



Final Entry

Meet AGA's Next National President: **Jeffrey S. Hart, CGFM, CFE**

Jeffrey S. Hart, CGFM, CFE, 50, a member of the Denver Chapter, will take office on July 1 as AGA's 57th National President. We talked with him recently about his plans for his term.



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

My AGA membership has positively affected my professional life in more ways than I can count. I believe building personal relationships of all kinds is the most important thing we can do in life, and through AGA I have met and learned from the icons of our profession while meeting colleagues who have become some of my closest friends. Second, it has given me a much larger view of our profession and the people in it than I ever could have seen in my own office or agency or level of government. This view of our professional world, and the learning I have experienced by interacting with our colleagues around government, has, in turn, provided me with the ability to much more clearly see where our profession is going, and must go, in the future.

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

I believe AGA's greatest challenge is updating and expanding our vision of ourselves—as an association, as a profession, and as individuals in this association and in this rapidly expanding profession of ours. It was on the basis of this challenge that I chose my theme, Creating Exceptional Value for Government Accountability Professionals.

First, let me say that being National President is an incredible honor that I never imagined for myself until some of the leaders in our profession suggested it to me. I thank them all, and I would not be here today if not for their ability to see in me something I had not yet seen in myself.

Now back to your question: AGA is becoming much more than a membership organization—much more than perhaps Robert King or any of

our founders ever imagined. Thanks to past and present AGA leaders, staff and volunteers, AGA has become the thought leader in government accountability. With AGA's expanded role, our individual members and chapters are more important than ever. We will only realize our goals with the help and service of our individual members and chapters. We must create exceptional value for our members and potential members if we are to be successful as an organization.

Nowhere is the need for creating value more acute than with the younger members of our profession, those we call "early career" professionals. Our profession and our Association are facing a demographic tidal wave as Baby Boomers retire en masse over the next few years, possibly swamping Social Security, Medicaid and Medicare, and causing the "brain drain" and "human capital crisis" we have all heard about. This tidal wave also has the potential to swamp AGA and our profession.

Our Executive Director Relmond Van Daniker has demonstrated the courage and foresight that will keep AGA from being swamped by outside factors. His skills and the abilities of our National Office staff are undoubtedly largely responsible for the gains in new members and CGFMs that we have seen recently.

AGA has much to be excited about. Yet, we must continue to think outside of the box and find new and better ways to create value in our Association and our profession. This is especially crucial with regard to our early career colleagues. They are the future. And we must find ways to attract and retain more people from this important group.

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

I plan to emphasize how important individuals' service and leadership is in the new AGA, and in creating exceptional value within AGA and our profession. I want us all to recognize and appreciate how much our profession has expanded, and all the new and exciting things AGA is doing. Perhaps most important, I want each member to know that everything they give to AGA has and will come back to them many times over in their value to their employer and their profession. I believe the more our profession is valued, the more our Association is valued, the more each member (and CGFM) will be valued, recognized and rewarded with enhanced job opportunities and bigger opportunities to serve their organizations, their profession and the American people. Transparency and accountability are the key pillars in a

healthy and vibrant democracy, and AGA and our members are at the forefront of this quest.

Tell us about your professional career and your AGA career.

I never really envisioned myself working for the government. However, when I was in college I learned about GAO's mission—fighting fraud, waste, abuse and mismanagement—and I was hooked. I started with GAO as a college intern and went to work for them full time right out of school. I later spent four years living and working for GAO in their "European Branch" in Frankfurt, Germany, which my wife and I always say were the best years of our lives. (I might have to change that statement after I complete my term as AGA National President.) While living in Frankfurt, we met some of our closest and dearest friends (outside of AGA), and traveled to scores of countries. I left Frankfurt in 1985 for a promotion with GAO in Dallas, and transferred back to GAO in Denver in 1989. In 1991, Nikki Tinsley, who later became the inspector general, hired me to basically rebuild and run the Denver IG office for the Environmental Protection Agency. I am now responsible for all IG program evaluation in the area of enforcement, compliance and environmental stewardship.

I joined AGA within weeks of starting my government career with GAO in Denver. I later also became a member of the Frankfurt and Dallas chapters and served in a variety of chapter leadership positions through the years. In 1998 I completed the term of the Southwestern Regional Vice President and then did a complete term as RVP the following year. I also served as

chair of the National Chapter Assistance Committee and as a member of various other national committees and task forces until I was appointed to the National Executive Committee in 2001 as a Senior Vice President At-Large.

Tell us about your personal background and include any information you wish to share about your family.

I am originally from Ohio and regularly visit my aunt and other close relatives who still live there. I grew up in Denver from the age of 4, graduated from the University of Colorado, and began my government career in Denver as an evaluator with GAO in 1977. I am the oldest of four siblings, two of whom also live in Denver along with much of my extended family. My beautiful wife Roxanna and I have been married for more than 30 years, and we spend much of our free time doting on our nieces and nephew and enjoying the beautiful Rocky Mountains.