

# PROMETHEUS BOOKS spring \* summer 2006

## TRADE CATALOG

### POWER FAILURE

Politics, Patronage, and the Economic Future of Buffalo, New York

**Diana Dillaway**

At the turn of the 20th century, Buffalo, NY, was one of the world's great industrial cities. The city was the third largest producer of steel and, with the largest inland port, was a hub of commerce at the end of the Erie Canal.

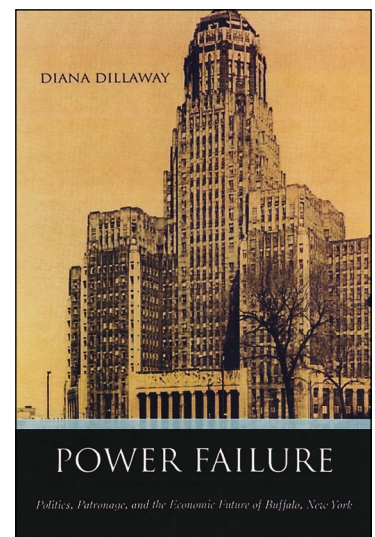
Today, due to financial distress and decades of mismanagement, the city has been put under the supervision of a financial control board. Population drain and an inability to attract new business have brought the city to the brink of financial collapse. The question on everyone's lips is, "What went wrong?"

Community development expert and Buffalo native analyzes the history of planning and decision making in Buffalo that led to the current malaise. A member of the Wendt family, whose great grandfather founded one of Buffalo's oldest manufacturing businesses, Dillaway has used her access to the city's most powerful political, economic, and community leaders to reconstruct the factors that created the city as it exists today. She examines the most divisive debates of the past, including strategies for downtown and neighborhood development, planning for a rapid transit system, and battles over the location of a proposed university campus and a professional football stadium.

A consistent theme is the protection of the status quo and turf battles among the WASP business and financial elite, ethnic Catholic communities centered on neighborhood parish life, and the Democratic machine with its entrenched patronage system. She finds that the only people interested in change has been the African American community, whose efforts were consistently thwarted by a multi-term mayor who diverted community development funds for his own pet projects.

At a time when Buffalo is trying to build a bright future, Dillaway's insights, revelations, and prescriptions for change comprise urgent reading for community leaders and citizen's alike. *Power Failure* speaks to the issues of leadership and power facing every city and local government today.

**Diana Dillaway** (Ventura, CA), now a freelance writer, has worked for more than thirty years on urban and community development with non profit groups including San Jose Development Corporation, the Foundation for National Progress, the Center for Business and Environmental Studies at California State University at Hayward, and the Local Government Commission (Sacramento) where she wrote "Capturing the Local Economic Benefit of Recycling" for local governments.



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