

Bill Geller



Bill Geller, director of Geller & Associates, reports on and provides consulting services to support effective and legitimate policing and community action that fosters a free society and safer, stronger communities. Over 33 years, he has worked with numerous police agencies, nongovernmental organizations, the U.S. Justice Department, local and state governments, research and policy organizations, training institutes, and civil rights organizations. He assists clients with leadership, strategic, policy, communications, program implementation and management challenges.

His coauthored and edited books include *Building Our Way Out of Crime: The Promise of Police-Community Developer Partnerships* (forthcoming—foreword by Los Angeles Police Department Chief Bill Bratton and community development expert Paul Grogan); *Deadly Force: What We Know – A Practitioner’s Desk Reference on Police-Involved Shootings in the United States* (the standard reference work on the subject for many years); *Police Leadership in America: Crisis & Opportunity*; the International City-County Management Association’s *Local Government Police Management* (1991 edition and, with Darrel Stephens, the 2003 edition); *Managing Innovation in Policing: The Untapped Potential of the Middle Manager* (written at the invitation of the Harvard University Executive Session on Community Policing); *Split-Second Decisions: Shootings of and by Chicago Police* (cited by the U.S. Supreme Court in a landmark 1985 deadly force decision restricting police from shooting at nonviolent fleeing suspects); and *Police Violence: Understanding and Controlling Police Abuse of Force* (with Hans Toch). The *Police Violence* volume, published by Yale University Press, was funded by the U.S. Justice Department to help map strategy after the Rodney King beating in Los Angeles.

In the 1980s, Geller conducted for the U.S. Department of Justice the first study of videotaping in the United States to document interrogations and confessions and recommended the technique to foster more effective, efficient and legitimate police stationhouse interrogations. Geller’s mentor, internationally-esteemed criminal justice and human rights advocate and scholar Norval Morris, under whom Geller studied at the University of Chicago Law School, wrote forewords for two of Geller’s books; and the two coauthored a policy examination of role divisions between Federal and local police in the United States, published in the University of Chicago Press volume *Modern Policing*. He has also been engaged to conduct a case study of a \$75 million revitalization-public safety project in a long-neglected African American neighborhood in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

Geller’s consulting focuses on leadership of strategic innovation in policing; managing police use of force and related community conflict; fostering police integrity and respect for human rights; and strengthening diverse police-community partnerships for public safety. He is the co-founder of and principal public safety consultant to the Local Initiatives Support Corporation’s Community Safety Initiative, which, for the past 15 years, has supported mutually-reinforcing community revitalization and public safety in American cities from New York to Los Angeles. As a community development intermediary, LISC has invested over \$8 billion in revitalizing low-income neighborhoods.

Geller’s executive search work has focused on identifying game-changing leaders for criminal justice organizations. This personnel work has included police chief searches for the cities of Washington, DC, Charlotte, North Carolina and Detroit, Michigan, as well as service in President Bill Clinton’s Office of Presidential Personnel, where 10 of Geller’s candidates were named by the President to senior Department of Justice posts. Much of Geller’s executive search work

over the years has been done in his role as a Senior Associate with The Boulware Group, a highly respected search firm and one of the few in the United States which is female-African American owned and managed. He is working with The Boulware Group currently to identify the next President of the National Council on Crime & Delinquency.

Other recent work includes: writing guidebooks for the Charlotte-Mecklenburg (North Carolina) Police Department describing – and explaining the rationale for procedures used in – its complaint processing and “early intervention” systems (providing greater transparency concerning how this major police organization investigates its own operations); advising the RAND Corporation on a study of the Los Angeles Police Department’s reforms of use-of-force training; assisting the Boston (Massachusetts) Police Department on the development of in-service use-of-force training; and advising the President of John Jay College of Criminal Justice, Jeremy Travis, on the development of a John Jay Leadership Academy aimed at upgrading police leadership in the United States and abroad. Geller was appointed in 2005 by LAPD Chief Bill Bratton to a “board of inquiry” – the first in the history of that department to include persons from outside the police organization – to explore opportunities for improvements in SWAT team strategy, leadership, management and operations.

He served on the board of directors of the John Howard Association (a national prison-reform group); the advisory board to the Yale University Child Study Center’s National Center for Children Exposed to Violence; and the National Center for Victims of Crime “Panel on Technology as a Community Engagement Tool for Crime Prevention,” funded by the MacArthur Foundation. Geller is a long-time member of the board of directors of Business and Professional People for the Public Interest (BPI), a leading public interest law and policy firm that focuses on making quality, affordable housing, education and other services available to the public on an equitable, nondiscriminatory basis.

Prior to opening the Geller & Associates consulting firm in 1997, he served as executive director and research director of the Chicago Law Enforcement Study Group (a research and advocacy organization convened by Chicago’s civil rights and civil liberties leadership); project director for the American Bar Foundation (the research arm of the American Bar Association); special counsel for public safety and internal security to the Chicago Park District in the administration of Mayor Harold Washington (focusing on matters of public safety in parks and employee integrity); associate director of the Police Executive Research Forum; law clerk to Justice Walter V. Schaefer of the Illinois Supreme Court; and search manager in the White House Office of Presidential Personnel, focusing on Presidential appointments to sub-cabinet posts.

In 1982, he founded and spearheaded a campaign that raised \$1.5 million and purchased soft-body armor for the entire 11,500-member Chicago Police Department, the largest domestic order for this protective gear in American history.

Geller holds a law degree – and a writing award – from the University of Chicago (1975). He was awarded the City of Chicago’s Richard J. Daley Police Medal of Honor and commendations from the New York City police commissioner (for executive leadership training) and St. Louis (Missouri) police chief (and later Mayor) Clarence Harmon (for support on problem-oriented policing). He is profiled in *Who’s Who in America*. Bill Geller lives in Glenview, Illinois with his wife, composer-lyricist Julie Shannon.
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