**Ms. Judie A. Scalise, CEcD, FM, HLM**
AEDC Chair, 1993-1994
IEDC Interview Conducted with Nancy Moorman

**How have you seen the economic development profession evolve over the course of your career?**

When I first started in economic development in 1980, it was called “industrial development.” The primary focus was on business recruitment, including the attraction of manufacturing, office, warehousing, and distribution. This is as opposed to the broader definition of economic development that we use today. Over time, economic development has expanded to encompass other activities, including: business retention, economic gardening, redevelopment, tourism, and community development activities. Community leaders recognize that in order to be successful you need to leverage your assets and improve the foundations that support economic development. The skill set that economic development practitioners need to do their jobs has expanded as well. You have representatives that specialize in finance, marketing, or downtown redevelopment activities. Others economic developers work primarily on entrepreneurship and retention and some that focus their time primarily on recruitment. So the profession has broadened and deepened over the years.

**Can you describe your personal career path and how it has evolved as the economic development profession evolved?**

I started my career with the Arizona Office of Economic Planning and Development, which was a part of the governor’s office. We had two divisions: a planning division and a development division. I was in the development division working as an economic development specialist and recruiting business to Arizona. During my tenure at the state, I was promoted to the Director of Recruitment and International Trade for Arizona, and for a period of time I also oversaw the Film Office. When I left state government, I moved into banking and worked as Vice President of Industrial Development for one of the major banks in Arizona. From there, I migrated to a private nonprofit economic development corporation.

After ten years as an economic developer I started my own company in partnership with another person whose background was primarily real estate development. Together we created a consultancy practice that focuses on economic development and predevelopment planning services to both public and private sector clients. Our services include preparation of economic development strategy plans, labor market assessments, targeted industry studies, economic and fiscal impact studies, and market and financial feasibility analysis.

**Would you say that your career, like the economic development field, has broadened over time?**

Absolutely. My skill set today is substantially deeper than it was when I first started in the profession. I think folks that are just in business recruitment have a narrow focus and skill set.
The work that we do here at ESI requires us to be experts in as many activities as we possibly can so that we can provide value to our clients.

What was your role in AEDC? How did your involvement with the organization affect your own career development?

When I first joined AEDC, I was an associate member. I got involved in the leadership of the organization when I was first elected as the Western Regional Vice Chair. That led to an officer position on the board of directors and then ultimately to me being elected the Chair of the American Economic Development Council. I was the first and only woman elected as the Chairman of that organization, which was founded in 1926. Being the first woman Chairman was an honor, [and] one that I felt I had worked hard to earn.

How has it affected my career? I would have to say that I probably would have started my consultancy practice whether I was a member of that organization or not. AEDC provided networking opportunities, education activities, and reference materials that you could take advantage of. I’m sure CUED did the same thing, and IEDC does those things today. I think each of the organizations’ missions were very similar: to provide professional development opportunities while expanding and enhancing the profession. I think the organizations have done a great job at that.

How did you see AEDC evolve through your involvement with the organization?

The real focus of AEDC was business recruitment, and the members that joined the organization were primarily business recruiters. As the economic development field started to expand, AEDC started to take on an expanded role from an educational delivery standpoint. So, an annual conference would perhaps have a breakout session that was geared toward tourism, financing, or downtown redevelopment. AEDC would incorporate other economic development topics in order to provide broader educational benefits to encourage people to come to the conferences. Over the years, AEDC did expand from that standpoint and tried to provide educational opportunities on current topics and approaches to be successful in economic development.

What did the merger mean to the overall evolution of the economic development profession?

When there were two organizations, most people were either a member of one or the other. There were few people that were members of both organizations. It’s my understanding that CUED was primarily focused on urban economic development and non-recruitment activities, whereas AEDC had a recruitment focus and more rural representatives.

I think the merger was done just by virtue of economics. It was difficult for organizations to justify paying dues and to participating in two organizations. It became fairly expensive, and most organizations don’t have an unlimited budget to send people to professional development seminars, workshops, and conferences. Many people want to get actively involved in an organization, and there are only so many hours in a day. They have to pick one or the other. As the profession started to expand, CUED recognized activities in areas outside of the urban
environment, and AEDC recognized more activities beyond rural economic development. The two organizations started to morph and look very much like one another. I think the people who worked in the profession, had a lot to do with pushing the two organizations together. They said, “We don’t want to be a member of both. We want to be a member of one. Why aren’t you one organization? You have the same mission, goals, and objectives. It would make better sense from my budget standpoint to only have to be a member of one organization.” So, there came a time when economics helped drive the merger. Early on the leadership of both organizations had floated the idea, but it didn’t go anywhere. I think the timing was right for the two organizations. When they finally did sit down and talk, it became apparent that there was more in common than not. It made sense to merge the organizations and have one strong international organization to represent the profession. That’s where we are today.

**Were you involved in the merger at all?**

I had already served as the chair of the organization. At that point, it had been two terms since I was the past chair. I wasn’t as involved as those who were current leaders of the organization. I certainly knew what was happening, and I provided input when I needed to, but I was not one of the architects that helped push it together.

**Where do you see IEDC and the economic development profession going in the future?**

IEDC must anticipate where the field is going and try to provide some value to its members through conference programs, leadership summit topics, or printed materials. IEDC must know the “flavor of the month.” Is it high-tech, bio-tech, green, or social media? What is it going to be next year or the year after that?

The skill sets and techniques that economic developers need in order to grow, diversify, and expand their economy are fairly standard. It’s really the targets you pursue that might change over time. I think IEDC is in a position to provide good background research and information in an educational setting to help communities get their minds around what the new targets are, what the better approaches are, and how to grow or recruit companies. From that standpoint, that’s where the changes seem to take place. There are always new financing mechanisms that come up such as the American Recovery Act and the Economy Recovery Zone Bond. It is important for IEDC to provide information to help the profession understand what the opportunity might be and how they can take advantage of that in their own marketplace. I think IEDC does a great job in keeping on top of those things.

**During your time as chair, were there any pressing issues or specific priorities?**

I know that growing the membership is an issue for any organization. In our case, we were trying to create an Economic Development Foundation that could be financially self-sustaining and provide high level research on current topics. We also wanted to improve the certified economic developer education process to make it more transparent. We wanted individuals that pursued certification to have a better understanding of what the requirements were and what materials they needed to study. The whole objective is to certify people…not keep people out. We had to work on improving our certification process and our testing instrument.
Do you have any personal anecdotes from your involvement with AEDC?

We were pretty much on the cutting edge of trying to have an international approach. Our goal was to take an international position as a leader in economic development so other countries could emulate the work we had done and perhaps do something similar in their own countries.

At one point, we hosted a delegation from the Soviet Union that were visiting on an educational/fact finding mission. They came here to observe and learn. This was before the fall of Communism. It was fascinating from our standpoint, to witness them embrace capitalistic ideas and approaches. We had a series meetings, presentations, and briefings in Washington, DC.

Were there any pressing economic development issues, like natural disasters, during your tenure?

There really weren’t any natural disasters that we had to deal with. I think we mostly dealt with what was going on in the economy and the workforce. We realized early on that off-shoring was starting to happen, and that our country was beginning to lose its competitive edge in manufacturing. There was a lot of time and effort put into creating workforce development programs to address off-shoring and bolster our manufacturing sector so that we had more base employment, which has a higher multiplier effect than retail jobs. Also, we were feeling the effects of base closures through the BRAC process and trying to address the economic impacts and facility reuse.

Have you worked on any economic development strategies to counter the effects of globalization?

I was involved in international trade when I worked at the state. We conducted a lot of reverse investment missions and provided opportunities for our businesses to export products abroad. As a consultant, I have developed strategy plans for communities that want to pursue international activities like attracting foreign direct investment or helping communities export products.

Do you see any other trends in the economic development field?

We are in a difficult economic climate, and I’m starting to see a little bit more parochialism on the part of communities and states. Everyone is buying local in an effort to keep the money local. You can understand why that’s important, but in the long-term, is that really a strategy that will help you survive? I think when the economy turns around people will abandon that as a strategy within their own communities.

Another trend, particularly here in the West, is the attraction of educational institutions. On a per-capita basis, the western part of the US is underserved with educational institutions. Today, I’m working with a community that is interested in attracting educational institutions to fill in some of the gaps and identify various niches that are currently being underserved in the marketplace. Obviously, education is the pathway to career advancement and the objective is to make education an opportunity for more people.
Healthcare is a sector that is projected to grow in order to keep up with the aging of the population. Many communities are focusing resources on this sector, including the creation of workforce development programs. Healthcare and education are the two areas that will continue to increase in employment over the decade.

I think “green industry” and renewable energy is the current trend. Jobs have gone from being blue-collar or white-collar to “green-collar” jobs. It’s the same job, but the product being made is now going to be used in an energy efficient fashion…either in a building or in a manufacturing process. The whole approach to resource utilization and trying to reduce the carbon footprint is being driven by policy makers, technological advances, and consumer preferences. I think that trend is going to continue, and you are going to see more jobs created that are associated with those objectives. We can call it the “greening of America,” but at some point in time we will accomplish this goal we’re all going to be there and it’s going to be done. So then, what’s next?

Last, I think information technology will continue to evolve with the use of mobile applications and the need for more securitization of data. Job growth in this sector will continue and education providers will need to keep up with the demand for talent.

I think IEDC is stronger today than it has been. There are new, yet unknown, opportunities out there for IEDC to leverage and help the membership grow. What will those opportunities be? Your guess is as good as mine.

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