retro-style of community policing has led to a significantly lowered crime rate and significantly higher trust of law enforcement in traditionally hostile neighborhoods. Greenberg's efforts have also brought national praise and publicity, exposing to fifth-wavers the progressive styles of leadership in crime prevention at work in Charleston. Riley, as well, has received national acclaim for his efforts, only bolstering Charleston's emerging, progressive image.

Another unsung Riley success has been his tireless devotion to diversify Charleston's regional economy. While tourism represents a substantial chunk of city revenue, Riley has not ignored other tried and true income sources, such as Charleston's port facility (which consistently ranks in the top ten busiest in the nation); nor has he been content in letting tourism and shipping dominate Charleston's economic landscape. The development of the "Digital Corridor" has seen substantial success in attracting firms like Blackbaud, the nation's leading supplier of non-profit network and data software. Riley has also been a staunch supporter of culture and the arts in Charleston, drawing in important regional, national, and international cultural festivals and expositions. The most notable is Spoleto Festival U.S.A., an arts and culture festival held every spring designed to bring to the U.S. the diversity of this Italian art festival. Spoleto not only brings international attention: attendance has also risen steadily and, in the last year, the festival has begun to operate in the black, becoming a truly self-sustaining cultural attraction for Charleston.

While support and praise for Riley are widespread, there are voices of dissent in the city. The most visible, Councilman Kwadjo Campbell, maintains that while Riley has brought success to Charleston, the economic, social, and physical costs have been passed on to the poor and the black. A walk through some of Charleston's redeveloped neighborhoods is testament to the gentrification of the peninsula. Unfortunately, gentrification in Charleston has become a regrettable by-product of Charleston's unprecedented growth.



### **Comparisons**

Descriptions aside, a more analytical approach must be utilized to truly understand both Riley's and Ashe's success. To understand how the policies and personal characteristics of these men relate to the success of their cities, we need to analyze their leadership in three areas — political, economic and social.

Socially, Ashe and Riley face drastically different populations. Charleston, for instance, has a rich African-American history and a considerable African-American population — 34% according to the latest census information.<sup>16</sup> Ashe and Knoxville, on the other hand, contains less than half of this percentage of African-Americans (16.2%).<sup>17</sup> This disparity in minority population, therefore, means that Riley's success has relied more heavily upon the support of the African-American population, while Ashe's reliance upon minorities is much less significant. While both men are relatively popular among their minority constituencies, concerns are still regularly voiced over the equity of their policies, particularly in Charleston where Riley's dedication to historic preservation, revitalization, and a new Cooper River Bridge project has led to a mass exodus of African-Americans from the Charleston peninsula in the face of rising property values, increased social division and the gentrification of traditionally black neighborhoods and businesses. In Knoxville, Ashe's success in bringing a federal Empowerment Zone has meant that the traditionally African-American sector of East Knoxville (a significant portion of the Empowerment Zone) has seen a major injection of revitalization capital, therefore perpetuating Ashe's positive image among Knoxville's African-American population. This influx of capital into East Knoxville, however, creates the opportunity for speculative investment, rising property values, and the specter of the exile through gentrification of Knoxville's African-American population. As with Riley, Ashe's dedication to his vision of a revitalized Knoxville has the potential to become racially and economically exclusive.

Another important social factor to consider in both Knoxville and Charleston is the attitude that both leaders and their organizations hold towards university students. While both leaders recognize the potential human resource pool created by these institutions, both have

regularly championed policy that excludes and alienates the university populations. In Knoxville, a ban on outdoor music, the requisition of World's Fair Park (a popular site for musical and cultural events) for the construction of yet another convention center, and a ban on "cruising the Strip" (an eight-block piece of Cumberland Avenue and the center of student entertainment and social interaction) has led many UTK students to perceive Knoxville as hostile to their demographic resulting in many of the university's graduating students seeking employment elsewhere. Two policies in Charleston that have had similar effects have been the new 2:00 am bar closing law, explicitly aimed at late-night university revelers, and Charleston parking policies. The bar closing law, though now temporarily not in effect due to legal battles, is testament to Riley's, and the city's, determination to hide this significant and important segment of the population from visitors and residents alike. Likewise, the city's denial of the College of Charleston's request to build a multi-story parking facility and continuing meter price hikes have made Charleston a frustrating area for out-of-state and local students alike to have cars and their cherished mobility. And while much of the aforementioned behavior (late-night revelry, increased traffic, and noise) can certainly be deemed a burden in attracting new residents and businesses, the universities and the students that comprise them represent an important economic, social, and cultural attraction for both Knoxville and Charleston. Thus, a balance must be continually maintained between preserving that vital portion of the city for and at the same time hiding its loud, inebriated college underbelly from aging Baby-Boomers and their parents considering Southern cities as potential areas of relocation. Attaining such a balance is certainly not an easy task, but a task that both Ashe and Riley must continue to work towards without undermining the support and presence of any productive and potentially lucrative segment of its population.

While all of these social policies are interesting in themselves, the more important factor is how these policies reflect both Riley's and Ashe's leadership qualities. For Cadenhead and Fischer, these policies are classic examples of both leaders' inadequacy in incorporating all sectors of their constituencies into their visions. Likewise, such poli-

cies point to an inability or unwillingness to incorporate the demographic changes occurring within their cities and, more importantly in this context, in their visions of the future of their cities.

Politically, both men have been wildly successful in their posts. In this arena, both Riley and Ashe have used their political savvy and their ability to convey their visions to bring in huge amounts of public and private capital to their cities. In Charleston and Knoxville alike, the tenures of both mayors are testament to their unique abilities to convey their vision to the public, present a united organizational structure, adapt to changing political environments, and, in the end, get the votes needed to remain in office. However, electoral success is not the only political arena in which these leaders have shown promise. In Charleston, for example, one of Riley's recent achievements has been the securing of massive amounts of state and federal money to construct a \$631 million bridge to replace the aging Cooper River bridges. Not only was Riley successful in securing these funds, but also was able to incorporate his design vision into the final product. Likewise, Riley has been able to secure these funds at relatively little cost to the city (approximately \$75 million over 25 years). As in Charleston, Victor Ashe's political success goes well beyond his fourteen-year tenure as the city's chief executive. Ashe's crowning achievement has been his ability to entice federal funds to the city through the federal Empowerment Zone, bringing in over \$700 million to some of Knoxville's most distressed areas plus the opportunity for neighborhoods and business to access millions more in low or no-interest federal loans for projects such as neighborhood and downtown revitalization and brownfield rejuvenation and reuse. Once again, however, questions are being raised in Knoxville on the equity of the dispersal of this money. In both cases, both mayors have shown that the ability to organize and mobilize their organizations and resources to accumulate huge amounts of federal money.

Finally, a look at the economics of both cities and the economic policies of their mayors will complete this analysis of both the leaders and the outcomes of their tenures in office. As previously stated, both Charleston and Knoxville have seen hard times and both have seen the potential of fifth-wavers, the information age, and the

globalization of the world economy. While this potential exists for most every city, Charleston and Knoxville are trying in earnest, and to some extent succeeding, in taking advantage of these unique opportunities. In Charleston, Riley and the city have aggressively pursued tourism as their niche industry and have succeeded in generating millions from tourism accounting for nearly 70% of the city's revenue. This growth has been fueled by Charleston's and Riley's dedication to historic preservation, but has not come without cost. For example, the high costs associated with complying with Charleston's tight historical codes has meant that low-income and minority residents and businesses have had increasing economic trouble in revitalizing their neighborhoods, thus opening the door to high-priced speculative real estate investors and an unspoken policy of peninsular gentrification. The question Riley, and the city, must ask themselves is "Growth at what cost?" What value does the city place on its racial and cultural diversity and how does gentrification change the dynamics of the city? Tourism, while Charleston's most prominent breadwinner, has not been the city's only economic focus. In the last twenty years, Charleston's Marathon container port facility has become the second largest on the East Coast and the fourth largest in the nation, accounting for millions in revenue for the city, most of this growth being fueled by Riley's commitment to both the port and economic diversification.

Knoxville, on the other hand, has had a much harder road to hoe. Tourism, for example, is virtually non-existent, with the exception of the draw from UT athletics — nearby Gatlinburg is the main tourist draw in the region, bringing millions of visitors and dollars of which Knoxville sees very little. Just because huge tourist dollars aren't available hasn't stopped Knoxville and Ashe from trying — as evidenced by the development of the Knoxville Museum of Art, the Women's Basketball Hall of Fame, the riverfront revitalization program, and numerous other "tourist" attractions. However, while Knoxville and Ashe have attempted to capture a portion of the tourism market, it has certainly not been the pillar of their vision. Ashe's dedication to attracting high-tech, clean industry and the demographic it brings along is evident through his spending and revitalization program for downtown — encouraging and underwriting housing, office

space, and recreation aimed at high-tech employees and employers (the mainstay of Ashe's vision for the new Knoxville). And while this has been mildly successful in the last decade, it is honestly too early to tell if Ashe's vision will be successful.

So what does this all say about Riley and Ashe, Charleston and Knoxville and their respective futures? For both cities, serious decisions must be made about where the cities want to go in the next twenty years. For Charleston, economic success has been achieved and the question is now "How much more do we want to grow, and at what cost?" Recently, backlash against tourism and expanding the port facilities have been serious obstacles to Riley's vision, indicating that perhaps the vision of City Hall is not necessarily the vision of the community. If Riley and Charleston plan to continue to be successful, questions of equity, fairness and representation must be addressed and perhaps Riley's vision for Charleston will need to be altered or rethought in order to assure the continued diversity, approval, and multi-dimensional consensus necessary for fair and equitable growth. Knoxville, on the other hand, with its very different social, political and economic situation, must begin to focus on many of the same issues. And while Knoxville's economic future is still up in the air, it is time for Knoxville and Ashe to begin to refine their vision to match the changing economic, social, and political landscape of the city and the region. Now that plans are in place for Knoxville's economic rebirth, the city and its leader must begin to adapt their styles and visions in order to assure that all of Knoxville's population is represented fairly and equitably.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Peter Wolf, *Hot Towns: The Future of the Fastest Growing Communities in America* (Rutgers University Press, 1999), p. 10.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>3</sup> Wolf, *Hot Towns*, p. 11

<sup>4</sup> G. Scott Thomas, "South is a Winner in U.S. Migration," *The Business Journal*, November 17, 2000, p. 17.

<sup>5</sup> Wolf, *Hot Towns*, p. 38.

<sup>6</sup> Phillip Kotler, Donald Haider and Irving Rein, "There's No Place

Like our Place,” *The Futurist*, November-December 1993, p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> Kenneth Cadenhead and George Fischer, “Leader As Artist,” *The Journal of Leadership Studies* 7 (2000), p. 77.

<sup>8</sup> Cadenhead and Fischer, “Leader As Artist,” p. 78.

<sup>9</sup> Cadenhead and Fischer, “Leader As Artist,” p. 79.

<sup>10</sup> Cadenhead and Fischer, “Leader As Artist,” p. 81.

<sup>11</sup> Patrick Rains, “Politics With Bite,” *American City and County* 109 (1994), p. 62.

<sup>12</sup> Terry S. Szold, “Merging Place-Marketing and Process in Local Practice,” in Lloyd Rodwin and Bishwapriya Sanyal (eds.), *The Profession of City Planning* (Center for Urban Policy Research, 2000), p. 37.

<sup>13</sup> City of Knoxville Website, “City of Knoxville, Development Projects,” Knoxville, TN. <[www.ci.knoxville.tn.us/development/downtown.asp](http://www.ci.knoxville.tn.us/development/downtown.asp)>

<sup>14</sup> Neal R. Peirce, “Charleston’s Joe Riley: The Mayor as City Designer,” *Nation’s Cities Weekly*, January 10, 1994, p. 9.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: Charleston City, South Carolina* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000).

<sup>17</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Profile of General Demographic Characteristics: Knoxville City, Tennessee* (U.S. Government Printing Office, 2000).

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