

**At a Glance****Current Title**

Director of Administration & Management

**Employer**

City of Philadelphia Law Department

**Major**

Mathematics

**Immediate Post-Grad Pursuits**

- Graduate School
- Public School Teacher
- City of Philadelphia Personnel Department

**Continuing Education**

- MA in Mathematics from Temple University
- MSPA with Specialty in Human Resources from Drexel University

**Sample Entry-Level Position**

Paralegal

**Contact Information**

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## The Pinball Wizard Navigating City Administration with Chris Lane '69



When discussing a typical day on the job, Chris Lane lightheartedly compares it to pinball, the beloved arcade game. As the Director of Administration and Management for the City of Philadelphia Law Department, he is in constant motion responding to the needs of its employees.

The Law Department seeks to provide high-quality legal services to the City in the most economical manner possible. Lane supports this mission by preparing and monitoring budgets, offering personnel services, managing computer facilities, purchasing and maintaining supplies and equipment, formulating space plans, overseeing telecommunications, paying experts, maintaining the library, supervising mail and messenger services, retaining and disposing of records, and coordinating word processing and receptionist services. These duties keep Lane on his toes.

His Haverford experience helped Lane cultivate the flexibility required on the job. He fondly recalls, "Its small size and encouragement of experimentation allowed me to blossom." Immediately after earning his bachelor's degree, Lane intended to continue his studies in graduate school. Under the threat of being drafted to Vietnam, he abandoned this plan in favor of teaching in the Philadelphia Public Schools. But frustrated with his role of disciplinarian, Lane quit this job. Following these false starts, he began working in the City of Philadelphia Personnel Department. After struggling to complete his M.A. in

Mathematics at Temple University, he realized that his career interests lay in public service and he pursued a graduate program in Public Administration at Drexel University.

Lane reflects warmly upon his job, "The city has offered me advancement at all the critical stages in my career. When I became restless, I could move on to something new." And indeed he has. Prior to his current position, Lane also worked in the Water and Health Departments. In 1980, he became the first full-time administrator in the Law Department. Prior to his hiring, an attorney juggled these tasks. Lane reflects, "The promotion allowed me to expand beyond Human Resources." His job has retained its appeal largely because he has been able to accrue more and more responsibility over time.

Due to the current economic downturn, Lane acknowledges that pursuing a career in government administration is risky. In addition to the current city-wide hiring freeze, there is also a trend to consolidate support staff. He opposes this cost-saving measure. Using his relationship with the attorneys in the Law Department as an example, Lane expresses his fear that this clustering will deprive employees of the specialized knowledge essential for operating each division efficiently: "I'm right here on the same floor as them, I intimately understand their needs, and I know how to support their litigation." On a more positive note, he remains upbeat about the prospects for students interested in practicing public interest law due to the high turnover among professionals combined with a constant demand for work. Lane recommends exploring this field by practicing as a paralegal prior to pursuing further schooling. To this end, he has shrewdly encouraged the City of Philadelphia Law Department to hire students with liberal arts backgrounds for such positions. Lane's support of such candidates demonstrates his positive appraisal of the Haverford education that helped to prepare him for the diverse demands of his job.