



**CREATING
PATHWAYS
AND**

**SHAPING
THE FUTURE**

**IAAP
ALABAMA DIVISION**

2006 - 2007

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

**Outgoing Message from the 2006-2007 Division President
Gertrude S. Benjamin CPS**

My journey began 2003/2004 with Trish Weldon CPS/CAP, "Light the Fire Within", to be recognized as "Alabama HEROES" with Maria Whitmire CPS/CAP, and as I travel this pathway Ellen Mahathey CPS showed me that I am that "Key to Excellence" and man what a journey.

As I began traveling this pathway twelve months ago, I told you that the Lord is my Shepherd, to feed, guide, and shield me, I shall not lack.

I told you that He makes me to lie down in, fresh, tender, green pastures; He leads me beside the still and restful waters.

I told you that He refreshes and restores my life, my self; He leads me in the paths of righteousness, uprightness and right standing with Him—not for my earning it, but; for His name's sake.

I said, Yes, though I walk through the, deep, sunless, valley of the shadow of death, I will fear or dread no evil, for He is with me; His rod, to protect, and His staff, to guide, they comfort me.

I told you that the Lord prepares a table before me in the presence of my enemies. He anoints my head with oil; my brimming cup runs over.

I said surely or only goodness, mercy, and unfailing love shall follow me all the days of my life, and through the length of days the house of the Lord and His presence shall be my dwelling place. HE DID, HE IS & I WILL!

It has been an awakening, eye opening year of "Creating Pathways and Shaping the Future" for me as the IAAP 2006 – 2007 Alabama Division President and I've learned a lot and grown a lot and I owe it all to you, my IAAP family. I have had the opportunity to discover and explore many "Pathways" and have endeavored to meet the challenge with a positive attitude.

If you will look at your place you will find a bookmark, please travel with me as I reflect on the past year, I'm reminded of the challenge from the International President: to focus on Chandler's 5-C's and WE DID:

#1 was COMMITMENT

The Division and Chapter leaders made the commitment to serve the association to the best of our ability. To make significant progress toward a common goal, by impact meeting, retention, and recruitment. ALL of us were committed to action and not just words. WE DID IT!

#2 was CONTINUED EDUCATION

Ronald E. Osborn said: *"Unless you try something beyond what you have already mastered, you will never grow."*

WE DID IT and WE HAVE!

We took advantage of the numerous opportunities for professional development through attendance at the International events (International Convention and Education Forum, Reno, Nevada), Division events (Professional Education and Student Conference at Tuscumbia, Alabama, Leadership Advance at Lawson State Community College, Bessemer, Alabama) and Chapter events (seminars, work shops, etc.), educational programs, self-study resources, certification, re-certification, and online training. WE DID IT!

#3 was COMMUNICATION:

Within the IAAP Network, everything revolves around not only good, but GREAT communication. We worked to improve the level of communication between our association's leadership, our Headquarters staff, and you, the members with routine conference calls, emails, letters, the web sites and Alabama In Review (AIR). WE DID IT!

#4 was CREATIVITY:

George Bernard Shaw said: *"Life isn't about finding yourself. Life is about creating yourself"*.

Many of you took the initiative to think outside the box while developing innovative solutions to problems and challenges that may have occurred within the divisions and chapters (such as filling vacant positions on your board, recruiting and retaining members in the chapters, division and at-large). WE DID IT!

#5 was CONNECTIVITY:

We learned that Connectivity is everyone's responsibility – yours and mine. It took all of us working together with our members to achieve that vital association link from the chapters to the division to the district to headquarters. WE DID IT!

My first task as we travel this highway began with installing the officers of the Birmingham Chapter at its regular meeting, too traveling over a large part of the state this past year. Some of the paths were a little narrow, some bumpy, some long and some were very wide but with a bit of persistence we made it thru.

I would like to thank each of you for this wonderful opportunity that you have allowed me to have by serving as your 2006-2007 President for the Alabama Division. I am truly honored.

I would like to say a special thank you to the Division Board Members, Division Committee Chairs/Directors and Chapter Presidents who have worked diligently

to make this year an overall success. There is absolutely no way that one person can do all these jobs. Each member of the Division leadership team plays a major role in the success of any year!

I want to express my gratitude to Joellynn Heaton CPS/CAP, Doris Kenny CPS/CAP and Claudia Burgin CPS for all the hard work they have done in preparing this great weekend for us. They accepted the responsibility of hosting the Division Meeting and they have truly done an outstanding job as coordinators. Through the hard work of the coordinators, we all have enjoyed a very special time together, and one that I will remember. Thank you.

Even though he's not here, I would like to thank my executive, the Hon. Jesse L. Upshaw, Chair of the Macon County Commission for his continued support, flexibility and generosity; he supports all of my IAAP activities and anything else that he feels will help our staff improve professionally.

I would also like to express my love and appreciation to my family that is with me tonight. My husband, "Ben" as he prefers to be called, has traveled these pathways with me this entire year. I am so thankful for his love, dedication, understanding and support. He has been my biggest fan, critic and supporter, without his encouragement and support it would have been hard to make to this point. You know he has been around so much, until Tuskegee Chapter has made him an honorary member! Jay, Thank you!

As I close tonight, I would like to encourage all of you to always strive to be better and don't be afraid to make the journey because you will never know where the path may lead you. *You all are my HEROES!*