

THE EIGHTIES

The decade of the 80's saw many changes in the trends and directions of AGA and the Dallas Chapter. Membership drifted downward during much of the decade from 231 in 1979-80 to a low of 107 in 1986-87. However, we continued with many positive achievements. In 1980, Romulo Garcia became the first Hispanic chapter President and he was followed by Sterlin McGruder, the first African-American to lead the chapter. Janice Leroy was chosen as the first woman president in 1987.

Robert Calbridge (president in 1979-80) died on September 30, 1982 at 59. During this period the chapter began to have joint meetings with other professional organizations, such as the Institute of Internal Auditors, the American Society of Military Comptrollers, and the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners. This initiative increased interest and attendance for all groups. In the 1980s, many top-level financial managers from Washington and Texas were invited to speak at our monthly meetings. Among others, the Inspectors General from Education (James Thomas) and EPA (John Martin) spoke at these meetings.

In 1985, with the Texas continuing education requirements for CPAs, Debbie Currie spearheaded our obtaining sponsor ID number 1567. Since then, the chapter has qualified most luncheon meetings for one hour as well as CPE credit for other training events. Another first occurred in October of 1988 when Dallas was one of the sites for the tele/video conference on the Revisions to the Governmental Auditing Standards. Two other very successful educational programs were held in early 1989. The first of these resulted in the Dallas and Fort Worth chapters obtaining substantial revenue by providing training for CPA's and others on compliance auditing. The second event that year was a two-day course on writing and team building with many attending from the Southwest Intergovernmental Audit Forum.

In the late 1980s, in an effort to increase attendance, the meetings were changed to a luncheon format. The old evening meeting format had been failing for a number of years. At times, only a handful of members showed up and the Chapter was in danger of going out of business. The luncheons resulted in a turn around in participation with larger crowds of 40 to over 100 attending. Other meeting sites were used to improve the quality and the image of the programs. Instead of holding meetings in cafeterias as done in the seventies and early eighties, hotels such as the Quality Inn and Embassy Suites improved the value, image, and professionalism of AGA Dallas meetings. The Clarion Hotel (later Holiday Inn) on Mockingbird hosted many meetings and events from 1989 to 1996.

Our winning and civic ways continued all through the 1980s. In 1982 and 1983, we received the Newsletter Excellence Award and the late Mary Graves received the award again in 1985. We were recognized by the College of Business Administration at the University of Texas at Arlington in 1985 as an Associate for our support of the UTA programs and making scholarship awards available to accounting students. Dallas won the AGA National competition for points and membership gains several times in the 80's (including 1988-89). In 1988, the first scholarship was awarded to a chapter member, Susan Harke, for professional development. In 1988-89, the Chapter also conducted a charity raffle to raise funds for the Marine Corp Toys for Tots and other causes. Debbie Currie was again instrumental in getting many members to volunteer for fund-raising for Channel 13 (the local Public Television Station), which continued for several years. This community service activity provided an opportunity to wear the new blue Dallas chapter T-shirts. We smiled at the TV camera even when we received a few "strange" pledge calls.

Beginning in 1989, Debbie Currie also directed the efforts of the Chapter in getting fourteen people involved in the IRS Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA). On May 19, 1990, we broke more new ground (and suffered many aches and pains) by joining with the City of Dallas in painting and restoring the home of an elderly Dallas widow who could not thank us enough for our hard work.

In 1989-90, we climbed back to 165 members, thus regaining Category B chapter status, and again won the "Best Newsletter Award" (Grace Morrison Editor). For the third time, the chapter achieved the Silver award on the road to a Gold Chapter designation in 1992. Perhaps the highlight of the year was the joint training event with the Fort Worth chapter when William Reed, the DCAA Director, spoke to a huge crowd

at the luncheon. That same year we contributed \$1,000 to the AGA National fund to help purchase the AGA building in Alexandria, and awarded a scholarship to a member's daughter. We published a Chapter Directory and a DFW Employment Guide. The by-laws were revised that year and a historian's position was created.