



**CREATING
PATHWAYS
AND**

**SHAPING
THE FUTURE**

**IAAP
ALABAMA DIVISION**

2006 - 2007

Gertrude S. Benjamin, CPS
Alabama Division President
2006-2007

**2006 Alabama Division Annual Meeting
2006-2007 Division President's Address
Gertrude S. Benjamin CPS
June 9 - 11, 2006 Gadsden, Alabama**

Good Evening,

I sincerely appreciate and thank my HEAVENLY FATHER for having all of you here in Gadsden with me as I begin my term as the 2006 – 2007 Alabama Division President. My passion for this association is mirrored in my strong dedication and commitment to my employer, and management support is critical to those of us taking active leadership roles in this association... and I am so blessed to have absolutely incredible support from every level of management in my organization.

Another essential area of needed support and understanding is that of my family... and some are here with me tonight! To ... my mother Evelyn ... my sisters Mary, Carolyn, and Regina ... and other family members and friends, ... thank you so much for coming all the way from Fayetteville; SC, St. Louis, MO, Auburn, Birmingham, and Notasulga, AL; to be with me tonight... and to my husband, James... thank you for understanding my passion for this association, and for sharing me with IAAP all those weekends I've been away from home ... or hidden away in my office at the PC ... I can't even begin to tell you how much it means to have you here with me tonight... I couldn't take on this opportunity without all of my family's support, and I love you all!

Special thanks to members of the Alabama Division...

without your support four years ago, I'd not have been elected to this Board of Directors, and wouldn't have the honor of standing before you this evening!

And to my own Tuskegee Chapter members, you're all "the very best!" Thank you for your support and belief in me over the years... and for being here in Gadsden with me! I'd love to introduce each and every one of you, but I'm afraid I simply don't have time ... I DO, though, thank you so much for encouraging me fifteen years ago, when I was so afraid to speak up at our chapter meetings ... Yes, I was terrified of public speaking... but you all saw something in me that I didn't see in myself at the time - a passion for this association and for my chosen profession ... and you take full credit for "developing me" way back then... I can't thank you enough for that, my friends ...and thanks so much for being here with me tonight!

To the members of the Alabama Division Board ... not only those who currently serve, but those who have served with me in the past, thank you for all of the knowledge, encouragement, nurturing, guidance, support and friendship that you have all so generously given to me.

And I'd be totally remiss if I didn't publicly thank President Mahathey for her incredible leadership... and for serving as my inspiration this past year... but above all Ellen, thank you for

being such a fun person. .. this time last year, I was not sure if I'd make it to this day ... but the open, honest dialogue you initiated opened the door to what has been a fun filled year... you are truly an inspiration to me, and serving under your leadership has been "an eye opening experience" for me! Thank you, Ellen!

I think one of the most important things a leader can do is to COMMUNICATE! So I'd like to take a few minutes to communicate my expectations... of MYSELF, as your president... and expectations I have of YOU, the members of this Association.

Personally, I have high expectations for myself, including:

1. COMMUNICATION ... I WILL communicate with the members through my Chapter Leadership Team, who serves as my front-line voice to the members! As you might imagine, one-on-one communication could be difficult in an association of 517 members statewide, but I will communicate with my Division and Chapter Leadership Teams on a regular basis, much of which I will ask to be disseminated throughout the Division through your Chapter leaders.

2. I will LISTEN... I want and NEED to hear members' concerns and issues", please know that the primary responsibility of your Division Board of Directors is fiduciary in nature, but its important to me to be aware of what's going on in and around the Division.

3. **I WILL MOTIVATE** you ... I have a strong commitment for our association ... and for our profession ... and I will do my very best to spread my enthusiasm!
4. And I will **REPRESENT YOU** to the very best of my ability!!

In return, my expectations of **YOU**, the members of IAAP, are simply **TAKE OWNERSHIP** in **OUR** year in the following ways:

Continue to focus on **YOU** as the “Key to Excellence” personally, professionally and in you chapter. As Alabama Division **HEROES**: helpful, energetic, encouraging, rewarding, outstanding, exciting, supportive, successful, Every job is a self-portrait of the person who did it... autograph **YOUR** work with excellence!

Sure, as I serve as your Division President, I'm certain I'll have my share of issues with which to deal - but I have an incredible Board standing ready to assist me in any way... I have an extraordinary group of Past Division Presidents from which to draw knowledge and experience, and I'm confident they will not let me fail..., my Chapter Leadership Team is pumped ... and ready to tackle anything that comes their way... our Division Committees are composed of dedicated members who are anxious to serve our association ... and I have a very capable and willing Division Board of Directors who I'd like to invite to stand **WITH** me as we begin our 2006-2007 year ... and please know that we'll do our very best to lead this association forward as Trail Blazers “**Creating Pathways and Shaping the Future.**”

When I started to think about a theme for my term, I had a couple of key points I wanted to be sure to capture.

What message did I want to convey to the members? I was certain I wanted it to be something that everyone could associate and relate to, one that has value and meaning, and one that we can definitely have fun with too.

How exciting it was to connect that “last piece to the path”. Ah – the essential piece making the path complete! guess what? That last piece is still the essential piece – connecting and linking it all together as trail blazers on the pathway to success.

With these thoughts in mind, I have chosen as the 2006-2007 IAAP Alabama Division theme/logo, “Creating Pathways and Shaping the Future**”. Each of us is an essential piece in IAAP, and the pathway is NOT complete, unless all of us are actively involved and linked together to building a stronger association.**

WHY, you ask, do I use the State of Alabama for my logo?

... Well allow me to explain:

FIRST, I needed something DIFFERENT... something, I thought, that would have people asking questions when they saw my theme logo! And to those questions, our members could offer this simple response ... WE 'Turn Jobs into Careers!'" And then the member could expand upon the benefits he or she, personally, receives through membership in

IAAP! What better way to market our association than through our own personal testimonials!

Second, I wanted my logo to be SYMBOLIC ... and I wanted my logo to ... represent All members (and FUTURE members) of our Association, so that everyone would feel a part of my team. You see, this isn't MY year - it's OUR year ... and how better to convey that to All of our members than to develop a theme and logo that's all-inclusive! So, based upon the location in which individuals reside, everyone is represented right here!

The State itself represents our association's rich history - a strong foundation on which we can shape a positive future! I believe the primary reason for looking at our past is to identify our successes... so we can build upon them. It's time to stop looking back at problems or dredging up OLD issues and wasting energy on things that didn't work... we need to identify our mistakes, but only so we can learn from them... and then let's move forward by building upon our strengths and those things that we really can impact during the 2006-2007 IAAP year.

Continuing with the symbolism, note that upper regions of the State represents the North West region of members... the middle regions of the State... represents the North East, Central and South Central regions of members. The lower and bottom part of the State represents our members in the South region.

So you see, EVERYONE is a part of the 2006-2007 IAAP theme, a part of OUR year! and I hope each and every one of you FEELS a part of OUR year!

And, while every member of the Leadership Team (Division Board, Chapter Presidents, Committee Chairs/Directors) is represented as the individuals they are by their respective geographic locations, I'm using HIGHWAYS to represent your Leadership Team (Board of Directors, Chapter Presidents, Committee Chairs/Directors), - and they're symbolized in my logo by the color RED - a necessary element to connecting, linking and shaping a positive image of the future of our Association. Another point of symbolism ... while we are each linked to our respective geographic area, as members of the Leadership Team (Board of Directors, Chapter Presidents, Committee Chairs/Directors), we must be void of all individualism as we represent the ENTIRE Division, making decisions for the betterment and advancement of the whole!

You'll also note the highways coming down thru the State from the cities within the counties ... this represents the leadership and mentoring role your Leadership Team (Division Board of Directors, Chapter Presidents, Committee Chairs/Directors) should be casting down for the members of our association ... and, through open communication and an approachable spirit, your Division Board will strive to meet your expectations in this area!

You know, we're All connected in a way! ... because we All have ideas ... we're All creative, in our own right ... and I believe that we all have the talents and abilities to "create

pathways and shape the future" in our personal and professional lives!!

And, just as the traveler uses his map as his tools to map out directions... we, too, will use OUR map - as OUR tools to link and connect to key areas: ... we must be Innovative in the way we approach our work and our membership in this association! The overall emphasis should be on performing at our optimum levels to ensure organizational efficiency... effectiveness... quality... and productivity.

Plus, ... I don't believe it's just about "the numbers" new chapters will bring into our Association... it's about the OPPORTUNITIES for personal and professional growth being introduced to the new members!!

President Chandler shared with us at IDPC an article that she read in the GLD Update that talked about if you were a linker or non-linker? So, just what is a linker? A linker knows that in our high speed culture, no IAAP member can do well without connections. Speed, quality and quantity of output depend on strong networks.

This year, we as Division members are to focus on Chandler's 5-C's for "Creating Pathways and Shaping the Future".

COMMITMENT:

As communicated in the 2006-2010 Strategic Plan to the

members, IAAP should focus its programs and services on the “Career-Minded Administrative Professional” who is committed and dedicated to being the best they can be for our Association. Often, members are persuaded or coaxed to serve in a leadership role when the real commitment is not there. I have every confidence that YOU are committed to serving as the leader of your chapter next year, and will strive to being that committed and dedicated leader.

CONTINUED EDUCATION:

IAAP affords us numerous opportunities for professional development through attendance at the International Convention and Education Forum, Division Events, Chapter Events, and the list continues. Through on-line educational resources, including the opportunity to earn an AS degree, is available to members.

By earning the CPS and/or CAP rating, you have received the most prestigious designation offered to administrative professionals. The achievement of these ratings is both a validation of current skills and a commitment to a life-long learning process.

COMMUNICATION:

Communication is the key to success – both professionally and

personally. Networking is consistently identified as a key benefit of belonging to IAAP.

There are numerous ways that we can keep those lines of communication open to our members:

I'd also like to ask each of you, if you have a member of the Division Board of Directors in your area, communicate and share with them what is happening within your Chapter. You know, that's certainly where they got their beginning!

Division – Communicate regularly with your Division Board of Directors. “Together Everyone Accomplishes More”, and by working together effectively and efficiently as a TEAM, it can only bring accomplishments to our Division.

Chapter – Communicate regularly with your Chapter Presidents, and remind them how important they are in “**Creating Pathways and Shaping the Future**” of IAAP, and to communicate with the members on a regular basis too.

MAL - Our Past Division Presidents' have done an outstanding job of bringing these MAL's into the Divisions. Let's keep them in the mix!

CREATIVITY:

Take the initiative to think outside the box while developing innovative solutions to problems and challenges that may occur within your chapter.

International President Enlow reminds us that “we are ALL artists in a way! Maybe not to the degree of a Rembrandt or Michelangelo, but we ALL have ideas, we are ALL creative in our own right, and we all have the talents and abilities to “create excellence” in our personal and professional lives!” We are encouraged and I’d certainly like for all of us to continue with that philosophy during the 2006-2007 IAAP year.

George Bernard Shaw says, “Life isn’t about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself”.

CONNECTIVITY:

Connectivity is the skill of finding the missing part of the IAAP highway and applying the procedures outlined in the Strategic Plan to move forward in “[Creating Pathways and Shaping the Future](#)” of the association.

Connectivity is everyone’s responsibility – yours and mine. It takes all of us working together with our members to achieve that association link.

“To dream anything that you want to dream. That is the beauty of the human mind. To do anything that you want to do. That is the strength of the human will. To trust yourself to test your limits, that is the course to succeed.”

Won't you join me in “[Creating Pathways and Shaping the Future](#)” during the 2006-2007 IAAP year? THANK YOU.