



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949 - 1999

Technical advice and municipal progress

BY ROB PARKINSON
MTAS Intern

In the years before the Municipal Technical Advisory Service was conceived and founded, national events were drastically shaping the future of Tennessee's cities.

The rapid economic, industrial, and cultural changes that were sweeping the country during the post-World War II era created new challenges for the states' municipalities. Tennessee was affected more than most states by the emergence of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

This new influx of federal dollars, whether from huge projects like TVA or World War II military contracts, coupled with the steady migration into the city limits had a tremendous impact on the cities and towns of Tennessee. How cities would respond to the new needs and pressures they faced would loom large in the resurrection of the Tennessee Municipal League and, soon after, the move to establish MTAS.

The immediate factors that led to MTAS' creation rested squarely on the shoulders of two men — Luther Gulick and Herb Bingham. These contrasted men — one at the zenith of his distinguished career in public administration and the other just beginning his storied crusade to improve Tennessee's municipalities — would meet with a grand idea in the spring of 1949.

Considered by many as the father of modern municipal government, Gulick, a member of President Roosevelt's administration, was invited to speak at TML's 1948 annual convention on municipal management's future needs.



Herb Bingham addresses an early Tennessee Municipal League conference.

Gulick's keynote address, "Technical Advice and Municipal Progress," laid a foundation for a technical advisory service. It was the ideological birth of MTAS.

According to Gulick, "What each city requires in meeting technical administrative problems is the advice and assistance of a well-qualified and experienced man who can see with his own eyes what the problem is in its local setting and then help in finding and installing the solution and showing the responsible officials of the town or city how to proceed."

Gulick's answer to municipal administrative problems was MTAS. "There is a solution for this problem which I want to outline for your consideration today. It is the establishment by the state government of a local government technical advisory service for Tennessee. I would envision such a service as set up either in

the Department of Finance and Taxation or in the office of the comptroller or at the state university."

Gulick concluded with a plea that would not go unheeded. "If even half of what I have said makes sense, might it not be time for you and the Legislature and the leaders of this state to put high on the agenda for 1949 the establishment in Tennessee of a local government technical advisory service?"

Gulick had publicly called for the establishment of the Municipal Technical Advisory Service. It would now be in the hands of the capable young director of the revitalized Tennessee Municipal League to bring life to Gulick's request.

Editor's Note: Rob Parkinson worked as an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at the University of Tennessee. This is the first article of a series.

Reflections of 50 years of service.



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949 - 1999

Support staff is foundation of MTAS

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

The diverse and talented support personnel are integral to the Municipal Technical Advisory Service. The large staff runs the gamut from those who would have been titled "clerk-typists" in the 1950s (called "word processing specialists" today) to highly specialized positions like office managers and administrative services assistants. Beginning in July 1950, when Wendell Russell came on board as the first administrative assistant, MTAS consultants have worked beside an ever-growing group of indispensable professional aides and office managers.

Unquestionably, the anchor of this group was Administrative Secretary Ann Lowe. Hired in 1956 as a clerk-typist, Lowe dedicated more than four decades to MTAS before retiring in 1998. Lowe was a central figure in all but seven of MTAS' 50 years. Office work underwent nearly revolutionary changes during Lowe's years with the agency. She described the differences in office productivity before the computer age.

"I took my typing test on [former Legal Consultant] Gene Puett's old Royal manual typewriter, and I still have that original test. ... Then in the later years, especially on your ordinances and codification, we went to the CPT computer, our first introduction to the computer. ...," Lowe said. "One of the big machines was the Address-O-Graph for doing envelopes. We kept a list of city officials, and it was like a newsroom. We had drawers that held different type styles — little metal plates that were 3 inches by 2 inches that you physically inserted into the machine,



Pictured above are members of the Knoxville support staff in the early 1990s. Seated (left to right) are: Armintha Loveday, program resource specialist; Barbara Benson, former information systems operator; and Judy Updegraff, former accounting clerk. Standing (left to right) are: Ann Lowe, former administrative secretary; and Debbie Linn, former senior editorial assistant. Loveday is still on staff and has been with MTAS 21 years.

then pulled down a handle for each letter. So, for every address that changed, you used a new steel plate. And you had to ink and hand-feed your envelopes. That's how we did our mailing list back then."

Other key people who have made various organizational and administrative operations run smoothly over the years have been Mary Bush, Flora Williams, Armintha Loveday, Brenda Moss, Claudia Walsh, and many others. They've managed the offices across Tennessee, handled countless phone calls, forwarded city requests to the appropriate consultants, completed mounds of paperwork, and performed a myriad of other essential tasks that keep MTAS func-

tioning.

The support staff members have helped bring MTAS the success it enjoys today. Without their dedication, the agency would not be able to complete its mission and serve Tennessee's municipalities. This group has been as vital in directing MTAS' path as the organization's most prominent consultants and executive directors.

Author Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at UT. This is a yearlong series of articles chronicling MTAS' 50 years of serving Tennessee cities.



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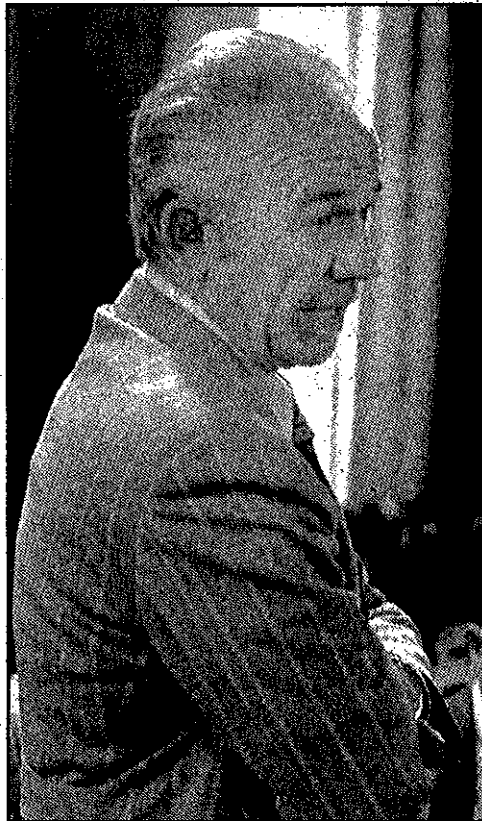
Modes of requests change, but quality service remains the same

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

Municipal Technical Advisory Service consultants are highly trained experts in their fields, but they aren't telepathic. They can't fix a city's problem unless they're *told* about a city's problem. So, local government leaders have been responsible for requesting MTAS' help since the agency's beginning.

In many respects, only the medium that cities use to make requests has changed in the past 50 years. Municipal officials once wrote letters formally asking for advice. They now rely on e-mail and fax machines. Technology has sped this process, but many requests mirror those that consultants placed on 3-by-5 note cards in the 1950s. If the original project-tracking system had survived until today, a tower of about 40,000 cards would break through the agency's ceiling. Now, MTAS experts record requests on high-tech computer programs.

A consultant's memory can be compared to that of a busy doctor who has seen so many patients that all the ailments and injuries have blurred. For many consultants, the requests have simply run together. Thousands of identical ques-



Bob Hutchinson (in 1972) was the first vice president for Public Service and Continuing Education at the University of Tennessee and its Institute for Public Service agencies, such as MTAS.

tions from different cities have simply been forgotten. Still, some projects prominently stick in each consultant's mind, like a hotly contested sales tax referendum or a divisive utility rate hike.

Like the sizes of cities that MTAS experts serve, the requests vary from small to large. Consultants might spend as little as two hours on one project while dedicating 700 hours to another. Furthermore, local officials who see their neighboring municipalities implement successful programs developed by MTAS often ask the agency for similar projects for their own cities.

Regardless of how municipal leaders reach MTAS — via the 1950's "snail mail" or today's lightning-quick computers — technology has never altered the agency's mission: helping Tennessee's cities improve their ability to govern effectively and intelligently.

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Reflections of 50 years of service



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949 - 1999

UT and MTAS are indelibly linked

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service's affiliation with the University of Tennessee grew stronger when UT's Institute for Public Service (IPS) was created in 1971. Previously supervised by the University Extension and Continuing Education Division, MTAS' ties with UT were minimal. They consisted mostly of administrative and funding issues. This gap narrowed when the new public service arm assumed oversight of the city advisory service and three other agencies. MTAS and the Center for Government Training, the Center for Industrial Services, and the County Technical Assistance Service fell under an umbrella that specialized in their field — serving Tennessee governments. IPS added another advantage to MTAS' visibility and prestige: It was an integral part of a department that reported directly to the University of Tennessee's president.

Robert Hutchinson first headed IPS. Its link to the Municipal Technical Advisory Service was bolstered 18 years later. Former MTAS Municipal Information Consultant Sammie Lynn Puett rose to vice president for public service, continuing education, and university relations, taking the helm of IPS in 1989. Puett's leadership and IPS' burgeoning strength pulled MTAS closer to the university, but the agency had always benefited from its association with UT.

When MTAS was formed in 1949, it was attached to the University of Tennessee to shelter it from external political agendas and influences. The UT connection also added clout to the field consultants: they represented the University of Tennessee. Seen as quasi-faculty, MTAS consultants had stature and authority in the eyes of city officials. They lacked partisanship, and this added to their respectability. City officials statewide knew



The creation of the Institute for Public Service in 1971 helped strengthen the bond between the Municipal Technical Advisory Service and University of Tennessee. IPS is now under the leadership of Sammie Lynn Puett, pictured here with former TML President Roy Worthington, former mayor of Manchester. IPS has eight agencies, one of which is the Municipal Technical Advisory Service.

that MTAS wasn't a puppet for any governmental bodies or political parties. Consultants could be counted on for advice that was in a city's best interest.

MTAS' framework has greatly expanded since 1949. Several new specialties have expanded the consultant roster nearly tenfold. The organization's administrative staff has also grown along with MTAS. The agency is fully equipped to help Tennessee cities in areas unheard of in the 1950s. And MTAS' parent organizations—the Tennessee Municipal League and the University of Tennessee—give MTAS support and leadership in return for quality service and able assistance.

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service is following the course its visionary founders charted half a century ago: an agency staffed by well-trained, highly educated, and experienced municipal experts who guide cities to a better tomorrow.

This is the final installment in a year-long series celebrating MTAS' 50th anniversary. A former intern at the agency, Rob Parkinson, wrote the 70-page text. MTAS Communications Consultant Carole Graves created the Tennessee Town & City series and organized the excerpts. She also served as photo editor. MTAS Writer/Reporter Mary Beatty edited the columns.

Reflections of 50 years of service



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Herb Bingham in 1946

MTAS was Bingham's brainchild

BY ROB PARKINSON
MTAS Intern

It was the personage of Herb Bingham that made MTAS a reality in 1949. Bingham's position as the head of the newly resurrected Tennessee Municipal League gave him insight into the needs of multiplying Tennessee cities.

The idealistic Bingham saw the need for new government leadership and technical assistance. After only three short years as TML's director, the young Bingham made the necessary political connections and landed the bill in the General Assembly that legally established the Municipal Technical Advisory Service.

Bingham began his 37-year career with TML on May 1, 1946. He was 29 years old and was still in World War II service at Millington Naval Air Base.

The new TML head had earned a political science degree from Southwestern in 1938 and a master's in economics from Vanderbilt University in 1940.

through the unprecedented prosperity that followed America's victory over totalitarianism. In the words of Bingham's protégé and successor, Joseph Sweat, "Bingham hung up his blue coat and trousers, put on a business suit, and joined that battle to save urban America. He didn't know it then, but he had stepped out of the lesser battle and into the greater one."

In a 1989 interview in *Tennessee Town & City*, Bingham described his early days on the job. "I and others worked very hard to create a statewide organization. By 1947, I had traveled over 25,000 miles meeting with city councils, legislators, and appearing on radio. But the real key to the '46 - '47 success was my belief that elected officials were essential to success in state Legislatures."

During Bingham's first years with TML, he pushed to create a technical advisory service. Ever the consummate politician, Bingham knew that he needed a respected authority figure to sign on to his request for an independent technical advisory service. If state legislators were going to



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The 1949 Senate Bill 607 created MTAS a half century ago

BY ROB PARKINSON
MTAS Intern

"A bill to be entitled: An act to establish a Municipal Technical Advisory Service in the University of Tennessee; to provide an appropriation therefore and for expenditure thereof; to prescribe the objectives and duties of such service."

Thus read the introduction of Senate Bill 607. Gov. Gordon Browning signed the act on April 15, 1949, and legally established MTAS.

The bill, sponsored by six senators from across the state, outlined the following duties and goals of this unique organization:

"It shall be used for studies and research in municipal government, publications, educational conferences and attendance thereat and in furnishing technical, consultative, and field services to municipalities in problems relating to fiscal administration, accounting, tax assess-



Gov. Gordon Browning

ment and collection, law enforcement, improvements and public works, and in any and all matters relating to municipal government."

The assembly also addressed how to fund the technical advisory service. From its very inception in the spring of 1949, MTAS has depended on two sources of revenue. Originally part of the University of Tennessee's Division of University Extension, MTAS was awarded a share of the division's general budget. To supplement this appropriation, the Legislature provided that a small percentage of the municipalities' share of the state sales tax would also fuel the Municipal Technical Advisory Service.

The combination of postwar changes in Tennessee and the foresight of TML Director Herb Bingham resulted in the Municipal Technical Advisory Service. After that, it was up to a small group of technical experts to build the bureaucratic structure that the Legislature had merely sketched out.

Note: This is the third installment in a yearlong series of articles celebrating MTAS' 50th anniversary.

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First director hired, operational framework built

BY ROB PARKINSON

Former MTAS Intern

A month and a day after the General Assembly approved MTAS' creation, the gears of actually fashioning the organization began to turn. In the South College Hall office of University Extension Division Dean F.C. Lowry, a group of University of Tennessee professors and administrators came together to discuss the beginnings of the Municipal Technical Advisory Service. This group elected a permanent sitting advisory council consisting of: Charles White, professor of business administration; John Knox, professor of sociology; Charles Miller, law professor; George Hickox, engineering professor; Lowry; Herb Bingham; and Lee Greene, political science professor. The council elected Greene to serve as the first chairman. He would exert powerful influence on MTAS' future staff.

The first order of business that faced the MTAS Advisory Council was filling the executive director position. Greene, however, already had given the matter some consideration. He recommended Gerald Shaw of the Tennessee Valley Authority.

According to the minutes from that early meeting, "It was the consensus of opinion that Mr. Shaw would be an excellent choice, chiefly for three reasons: his demonstrated ability to get along with people, his familiarity with conditions in this state, and the fact that he is known personally by several members of the committee and therefore would not have to be hired on the basis of a 'paper' record."

Shaw received both his bachelor's and master's degrees from the University of Tennessee. He began his career in municipal government in Ashland, Ky., in 1934, and he served as city manager of Hazard, Ky., and Big Stone Gap,



Gerald Shaw, first MTAS director

Va. Shaw's relationship with the state of Tennessee began in 1940, when he accepted the city manager's position in Columbia. After two years, he joined the Tennessee Valley Authority as a consultant and researched municipal government problems. Through his experiences with UT, Tennessee government, and TVA, Shaw more than qualified as an excellent candidate for executive director. The council appointed him to head the new Municipal Technical Advisory Service in the summer of 1949.

The first few months of a brand new agency are normally fraught with disorganization and chaos. The infancy of MTAS was no different, as Shaw "started on the tedious process of creating a completely new, working organization."

The executive director began his search for qualified consultants. At the end of his first monthly report, Shaw explained what he saw as MTAS' most immediate needs. In his words, "During the first month, attention has been devoted primarily to getting the Municipal Technical Advisory Service established and integrated within the university's organizational structure. This preparatory work sets the stage

for proceeding to the next phase of the development of MTAS: the employment of certain key personnel as specialists." Shaw recommended that five consultants be hired in the order of greatest need. He saw three — legal, finance, and engineering/public works — as the most significant positions "if the advisory service is to be able to furnish technical assistance on a level of professional competence." The fourth, a public administration consultant, would be necessary "as soon as the first three are well-integrated into the organization and their responsibilities and work are defined." Shaw deemed the fifth, public safety, a luxury. He said that it "may not be required," and should be "deferred until a definite need is demonstrated."

MTAS, according to Shaw's vision, would be a very direct bureaucracy. In the organizational chart drawn in his third week on the job, the executive director designed a simple flow of responsibility. The five consultants, potentially with some future assistants, would report directly to the executive director, while the appropriate members of the diverse advisory council oversaw their work. For example, the accountability of completing requests would eventually fall to Shaw. But Charles Miller, law professor and council member, would have to agree with the legal consultant's work-related decisions. This chain of command, which proved effective in the late 1940s and early '50s, would soon grow in complexity as Tennessee towns and cities began to fully realize the potential benefits of their Municipal Technical Advisory Service.

Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at UT. This is the fourth installment in a yearlong series of articles celebrating MTAS' 50th anniversary.

Reflections of 50 years of service.

3/8/99



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First consultants go to town

BY ROB PARKINSON
MTAS Intern

Throughout the late summer and fall of 1949, MTAS Executive Director Gerald Shaw began his quest for the new service's initial staff of qualified consultants. The first staff member began work on Dec. 1, 1949. Pan Dodd Wheeler, a 28-year-old artist who had been working at Knoxville radio stations WBIR and WKGN, became the agency's advisor on municipal issues. Porter C. Greenwood joined MTAS on Jan. 2, 1950, as the municipal law consultant. Murphy Snoderly came on board as the engineering and public works consultant on Jan. 16, 1950. Victor Hobday, a former city manager from Paducah, Ky., accepted the position of municipal management consultant on Feb. 1, 1950, completing the original group of MTAS consultants. These first four — especially Hobday, Wheeler, and Snoderly — would have a drastic impact on the course and development of the Municipal Technical Advisory Service for several decades.

By the middle of February, most of the staff and structural elements were in place. Mary Elizabeth Bush joined the agency as a clerk/typist on Feb. 15, beginning a long and positive relationship with MTAS. Before winter ended in 1950, the advisory service had published its inaugural issue of *Tennessee Town & City*. Consultants were beginning to respond to the cities' requests, which had been slowly trickling in.

The first call came from Norris, a city literally established by the Tennessee Valley Authority. Norris needed help with the same task Executive Director Shaw was tackling at MTAS — becoming organized. In fact, Norris had incorporated on the same day Shaw began his tenure at the agency. He met a few times with the Norris City Council to discuss the details of preparing an annual budget, and he conferred with officials in August about accounting and billing system problems. This request from Norris was the first of thousands that would drive the organization for 50 years. Since that initial visit, MTAS consultants have crisscrossed the state in UT automobiles assisting cities.

By January 1951, 67 municipalities — from Rossville to Mountain City — had asked MTAS to help with a specific problem. At the same time, the first four consultants were spreading the word about the agency to hundreds of city officials. In 1950, Snoderly, Greenwood, Hobday, Wheeler, and Shaw personally visited each of the state's then-230 municipalities to acquaint officials with the new service. These extensive tours, which were policy during the first years, quickly stretched MTAS' excellent reputation across the state.

Throughout the early 1950s, Tennessee city officials filed about 30 requests per month, and the number of calls continued to grow. From the very beginning, patterns emerged in both the types of requests and the cities making them. For example, because MTAS' only



Murphy Snoderly, MTAS' first engineering and public works consultant (left), reviews state regulations for municipal water and sewer departments with former McMinnville Mayor Ulus Davenport.

office was in Knoxville, East Tennessee municipalities filed the majority of requests. Recently founded cities, such as Norris and Oak Ridge, frequently asked for assistance with basic issues, such as compiling budgets, writing annual reports, and collecting tax rate information. Cities with populations of 25,000 or less called most often. However, from growing municipalities like Murfreesboro to small towns such as Parrottsville, cities of all shapes and sizes began to rely on MTAS experts for guidance and support.

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Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949- 1999

Hobday leaves indelible mark on MTAS

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

Other than Herb Bingham, Victor Hobday is widely regarded as the man most responsible for designing the paths that the Municipal Technical Advisory Service would follow for nearly 30 years. Any discussion of those who made MTAS a successful venture must start with the talented manager from Kentucky.

Hobday was born in Covington, Ky., in 1914, joining a generation that was unwittingly on a collision course with World War II.

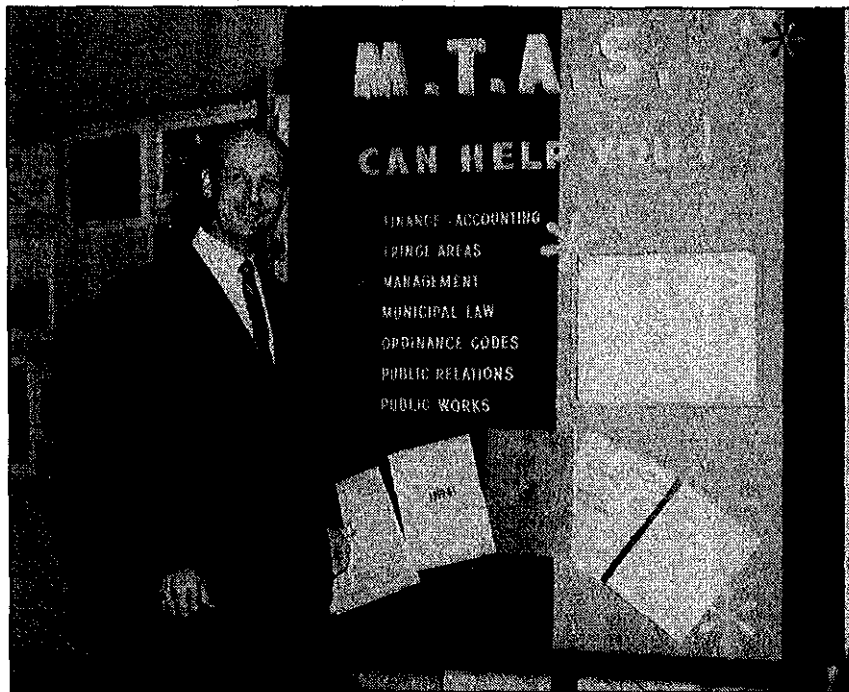
In the midst of the Great Depression, he earned a bachelor's degree in commerce from the University of Kentucky. Despite the restricted job market after graduating, Hobday worked for \$115 a month in the Kentucky Department of Revenue from 1936 to 1938. He then won a graduate fellowship from the Maxwell School at Syracuse University, recognized as one of the best public administration schools in the country. Hobday worked toward his degree for two years at Syracuse, then "World War II came along, and I was a reserve officer and got ordered up right away," Hobday said. Along with thousands of other young American men and women, World War II temporarily postponed his career aspirations.

However, Hobday's sharp ability to recognize opportunities marked his diverse experience in the military. He worked for six different military agencies in five years. Hobday left active duty and returned to Kentucky in 1946.

He accepted the city manager position in Paducah, Ky., in 1947, launching a career in municipal government that spanned three decades. A job interview in Tennessee two years later would shape much of Hobday's career.

He interviewed with Executive Director Gerald Shaw at the MTAS office in Knoxville and was hired as the fledgling organization's first municipal management consultant. However, Hobday's initial stint with MTAS was brief. Before joining the agency, he had applied for the city manager's position in Waxahachie, Texas, a small town near Dallas.

"After I came down here [to MTAS], the man they had hired in Waxahachie instead of



Victor Hobday, MTAS executive director for nearly 30 years, staffs the agency's exhibit booth at a TML conference in the early 1960s.

me had gone on in a very short time, so they contacted me and wanted to know if I was still interested. ... It was an opportunity to get [my wife] Elizabeth back to her home, [so] I felt it was desirable," Hobday said.

After just eight months at MTAS, he quit and headed for Texas. But Vic Hobday's impact on the organization was far from over. When Shaw left the executive director's post in 1951, Hobday returned to Knoxville—and this time he stayed a little longer than eight months.

For the next 28 years, Hobday held MTAS' rudder steady, guiding the agency through its years of major growth and expansion. Many city officials simply associated MTAS with Vic Hobday for decades. The two were synonymous.

While he headed the technical agency, Hobday recalled that his management style evolved from an assignment during graduate school at Syracuse.

"The dean was a man who had gone to a German university. He was a hard taskmaster,

and we studied like the devil. ... He had us read *Creative Experiences* by Mary Parker Follett. The essence of her book was that in settling controversies, you shouldn't consider it as two sides going against each other ... there is a relationship that the two of them form ... a mystical third entity ... evolves. You don't have one side or the other win, you have an entirely new [creation]. ...," Hobday said. "The other thing she stressed was that you don't have superior/inferior relationships. One person is not the boss, everybody here is someone you're working with, you're not working for them—you work with them. And that always stuck in my mind. Then I thought to myself that most of these people here spend most of their time working at MTAS, and I'm going to do all I can to make their lives here as pleasurable as possible."

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Go west, MTAS, go west

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

The Municipal Technical Advisory Service gradually expanded to the west after operating solely from Knoxville in its infancy. The agency opened its first regional office in Nashville in 1952 and another in Memphis 13 years later. Some of the earliest consultants at the branches are still remembered decades later.

Ed Meisenholder

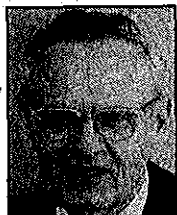
Ed Meisenholder was the first consultant to serve in the Nashville office, which was opened next to the Tennessee Municipal League to solidify MTAS' relationship with its parent organization. That proximity to the League continues today.

The Pennsylvania native received his bachelor's degree from Harvard University in 1938 and enrolled in the public administration program at Syracuse University's Maxwell Graduate School. One of Meisenholder's classmates at Syracuse was a man he would eventually work for three times: future MTAS Executive Director Victor Hobday.

After Meisenholder was discharged from the Army, the World War II captain was city manager of Fernandina, Fla., and Park Forest, Ill. His old college buddy, Hobday, hired him in 1952 as the first MTAS management consultant in Middle Tennessee.

Meisenholder went to Panama in 1955 on a three-year program sponsored by the University of Tennessee and the state department. He led a team of three men who advised Central American government officials on budgeting, operations and management, personnel, purchasing, and records management. Meisenholder returned to MTAS-Nashville in 1958. In 1961, he left the organization again to become Cookeville's first city manager.

After his Cookeville stint, Meisenholder joined the foreign service branch of the Chicago-based Public Administration Service. He worked for sev-



Ed Meisenholder



A.C. Lock, Gary Head, and Bob Lovelace stand before a map marking their areas.

eral years in Bangkok, Thailand, and Managua, Nicaragua.

Meisenholder returned to the United States and was employed by 10 different cities from Long Island, N.Y., to Topeka, Kan. He eventually signed on with MTAS for his third and final tour of duty, staying this time for 14 years. Ed Meisenholder retired in 1982, after helping cities across the globe for 40 years.

Bob Lovelace

The incomparable Bob Lovelace is remembered as a complex mix of paradoxes — a deeply religious man who relished off-color jokes, a knowledgeable professional who wore tennis shoes and beach shirts to work, and a scholar who loved reading annexation legislation as much as English literature. Like Meisenholder, the Connecticut native left and returned to MTAS more than once.

MTAS hired Lovelace as an intergovernmental services consultant in the 1950s to serve as a liaison between TML and MTAS in Nashville. He also managed the Nashville office while Meisenholder was in Panama. In 1960, Lovelace was named executive director of a government services agency at the University of Maryland. When Meisenholder accepted the Cookeville city manager's position, Lovelace returned from his short-lived stint in Maryland to again replace his co-worker. This time, he would stay until he retired.

Lovelace assisted Middle Tennessee cities after coming back to the South, but his main charge was serving as TML Director

Herb Bingham's right-hand man in Nashville. He also edited *Tennessee Town & City* through the 1970s. Lovelace retired from MTAS in 1982.

A.C. Lock

MTAS pushed west of Nashville in 1965, establishing an office in downtown Memphis staffed by A.C. Lock and a secretary. A Memphis office would not prove permanent, however. In 1976, MTAS decided in favor of a more centralized location in West Tennessee — Jackson.

The agency originally hired Lock to help West Tennessee cities with urban growth. In 1972, he became the region's engineering and public works consultant, a position he held until his 1990 retirement. Management Consultant Gary Head joined Lock in November 1966.

Originally from Oklahoma, Lock was drafted for World War II a year after graduating from high school. He became a paratrooper in the 101st Airborne Division, and he fought in the Battle of the Bulge.

After the war, Lock earned a bachelor's in civil engineering. He worked for the Corps of Engineers in Tulsa until he entered the city government arena in 1956. The war veteran held city manager positions in Claremore, Cushing, and Stillwater, Okla., before joining MTAS.

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5/10/99



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949- 1999

Codification on cities' "Most Wanted" lists

BY ROB PARKINSON

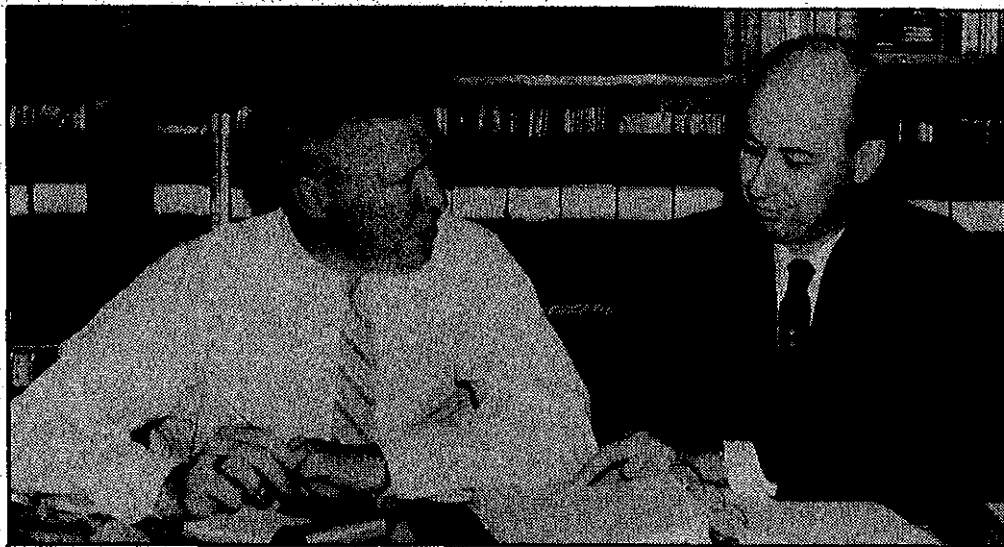
Former MTAS Intern

Since the early days, codifying ordinances has been the most popular service MTAS offers. Former Executive Director Victor Hobday described MTAS' practice of codifying municipalities' ordinances as "the single most important and valuable service that we provide." Furthermore, Hobday suggested that a major obstacle facing some of Tennessee's smaller cities was that their laws and ordinances were in extreme disarray. According to the executive director, sometimes the acts were in "handwritten form in old ledger books. I doubt there were many who really knew everything that was in those books or [were willing] to sit down and try to go through all those books."

Legal Consultants Eugene Puett and Don Ownby, who each spent 34 years with MTAS, *did* sit down and go through many of those books.

Puett replaced original Legal Consultant Porter Greenwood, who became the city manager of Red Bank in 1955. By 1957, requests had completely covered up Puett. The number of cities that needed help with legal issues had grown so large that one consultant could not handle the load. That spring, MTAS brought on a second lawyer, Don Ownby, to concentrate solely on the vital task of codifying ordinances for Tennessee's cities.

According to Ownby, codification was a challenge because "codes were whatever someone would remember. Some cities



Former MTAS Legal Consultants Don Ownby, left, and Gene Puett review city statutes in the 1966 photo above. The two put in almost 70 years between them at the UT agency. Ownby was hired in 1957 to take over codification for Puett, who was nearly swallowed by an ongoing flood of legal requests from municipalities.

did not even number their ordinances ... sometimes ordinances would run 50 or 100 pages, or sometimes they may be one page. Some cities were *surprised* what ordinances they had on their books — or didn't have."

Ownby related an instance when he visited a city to look through its books. He asked about the charge against a person in the city's jail. When told the offense was public drunkenness, the MTAS consultant replied, "I didn't see any ordinance *against* public drunkenness!"

Through the decades, several cities have called each month asking to have their codes updated. Until recently, this service was free — saving cities from retaining an attorney

from the private sector for thousands of tax dollars. However, in the late 1990s, MTAS instituted a fee for codification to streamline the process and produce the best volume for cities to adopt.

The massive amount of ordinances Don Ownby codified over his tenure reflects MTAS' central mission: to help even the smallest cities in Tennessee modernize and stay that way.

Author Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at UT. This is a yearlong series of articles celebrating MTAS' 50th anniversary.

Municipal Technical Advisory Service
Municipal Technical Advisory
Service 50th Anniversary Packet

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Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949- 1999

MTAS grows like a boomtown

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

By the mid-1960s, MTAS had divided its coverage along the state's grand divisions of East, Middle, and West Tennessee. Experienced managers were assigned to offices in Knoxville, Nashville, and Memphis. The agency hired consultants Jerome Hartman, Gary Head, Ken Holbert, Philip Deaton, and Frank West by the end of 1967, constituting the biggest growth spurt in the agency's 18-year history. According to former TML Director Herb Bingham, "This administrative structure let consultants spend a great deal of fruitful time in the field giving assistance in face-to-face discussions in city halls."

Cities were calling on MTAS about 30 times a month by the end of the organization's first decade. From offices in Knoxville and Nashville, consultants handled 322 requests between 1958 and 1959. The lion's share of those calls came from cities near the offices — 113 from 45 municipalities in East Tennessee, 123 from 51 cities in Middle Tennessee, but only 52 from 28 municipalities in West Tennessee. MTAS also responded to 34 requests from the Tennessee Municipal League. The consultants traveled more than 46,000 miles throughout the state that year.

In 1965, the Municipal Technical Ad-



Mayor C.W. Bond (right) and Alderman Sam Wilson (left) of Arlington discuss a planned annexation program with Bob Lovelace, MTAS fringe-area consultant.

visory Service established an office in Memphis. This took MTAS to a new level in its capacity to help Tennessee's cities and situated the agency within a few hours of nearly all its clientele.

With MTAS' growing legion of offices and consultants advancing across the state, requests from cities began to mount. When the agency turned 25 in 1974, consultants had worked on 741 requests, visited 1,872 cities, and traveled 253,351 miles in Tennessee. Further expansions in the 1980s and

1990s would dwarf that number yet again.

In 1976, MTAS closed the Memphis branch in favor of a more centralized location in West Tennessee — Jackson. Now, the Municipal Technical Advisory Service also has offices in Martin and Johnson City.

Author Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at UT. This is a yearlong series of articles celebrating MTAS' 50th anniversary.

Reflections of 50 years of service.



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949- 1999

Murphy Snoderly: The man behind the award

BY ROB PARKINSON

Former MTAS Intern

The Tennessee Chapter of the American Public Works Association annually recognizes the state's most outstanding public works employee. The name that graces the coveted award is Murphy Ulysses Snoderly.

Born in 1899 in Maynardville, Snoderly earned a civil engineering degree from the University of Tennessee in 1920. By the time he became MTAS' first public works consultant in 1950, Snoderly had already made a significant name for himself in Tennessee.

From 1921 to 1926, he supervised road and bridge construction throughout the state as a resident engineer for the Tennessee State Highway Department. In the late 1920s and early '30s, Snoderly worked as an engineer in cities in Western Kentucky and East Tennessee. Qualified engineers in those days were in hot demand for the federal work programs of the early New Deal, and Snoderly became a "party chief" on local control surveys for the Civil Works Administration. In 1935, the Tennessee Emergency Relief Administration put him in charge of construction in 10 counties. When then-President Franklin Roosevelt created the Works Progress Administration, District Director Burgin Dossett selected Snoderly to oversee WPA projects in 21 East Tennessee counties. The future MTAS consultant was responsible for 12,000 to 15,000 workers in his WPA position.

Murphy Snoderly became the first city manager of growing Johnson City in 1939. The municipality, with a population of 25,000 in the late 1930s, was a fertile training ground for the job he would later assume with MTAS. In fact, Snoderly served two tours of duty as the city manager of Johnson City — from 1939 to 1941 and from 1943 to 1947. Three years later, Snoderly became the first engineering and public works consultant for the Municipal Technical Advisory Service.

During those 30 years before he joined MTAS, Snoderly made a huge impact on public works projects across the state. In a laundry list compiled by *Tennessee Town & City*, his major undertakings were:

- supervising the design and building of



In this photo from the 1960s, Murphy Snoderly examines the mechanics of a demonstration rescue truck. MTAS' first engineering and public works consultant's contributions to his field are commemorated by the Tennessee Chapter of the American Public Works Association. The organization annually presents the Murphy Snoderly Award to the best public works employee in the state.

the Iroquois Steeplechase track in Nashville;

- overseeing construction of all earthen dams erected by the WPA in Tennessee from 1937 to 1939, including those at Marrowbone Lake in Davidson County, Laurel Lake in Blount County, and Pressmens Home in Hawkins County;
- serving as location engineer for portions of the Skyline Highway in the Great Smoky Mountains National Park; and
- managing construction of many early highways and bridges in Middle Tennessee.

Snoderly was with MTAS nearly 20 years. He traveled the state promoting the agency's services to city officials and helping them accomplish their public works goals. In addition to his consultant work, Snoderly was active in the Tennessee Chap-

ter of the American Public Works Association. He served as secretary of the organization that rewarded his dedication by naming its prestigious award in his honor.

But professional success couldn't shield Snoderly from personal tragedy. He married Alice Peters, a Knoxville teacher, in 1964. After four short years as husband and wife, Alice was killed in a car accident on Interstate 40 near Parsons.

A year after his wife's death, MTAS' first public works consultant retired at the age of 70. Murphy Snoderly died several months later after suffering from a lengthy illness.

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Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949- 1999

TML stamps imprint on MTAS

BY ROB PARKINSON

Former MTAS Intern

A transformation swept across the South in the 1930s and '40s. More than 3 million farmers left the fields for the exploding industrial and economic conditions in the cities and towns. Also, returning World War II veterans bought new houses in previously undeveloped areas. And an influx of federal dollars to huge projects like the Tennessee Valley Authority or World War II military contracts had a tremendous impact on cities and towns in postwar Tennessee.

This flood of residents forced municipal governments to adapt to new demands, implement lasting reforms, and address the needs of their new constituents. In the face of this unprecedented growth, Tennessee municipalities needed quality advice about properly governing their citizens. The Tennessee Municipal League guided municipalities through issues born from these long-term changes, but TML itself needed help keeping up with burgeoning municipalities.

Herb Bingham, the League's 29-year-old executive director, envisioned an organization that could assist city governments and produce a monthly magazine highlighting Tennessee's municipalities. He shared this vision with the state legislature, and the Municipal Technical Advisory Service was legislatively established in 1949.

In the first decades, MTAS was tightly linked to its founder, Herb Bingham, and the Tennessee Municipal League. The University of Tennessee's minimal involvement with the advisory service pushed it even closer to TML in the early years. Although the dean of University Extension supervised MTAS and the university partially funded the agency, UT did not take an active role in developing the service and determining its mission.

The MTAS Advisory Council meetings represented the extent of UT's involvement in the organization's affairs. Bingham was the only member of the council who wasn't with the University of Tennessee. The advisory council, which met every two years, approved budgetary changes, monitored consultant hirings, and authorized structural changes at the Municipal Technical Advisory Service. Bingham played a significant role at the



From left: in the early 1950s, MTAS founder and former TML Executive Director Herb Bingham, TML secretary Sue Dixon, MTAS secretary Jennie Moscovitz, and MTAS' first specialist consultant, Bob Lovelace, gathered outside their adjoining Nashville offices. Lovelace, who was with the advisory service nearly 30 years, became Bingham's right-hand man as the liaison between TML and MTAS.

meetings. The UT members depended on the outspoken TML director for inside information on MTAS activities.

Also, editing *Tennessee Town & City*—technically a TML publication—was mainly the responsibility of the MTAS municipal information consultant through the 1970s.

Their purposes differed, but TML and the Municipal Technical Advisory Service had strong ties to each other. While the UT agency had nothing to do with the political lobbying that defined TML, the two still shared the same clientele. MTAS was under the strong leadership of Director Victor Hobday through the 1950s and '60s, but the ever-present shadow of Herbert Bingham loomed large over the organization.

No other state has successfully established an independent, multidisciplinary, technical advisory service that parallels MTAS. There are probably many reasons for this, but all are speculation. Perhaps creating such an organization in other states would infringe on the territory of entrenched municipal leagues. Tennessee experienced the opposite. TML lightened its heavy workload by leading the drive to create MTAS. Instead

of spawning jealousies and turf wars, the Municipal Technical Advisory Service and TML have been effective partners in helping Tennessee's cities and towns.

It's also possible that no other state has encountered the coalescence of forward-looking leaders like Tennessee witnessed in the late 1940s. The vision of Herb Bingham, the early path charted by MTAS Executive Directors Gerald Shaw and Victor Hobday, and the dedication of consultants and office staff forged an organization that perhaps cannot be replicated in any other state.

The niche that the Municipal Technical Advisory Service has filled over the past five decades is indeed a unique and invaluable asset to Tennessee cities. The agency that has affected thousands across this state was the inspiration of one man—TML's legendary Herb Bingham.

Author Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at UT. This is a yearlong series of articles chronicling MTAS' 50 years of serving Tennessee cities.



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949- 1999

Kirk, Lock: Paragons in the public works world

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

Since the post was created in 1950, several engineering and public works consultants have had influential and unique personalities — particularly Frank Kirk and A.C. Lock. Together, they dedicated more than four decades to the Municipal Technical Advisory Service and Tennessee cities.

Frank Kirk began his 20-year tenure with MTAS when the agency's first engineering and public works consultant, Murphy Snoderly, retired in 1969.

Kirk earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Southern Methodist University in 1951. He spent five years in Liberty, Mo., as city engineer before holding the same position from 1966 to 1969 in North Kansas City. Kirk then joined MTAS. He retired from the organization 20 years later.

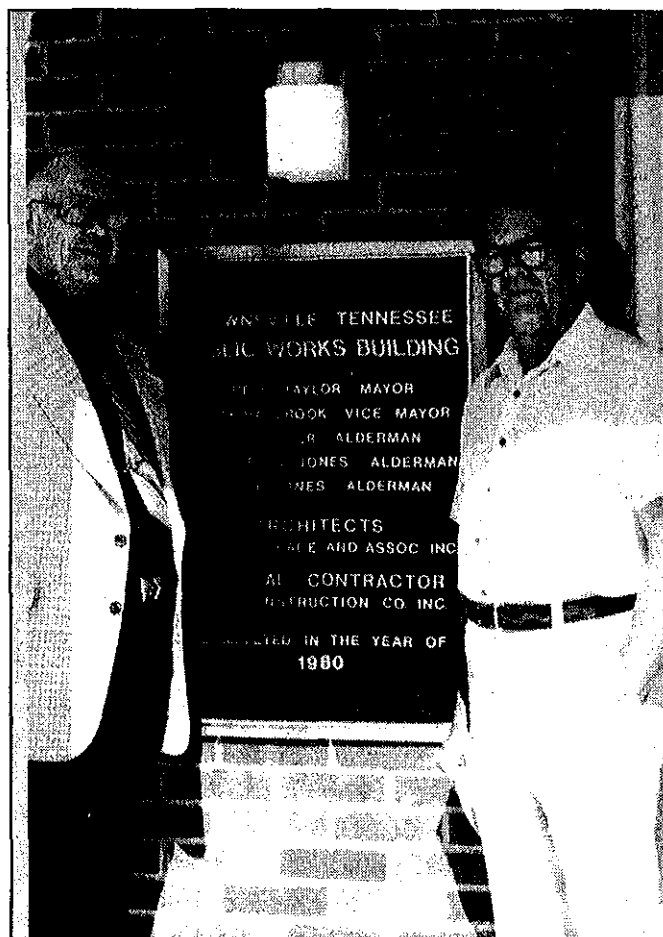
An active member of the Tennessee Chapter of the American Public Works Association (TCAPWA), in 1971 Kirk won the group's Harry Swearingen Award for outstanding service. In 1987, he also received the American Public Works Association's Meritorious Service Award, a national honor presented to dedicated individuals who devote their efforts to furthering the public works profession.

A second public works consultant, A.C. Lock, was actually part of MTAS before Kirk's arrival. When Lock opened the Memphis office in 1965, his original charge was to help cities with urban growth. In 1972, he took over the duties of West Tennessee's engineering and public works consultant. Lock stayed in that position until he retired in 1990. The Oklahoma native's interest in city government grew from childhood experiences. According to Lock, "My father was a small-town politician, serving four years as county treasurer and eight years as county commissioner in Jackson County, Okla. Because of this, I have been interested in government since I was a small boy."

Likemany early MTAS leaders, Lock served in World War II. In 1943, one year after graduating from high school in Claremore, Okla., the Army drafted him to fight in Europe. Lock was an airfield construction supervisor in Iceland for a year. Then he qualified as a paratrooper and became a member of the prestigious 101st Airborne Division. Lock fought in Belgium and southern France in the Battle of the Bulge.

After the war, he earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering from Oklahoma A&M (now Oklahoma State University). From 1952 to 1956, the former paratrooper was a construction estimator for the Corps of Engineers in Tulsa. Lock then moved into local government as city engineer in Claremore, Cushing, and Stillwater, Okla. He found that municipal service was a fulfilling career choice.

"When I first sat down at my desk in Claremore, I knew I had found my calling," Lock said. "I saw my first city manager



A.C. Lock (left) and Frank Kirk stand in front of the Brownsville Public Works Building.

several years after we had both left Claremore. He apologized for hiring me into a field that probably lost its glamour and excitement for me rather rapidly. I told him to forget it. His hiring me into the municipal engineering field helped me find my niche in life."

Like his MTAS colleague Frank Kirk, Lock was active in the TCAPWA, sitting on award and bylaw committees throughout the 1970s and '80s. In 1983, the organization rewarded his outstanding service with the Harry Swearingen Award.

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Reflections of 50 years of service

7/26/99



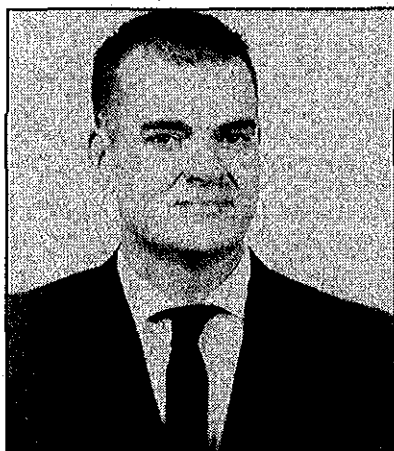
Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949- 1999

Accounting consultants credited for longevity

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

Threemen worked with MTAS and Tennessee cities for more than six decades in finance and accounting. During their combined 62 years with the agency, Inslee Burnett, Ken Joines, and Jim Leuty logged countless hours helping cities with fiscal issues.

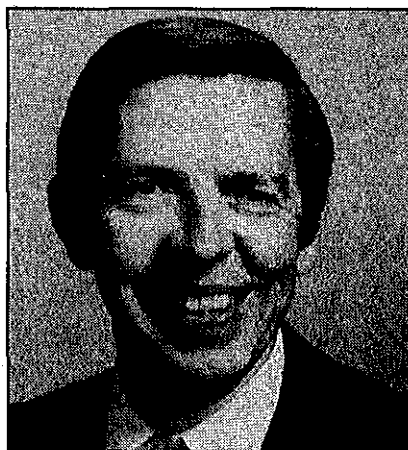
However, the first MTAS finance and accounting consultant took a leave of absence from the agency for nearly 46 years. The advisory service hired William Snodgrass in 1951. Two years later, then-Gov. Frank Clement appointed him Budget director and Local Finance director. Due to the temporary nature of those positions, Snodgrass asked MTAS for a leave of absence. He became comptroller of the treasury in 1955. Snodgrass held that post until this year, when he didn't seek re-election. In a 1984 interview in *Tennessee Town & City*, the former consultant laughed about going to work for the Governor in 1953. "I never got back to my MTAS work at the university," he said. "I guess I'm still on leave of absence from MTAS."



Inslee Burnett

Inslee Burnett was born in 1919 and fought in World War II before launching a career aiding municipal governments. The

Knoxville native served three tours of duty with the Army, returning to Tennessee in 1946. After his military discharge, Burnett worked as an assistant buyer for a large grocery chain, an office manager for an equipment company, and chief accountant for a motor accessories firm. He enrolled at the University of Tennessee at the age of 34. Burnett graduated from UT's business administration program in 1957 and joined the Knoxville accounting firm of Homer K. Jones and Co. as an auditor. Three years later, he began a decade-long tenure with MTAS when he replaced William Chaffin as the finance and accounting consultant.



Ken Joines

MTAS hired Ken Joines when Burnett returned to private practice in 1970. Joines was born in Madisonville in 1935 and earned a bachelor's degree in accounting from Tennessee Technological University in 1957. He worked for the Office of the Comptroller as a county auditor for the following eight years. Next, Joines was supervisor of Field Services for the state Department of Education before teaming with MTAS. He acted as the agency's interim director for five months between Executive Directors Odell Miner and C.L. Overman.

For 27 years, the Knoxville-based consultant provided Tennessee's cities with finance and accounting expertise. Joines retired in 1997.



That fine Mr. Leuty

Jim Leuty, a one-time co-worker of Joines' at the Department of Education, came on board in 1973. From MTAS' Nashville office, he helped cities in Middle Tennessee for 25 years.

Leuty worked side by side with city recorders, explaining various accounting responsibilities, developing new revenue sources, and basically helping cities manage their money. A true Southern gentleman, he was called "that fine Mr. Leuty" in many city halls.

Prior to joining MTAS, the avid fisherman was director of Fiscal Management for the Department of Education. He holds a bachelor's degree in business administration from Tennessee Technological University.

Leuty received the Victor Hobday Award for his years of service in anchoring the Middle Tennessee team. The award is presented each year to an outstanding MTAS consultant in honor of Hobday, MTAS' executive director for 28 years. Leuty also earned the University of Tennessee's Outstanding Public Service Award.

He retired at the end of 1998. Combined with his years at the Department of Education, Jim Leuty devoted more than 34 years of service to Tennessee and its cities.

Author Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while getting his master's at UT.

Reflections of 50 years of service

8/9/99



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949- 1999

Puett raises MTAS' consciousness in the 1960s



The former Sammie Lynn Scandlyn, the lone female on MTAS' professional staff in 1967, is flanked by male consultants. The "advisor" for municipal information successfully fought for the title "consultant," the same designation given her male co-workers. Sammie Lynn Puett is currently vice president for Public Service, Continuing Education, and University Relations at UT. Standing (from left) in this 1967 photo of MTAS staff members are: Lewis Gorham, Eugene Puett, Gary Head, Murphy Snoderly, Bob Lovelace, and John Brand. Seated (from left) are: A.C. Lock, Victor Hobday, Scandlyn, Jerry Hartman, Don Ownby, and Insee Bumett.

BY ROB PARKINSON Former MTAS Intern

The lineages of each of the consultant positions areas old as the Municipal Technical Advisory Service itself.

Some posts have been filled by only a handful of long-term employees throughout the past five decades. Other positions have been like a revolving door, with constantly changing consultants popping in for a brief "hello" before heading out again. And a few specialties have settled into trends. For example, a woman has always been the "advisor on municipal information"—from Pan Dodd Wheeler to Jackie Kersh to Sharon Fitzgerald to the current specialist, Carole Graves. Now called a communications "consultant," the advisor status reflected the gender values of the workplace in the 1950s. The MTAS Advisory Council did not originally consider the position a full consultancy because of its association with women—even though they were as productive and qualified as males. It would be more than a decade before females at MTAS received their due.



Sammie Lynn Puett

A woman whose career eventually eclipsed most of her male MTAS colleagues' launched a one-person campaign for equal treatment of females. The advisor on municipal information in the mid-1960s was Sammie Lynn Scandlyn. Now she's Sammie Lynn Puett, the current University of Tennessee vice president for Public Service, Continuing Education, and University Relations. She described

her fight for promotion to a full consultant:

"I had been taking a course in the College of Education, and we were talking about discrimination and women in the workplace. It suddenly dawned on me that, 'Hey, this is ridiculous,'" Puett said. "[I was] really worked up and I thought, 'I'm just going to go in and tell [Executive Director Victor] Hobday exactly what I think.' I happened to meet him on the sidewalk... and I lit into him about how I thought that this [unfair treatment] was just absolutely horrible. He couldn't agree with me more, which kind of took the fire out of my sails. He said, 'We'll get that taken care of.'"

And he did. Puett's fervent appeal spurred Hobday to convince the advisory council to change the title of the public relations position from advisor to consultant. This elevated the post and MTAS' professional females to the same rank as the men.

Author Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at UT. This is a yearlong series of articles celebrating MTAS' 50th anniversary.

Reflections of 50 years of service

MTAS employees go where the rubber meets the road



Elaine Hampton, a drafter with the Jackson Utility District, and MTAS Public Works Consultant John Chlarson work on the city's GIS program.

BY CAROLE GRAVES
MTAS Communications Consultant

In celebration of MTAS' 50th anniversary, several of its employees participated in a city workday. During the week of Aug. 9 – 13, staff members selected projects and cities throughout the state.

Some staff members actually lent their manpower and worked on specific projects, while others chose to use the day as an opportunity to learn more about the daily operations within various city departments.

Pat Hardy, MTAS management consultant, spent the day working in Elizabethton restoring the historic Boone Trail marker erected in the 1930s. Hardy and City Manager Charles Stahl selected the project as an appropriate way to celebrate several historic milestones. This year also marks Elizabethton's bicentennial. Hardy's restoration efforts are in preparation for the town's celebration this fall.

Maryville put several MTAS staff members to work. Beth Sanderbeck, library

supervisor, along with Knoxville support staff members Laura Smith, Ann Thompson, and Sarah Clapp, spent the day with the Maryville public works department. Bill Bryant, Maryville sanitation director, and Frank Curtis, Maryville streets superintendent, took the group on a daylong tour of various public works projects currently under construction. The MTAS group learned about fleet maintenance, street paving, and snow removal.

Sally Thierbach, MTAS training consultant, and Armintha Loveday, MTAS administrative assistant, also worked in Maryville. Thierbach spent the day helping Roger Campbell, assistant city manager, and Diane Anderson, executive secretary, on various administrative projects. Loveday played detective for the day and spent her time with Capt. John McCulloch, detective with the Maryville police department. Loveday also spent a day working in Knoxville in the parks and recreation department. She spent the afternoon touring the various facilities with Joe Walsh, the department's deputy director.

MTAS consultants were also plentiful in Jackson. Steve Wyatt, MTAS utility specialist, was put to work rewiring a control circuit at a Jackson Utility District water plant. John Chlarson, MTAS public works and engineering consultant, took the opportunity to learn more about the city's Geographic Information System and spent the day with Elaine Hampton, a drafter with the utility district. It was also a learning experience for Mark Pullen, MTAS legal consultant. He spent the day with Officer Albert Colon of the Jackson police department. Pullen said they spent the day patrolling various high-crime areas, and he has a new appreciation for the problems facing city police departments and the communities they serve.

Other staff projects included MTAS Management Consultant Don Darden, who served as Mayor Bill Johnson's assistant in Walnut Grove, and MTAS Utility Specialist Brett Ward, who helped repair a leaky manhole in Spring City.

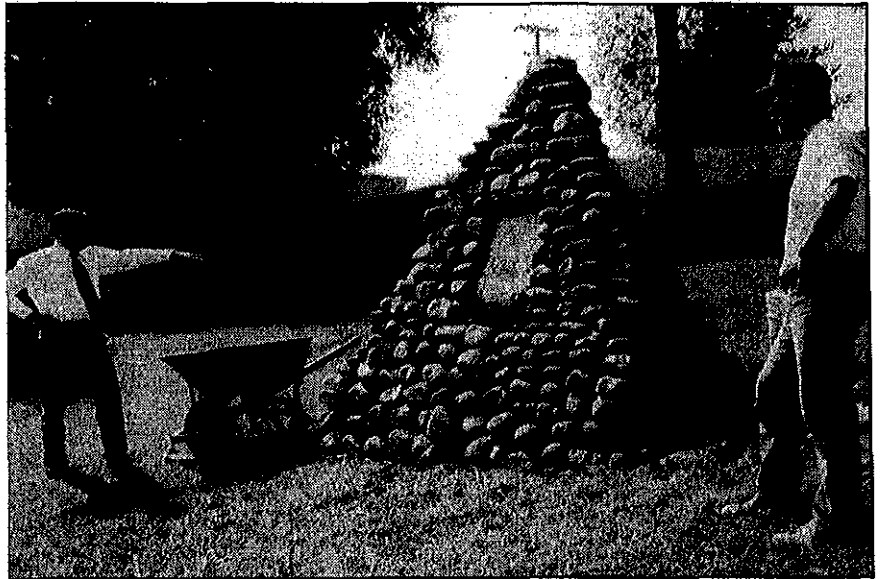


Frank Curtis, Maryville streets superintendent, points out to MTAS employees Sarah Clapp, Laura Smith, Ann Thompson, and Beth Sanderbeck a street-widening project currently under construction. Bill Bryant, sanitation director, looks on.

Photos by Carole Graves



Steve Wyatt, MTAS utility consultant, and Vincent Hurst, maintenance technician, rewire control circuits at a Jackson Utility District water plant.



Elizabethton City Manager Charles Stahl (left) oversees Pat Hardy's renovation of a 1930 Boone Trail marker.

Nominations

TML is seeking nominations, of yourself or others, for National League of Cities policy committee. Starting

From left, former City Commissioner Dexter Stewart; V chapter of the NAACP; Alcoa Police Chief Wayne Overman; and Frank Smith, director of the Boys Club.

Alcoa thugs find no P. 8



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949 - 1999

Women communicate value of public relations

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

Several interesting and forceful personalities have been municipal information specialists for the Municipal Technical Advisory Service over the decades. Three in particular — Pan Dodd Wheeler, Sammie Lynn (Scandlyn) Puett, and Jackie Kersh — made lasting impressions on both MTAS and Tennessee city officials.

The first specialist hired by then-Executive Director Gerald Shaw was Dodd. Born in 1921, Mary Frances ("Pan") Dodd lived a busy and diverse life before coming to work for MTAS in 1949. Before graduating from high school, Dodd attended seven schools in Nashville, Cincinnati, Chicago, and Decatur, Ind. Upon finishing at West End High School in Nashville, Dodd attended Vanderbilt University for two years. Consistent with her migratory childhood, she studied Spanish and music history for three quarters at the Instituto Nacional de Panama in Panama City and attended the University of Tennessee in Knoxville for one quarter. Furthermore, Dodd expanded her education through seminars at the Cincinnati Art Museum, the Chicago Art Institute, and Nashville's Watkins Institute. Through these courses, she learned commercial artistic skills that would be necessary as an advisor on municipal information.

Dodd, who became Pan Dodd Wheeler after her marriage in 1949, was the first MTAS publication officer. A previous article explained that, in the beginning, the MTAS Advisory Council did not view this position in the same light as other consultants. Wheeler's primary duties of editing *Tennessee Town & City* and assisting cities with annual reports and publications reflected her extensive experience prior to MTAS. While serving as publications officer, which the council voted to change to "advisor" on municipal public relations in February 1952, she also edited a column for *American City*, a national magazine focusing on achievements and trends in city government. She was a member, along with Nashville Mayor Ben West, of the 1957 U.S. mission to Europe that attended the Eighth International Congress of Local Authorities at The Hague in the Netherlands.

Wheeler's impressive tenure ended in April 1958 after a decision to travel with her second husband, geologist Paul Eimon. Wheeler's replacement, Ann Pearson, worked for two years until leaving for West Pakistan, where her husband accepted a job as an engineer on development projects.

Sammie Lynn Scandlyn filled the vacant municipal information position in September 1960. Scandlyn, who graduated from the University of Tennessee in 1958, took over for Pearson at the recommendation of her mentor in the UT journalism department. According to Scandlyn, she had no inclination to assist Tennessee cities before interviewing with longtime Executive Director Victor Hobday.



Jackie Kersh (right) worked as MTAS' longest-serving public information consultant. From 1968 to 1986, Kersh extended her expertise in communication to cities across the state. Holding a publication Kersh designed is longtime MTAS Executive Director Victor Hobday (center) with Management Consultant Jenny Hartman (left).

"I really didn't know anything about it; I didn't set [MTAS] as a goal. I actually was asked to interview for the job by Professor Tucker, who was head of the school of journalism. He had been asked by Vic Hobday to help identify some candidates for the PR position. ... So Professor Tucker called me up and said for me to apply for the job, even though I really didn't have a journalism background. ...," Scandlyn said. "I remember when I went for the interview with Mr. Hobday, every question he asked me I answered in a way that would disqualify me from the job. I remember walking out of his office saying, 'I hope you find the right person for this job.'"

Scandlyn had shown exceptional leadership skills as a student at the University of Tennessee. She was president of the Delta Delta Delta sorority and a member of the Phi Kappa Phi academic honor society. In her senior year, the university awarded Scandlyn for her outstanding service with the honor of "torchbearer," a designation given to only the very best and brightest graduating seniors.

Scandlyn spent eight years with the Municipal Technical Advisory Service as the advisor on municipal information. In September 1966, her grit and guts brought the position into line with the male consultants in title and salary. Like her predecessors, Scandlyn edited *Tennessee Town & City* and helped cities with their annual reports, along with her added duties of local sales tax campaigns. Scandlyn also edited a monthly column for *Nation's Cities*, which she continued even after departing MTAS. In September 1968, Scandlyn left the agency to return to the University of Tennessee College of Communication as an assistant professor in journalism. A few weeks later, she married Eugene Puett, an MTAS legal consultant.

In 1973, Sammie Lynn Puett became an executive assistant to the chancellor of the University of Tennessee. Five years later, then-Gov. Lamar Alexander called her to join his Cabinet, where she was the state's commissioner of the General Services Department and the Human Services Department. In

January 1989, MTAS and Puett came together again when she became vice president of Public Service, Continuing Education, and University Relations at UT's Institute for Public Service (IPS).

Puett's replacement at MTAS in 1968 was Jackie Kersh. The Jacksonville, Fla., native came to East Tennessee to attend UT, and she earned a bachelor's in journalism in 1953. Kersh then went home to Florida to work for the *Daytona Beach News Journal*. From 1955 to 1958, she served in the Media and Publications Department for the Methodist Church in Nashville and Washington, D.C. In 1958, Kersh became managing editor of the *Herald-Advocate* in Wauchula, a small Florida city. She held one final position in the Sunshine State — public relations director for the Hillsborough County Public School system — before returning to East Tennessee and MTAS in 1968.

When Kersh came to MTAS, the organization was 18 years old. When she left in 1986, it was twice that age. During her long association with the agency, Kersh greatly shaped the public information consultant's role and expanded it to include special projects. She also earned a master's degree in communication from the University of Tennessee while at MTAS. In 1986, Kersh resigned to accept the public relations director's position at Stetson University in DeLand, Fla.

These three women — Pan Dodd Wheeler, Sammie Lynn Puett, and Jackie Kersh — helped cities with public relations projects for 35 of MTAS' 50 years. Puett's 10 additional years of leadership at IPS further demonstrate her continuous and far-reaching influence on Tennessee's municipalities.

Author Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at UT. This is a yearlong series of articles celebrating MTAS' 50th anniversary.



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949 - 1999



Jim Leuty, former MTAS finance and accounting consultant, left, looks over the town books with Mike Woods, Smyrna city clerk. Leuty retired last year after serving a quarter of a century with the UT organization.

The many faces of MTAS define agency

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

During the Municipal Technical Advisory Service's 50 years, Tennessee city officials have come to know a host of MTAS consultants. Names such as Snoderly, Meisenhelder, Lovelace, Lock, Puett, Ownby, Leuty, Muscatello, Tallent, Hardy, and Pentecost stand out as familiar helping hands that cities have called on. The intelligence, charisma, work ethic, and expertise of these people, along with dozens of their MTAS colleagues, helped establish the University of Tennessee agency as a powerful force in Tennessee government.

MTAS has enjoyed its share of personalities that have shaped its image in the minds of Tennessee city officials over the

past five decades. Some former MTAS consultants, such as UT's Institute for Public Service Vice President Sammie Lynn Puett and longtime state Comptroller of the Treasury William Snodgrass, have gone on to prestigious positions in Tennessee government. Others, such as Murphy Snoderly, Bob Lovelace, and Don Ownby have made indelible impressions on Tennessee through their activities at MTAS.

The consultants and support staff have also served as the nucleus of the organization itself. The people of MTAS are truly the essence of the agency's history.

Administrative Secretary Ann Lowe witnessed all but a few of MTAS' 50 years. She retired in 1998 after 42 years with the organization. Lowe said, "Every

kind of person and personality has been here and gone. ... I've called it the 'Baskin-Robbins' variety ... the different flavors of MTAS created by the different people."

Consultants have introduced MTAS to perspectives from all across the nation and, in some cases, the globe. The people behind the acronym spell the real reason MTAS has made a permanent mark on city government over the past 50 years.

Author Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at UT. This is a yearlong series of articles chronicling MTAS' 50 years of serving Tennessee cities.

Reflections of 50 years of service



Helping Cities for Half a Century Municipal Technical Advisory Service, 1949 - 1999

MTAS executive directors: Different modes, same goals

BY ROB PARKINSON
Former MTAS Intern

(Note: This article focuses on three of MTAS' five executive directors during the last 50 years. Gerald Shaw, who headed the agency when it was formed, was profiled in this section Feb. 22. Victor Hobday, Shaw's successor, was featured March 29.)

Executive Director Victor Hobday's retirement in 1980 produced a quandary for university administrators and Tennessee city officials. For the first time since Hobday was hired in 1952, they had to find someone to take over the reins of the Municipal Technical Advisory Service. A select group of interested parties, including Hobday and Tennessee Municipal League Executive Director Herb Bingham, decided to guide MTAS down a different course by selecting Edwin Odell Miner as the agency's third executive director.

The campaigns to recruit new MTAS executive directors had followed something of a pattern. When the MTAS Advisory Council brought in Hobday in 1952, the members hired a director they were familiar with and who knew the workings of the organization. In 1980, the organization's leaders, along with UT's Institute for Public Service and TML, decided to take a different tack in recruiting a replacement for the retiring Hobday. Because he was unacquainted with MTAS and Tennessee, Miner fulfilled MTAS' desire for a fresh director with a fresh outlook on city government.

The Utah native had previously served as executive vice president of the Rocky Mountain Institute of Public Affairs. He gained quality city experience working for Provo and Orem, Utah, and Scottsdale, Ariz. Miner graduated from Brigham Young University with a bachelor's and a master's in public administration. He earned his doctorate at the University of Utah in 1978.

Miner's managerial style differed greatly from that of his predecessor. Whereas Hobday led with a personal air of authority, Miner's management method focused on reaching a consensus throughout the organization. This drastic change led to some friction because, in the words of one consultant, "Those of us in the organization didn't recognize that what Odell Miner was talking about we'd still be talking about 20 years later. He put a lot of emphasis on teamwork. That's a no-brainer today. But he was a little ahead of his time and of MTAS at that time."

This friction, coupled with Miner's desire to be closer to his family back in Utah, led to his resignation in 1983. Because this relationship didn't meet everyone's expectations, a return to the



Four of the five executive directors who have led MTAS since 1949 gathered three years ago for this photo. From left to right, they are: Victor Hobday, Odell Miner, C.L. Overman, and Bob Schwartz, the agency's current head. Missing: Gerald Shaw, MTAS' first executive director.

previous method of recruitment—finding a familiar and comfortable director—resulted in hiring former MTAS consultant Carl Lewis (C.L.) Overman.

In 1977, Overman first came to work at MTAS as a management consultant, advising cities in northeastern Tennessee. For the next four years, Overman worked as a generalist consultant until he was hired as an assistant city manager of Maryville in 1981. Eighteen months later, MTAS called upon Overman to return as head of the agency.

He was executive director for six years. During his tenure, Overman solidified the organization and modernized some of its processes. Beginning a movement that would be built on by his successor, Overman made the first strides in modernizing MTAS' technology. This enabled the organization to lead Tennessee's cities into the next century.

In 1989, Overman left the MTAS directorship. He was named assistant to renowned Alcoa City Manager Bill Ricker. Rising to city manager when Ricker retired in 1990, the abilities Overman displayed at MTAS—acute, far-reaching vision and strong organization-building skills—again emerged as he led one of the most thriving towns in East Tennessee. This expertise was recognized when Overman won the 1995 City Manager of the Year Award from the Tennessee City Management Association.

When he left MTAS, the organization decided again to hire an "outsider." Bob Schwartz became the fifth and current MTAS executive director in 1989. Schwartz began his local government career as an assistant county manager in Lexington County, S.C. Then he moved to Sumter,

S.C., where he served as community development coordinator. Next, Schwartz spent five years as city manager of Garden City, a suburb of Savannah, Ga. In 1987, he was named city manager for Americus in western Georgia. Schwartz, who is only a few months older than MTAS, came to Knoxville two years later. In his own way, he continued C.L. Overman's work. In his 10 years as director, Schwartz's primary objective has been continuing MTAS' successful relationships with Tennessee cities by streamlining and modernizing the organization's processes.

Schwartz and MTAS staff members recently engineered a plan to restructure the ways in which MTAS fulfills its mission to Tennessee's cities. Entitled "MTAS: The Next 50 Years," the plan redistributes the internal organization to improve MTAS' ability to assist cities. Reflecting a statement expressed decades earlier by Herb Bingham, the "50-year plan" increases consultants' starting salaries to attract the most experienced candidates. The plan also calls for hiring more management consultants to reduce the number of cities serviced by each generalist, allowing them to assume primary responsibility for their assigned municipalities.

At the close of the 20th century, MTAS is preparing itself for the challenges that face Tennessee cities in the new millennium.

Author Rob Parkinson was an MTAS intern while he completed his master's degree in history at UT. This is a yearlong series of articles chronicling MTAS' 50 years of serving Tennessee cities.

Reflections of 50 years of service