



Meet AGA's Next National President—Bobby A. Derrick, CGFM

When Bobby Derrick, CGFM, becomes AGA's 55th National President on July 1, he plans to make the furthering of AGA's Long-Range Strategic Plan his primary focus, using the theme of "Leadership for the Future."

Derrick, 55, is the director for Administrative Services and Corporate Resources Support Services Customer Advocate, at the Defense Finance and Accounting Service (DFAS) in Indianapolis. A 32-year federal employee, Derrick has served in numerous posts within DFAS and has been a longtime AGA leader.

An AGA member since 1989, Derrick credits his AGA membership with helping him to get ahead in his career. "AGA has been one of the contributing factors to my successful professional life," Derrick said. "Through AGA, I have had a number of different opportunities to work directly with senior managers where I was able to demonstrate my leadership skills. I have had the opportunity to network with many who have served as mentors. In my career, I have personally worked with two outstanding leaders who were also AGA Past National Presidents, Clyde Jeffcoat, CGFM, CIA, and John Cooley, CGFM. They will never know how much they influenced my life and how I looked up to them."

A past president of the Indianapolis Chapter, Derrick was instrumental in starting the Central Indiana and Quad Cities Chapters while serving as the North Central Regional Vice President and later as the Senior Vice President for Regional Services for Section I. A member of AGA's National Executive Committee (NEC), Derrick has served two terms on the National Nominating and Chapter Assistance Committees

and was chair of the 1999–2000 AGA National Awards Committee.

We asked Derrick to discuss some of his goals for AGA during his upcoming term.

Please tell the AGA members how your membership has affected your professional life.

One of the most important "intangible" benefits that AGA has to offer is an opportunity to meet some wonderful people and to make some lifetime friendships. If only the public knew what I know. One of the common characteristics of AGA members are that those who join to make a difference by learning through the educational events and/or by contributing to the accountability profession. They are among the most dedicated and selfless employees an employer could ever wish to have. These members have another common characteristic: they want to serve others, which is one of the noblest things we can do in our lives.

What do you see as AGA's greatest challenge and where do you think AGA can and should have the biggest impact?

From my perspective the biggest challenges we face are (1) our commitment to growing membership and (2) to develop and implement leadership succession planning. We are on the edge of some exciting and rewarding times for our Association, members and the government financial accountability community. As an Association, we have an unprecedented opportunity to step up and make an impact in government



financial management community through the CEAR and SEA Programs, CGFM, and our participation in technical areas, such as standards setting. One of the benefits we will realize as a result of these successes will be growth. I believe that leaders and professionals across our country in all levels of government and our Corporate Partners will take another look at AGA and see our successes. Many of them will want to be part of this Association as they see how we have changed and are making a difference.

This will happen because of "leadership" and our commitment. Our Association is truly fortunate that our National Office is led by an outstanding Executive Director, Relmond Van Daniker, DBA, CPA. Through his leadership and support by the NEC, Past National Presidents and volunteer leaders at all levels throughout AGA, we are going to be "stepping up" as an Association. One of the points that I think must be noted is that Van has started off with an outstanding National Office staff. I wish each and every member could have the opportunity to know Van and our National Office staff, for they are second to none in their professionalism, innovation and commitment.

Our vision and strategic planning goals and objectives will serve as our guide. On this journey, we will embark on some new initiatives to help us achieve those strategic objectives

thereby leading us in “stepping up a notch.”

My goals and objectives this year begin where our current National President, Jullin Renthrope, CGFM, leaves off. I will follow the same path established by my predecessors in seeking to implement our strategic plan. My objective will be to ensure that we stay on this path. I will encourage and support Van as he works with the NEC to develop new initiatives and implements them. You will find that I will be marketing our successes and communicating them to the members as I visit our chapters and participate in training events.

One of my contributions will be to work with the NEC, Past National Presidents, executive director, chapter presidents and RVPs to begin a new emphasis in offering leadership opportunities. With their help we will encourage our chapters to develop leadership opportunities and provide for succession planning. We must find potential leaders in our respective communities, offer leadership opportunities and provide mentors to help them to become this great Association’s new leaders. AGA’s success and strength is based on the leadership and voluntary work performed by its membership—at the national, regional and chapter levels. This includes all government and nongovernment members and financial management accountability professionals. Our voluntary membership is our foundation, our leaders are our strength and our partners (corporate and other associations) are our enablers.

Where do you plan to put the most emphasis in the coming year?

First, look at the Certificates of Excellence in Accountability Reporting (CEAR) at the federal level and Service Efforts and Accomplishments (SEA) Reporting at the state and local levels. In respect to taking AGA to a new level, we must set our minds and initiatives to making the CEAR and SEA Programs the premiere programs for rewarding and recognizing outstanding performance.

AGA’s CEAR Program has been helping federal agencies produce high-quality Performance and Accountability Reports since 1997. AGA has been helping federal agencies improve their

operations by helping them produce high-quality Performance and Accountability Reports (PARs), which provide a comprehensive understanding of an agency’s fiscal and programmatic accomplishments. The reports provide readers the opportunity to assess financial stewardship and evaluate program performance. Exceptional PARs can help leaders rethink the way agencies do business.

The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation granted AGA funds to launch the Certificate of Excellence in SEA Reporting Program. The program offers in-depth evaluation of SEA reports (also called performance reports), recommendations for improvements and recognition of excellent reports with a Certificate of Excellence. With support from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, the National Center for Civic Innovation is launching the Government Performance Reporting Demonstration Program. To encourage participation, approximately 30 governments will be awarded grants of \$30,000 to assist them in preparing annual reports using the GASB Suggested Criteria. Governments that apply for the grants are being encouraged to consider submitting their performance report to AGA for evaluation under the new Certificate of Excellence SEA Reporting Program.

Second, the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) Program has become so critical to AGA and its members. Thanks to the visionary leaders who had the wisdom, understanding and commitment to make the CGFM Program a reality, our goal for making the CGFM certification the preferred designation for government financial accountability professionals is well on the way. Each year we have new governmental entities adopting the CGFM designation as a one of the preferred certifications. Our goal should be to make it the preferred designation within the government accountability profession. I am looking forward to working with our director of professional certification and the Professional Certification Board to make that happen.

The next area of emphasis is education. For more than 53 years, the AGA has provided the cutting-edge continuing professional education and training that government financial managers need. Through conferences, courses, training events and the CGFM

Program, AGA and its network of 90 chapters deliver thousands of hours of continuing professional education hours each year. This may be one of the most successful years, if not the most successful, in providing educational opportunities to our members both at the chapter/regional levels and national level.

Finally, in keeping with my theme, we have to focus on leadership. We must place a renewed emphasis on our personal commitment in fulfilling our roles and responsibilities as current leaders. We must make leadership opportunities available starting at the chapter level. We must actively seek potential leaders in our membership rolls. We must personally mentor new leaders as they take on leadership opportunities through encouragement and support. We must develop succession plans for all levels of our governing infrastructure.

A native of Corbin, KY, Derrick is the son of the late James Tilson Derrick, who died in 1997 at the age of 103, and Etta Natz Derrick, who still resides in Corbin. He enjoys relaying the story of being the first in his family to have a driver’s license and calls teaching his parents how to drive “quite an experience.”

Derrick, along with his wife Donna, raised three grown children: Veronica, Robert and Amanda. Bobby and Donna, who is a registered nurse working for a family practice, often compete for babysitting duties and chances to spoil their three grandchildren: Megan, 6, Luci, 5, and Dean, 3.

On top of his career as a federal government financial manager, Derrick is a professional photographer, specializing in children and family portraiture as well as weddings. His favorite subjects are definitely his three grandchildren. He estimates he has taken more than 7,000 photographs of his grandchildren. He also enjoys reading, gardening and taking continuing education courses in a variety of fields.

“I am firmly convinced that you get out of AGA or any Association or similar organization what you put into it,” Derrick said, adding he is looking forward to his year as AGA National President. “I feel like I have been fortunate in my life for having an internal drive to become involved and to find ways of serving others.” ■