

Steger Believes "To Whom Much Is Given, Much Is Expected"

By Audrey C. Lodato
Post Staff Writer

Assistant City Manager Don Steger is a man of many responsibilities and activities. Fairly new to Charlotte (he came here in 1979 to work for the City), Steger very obviously believes in helping out. He is on the boards of the Urban League, the United Way, Bethlehem Center, the Downtown Rotary Club, CONTACT Counseling Service, the Multiple Sclerosis Society for Western North Carolina, and the Afro-American Cultural Center.

"I don't believe the old theory that people can pull themselves up by their bootstraps," he declared. "They can't if they don't have any shoes. A lot of people have helped me; life has been good to me," he continued. Steger's guiding philosophy is "to whom has been given, much is expected."

Steger's City employment involves managing a number of departments for the City Manager. He is responsible for supervising public safety programs and the basic service programs in Charlotte, including the police and fire departments; operations, which



Don Steger
.. Assistant city manager

includes the divisions of sanitation, street maintenance, community improvements, and animal control; employment and training; parks and recreation; neighborhood cen-

ters; emergency management; and the Mint Museum.

Steger described himself as one who "gets turned on by doing." Charlotte fills the bill for him in that

regard. "There are so many people doing so many things you want to be part of here." He has also found Charlotte to be a caring place. "This is one of the most loving communities in which to live. People care about each other here," he noted.

Steger claimed he came to Charlotte "by way of 25 different places." His immediate past employment was for the city of St. Petersburg, Florida, where he had a similar position. Before he and his family made the move, Steger had heard of Charlotte but knew nothing about the city. Now, the born-again Charlottean thinks his adopted city is "the best kept secret around. It's probably the most exciting community, certainly in the Southeast, and probably in the country."

His enthusiasm is contagious. Steger admitted, "I spend my life thinking about us all 'becoming'. There is no end to the sky. All of us can keep climbing, there's so much to discover, so much to do."

Steger obtained a B.S. degree from Bethune-Cookman College in Daytona Beach, where he studied "a little of everything"

because he couldn't make up his mind. His studies included pre-law, administration, biology, social planning, and psychology. He has a second degree from Gammon Theological Seminary, and received his Ph.D. in urban studies and urban administration and planning from the University of South Florida, Tampa.

The Assistant City Manager has been "pretty active" in church life. He is presently working with Reeder Memorial and feels his ministry is "an important part of what I ought to be doing."

Steger and his wife, Elizabeth, have an 8 year old daughter, Lisa. Despite his hectic schedule, Steger makes time for his little girl, "particularly on Saturdays. That's our time, and has been since she was old enough to go out in a stroller."

He wants his daughter to grow up in Charlotte. "There are plenty of cultural activities here," he noted. "There are wholesome opportunities for a well-rounded family life. Living in Charlotte is almost like being in a candy shop," he laughed.

When asked if he and his

family want to stay in the Queen City, Steger replied, "Without question."

Robinson

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from Charlotte's Black community. It's an important occurrence since, "Art is an investment," Robinson divulges. "There is a great return on your money."

"I've charged \$4,500 for a picture and more," tells Robinson. "But I still do things for \$200 because I want Black people to have my work. I know one day I'll be priced out of most people's range," he notes.

"I consider myself successful in Charlotte though that is not my objective. I'm interested in becoming internationally known," he relates.

But the time has come for this interview to end because Robinson is busy preparing for a few upcoming art exhibits this year. He has also been requested to curate a show during 1985.

He is apparently on a course to further success. But what is most important, Robinson is interested in pulling other black artists along with him.

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