



Association of Government Accountants Richmond Chapter History

1970s – In the Beginning:

The Richmond Chapter of the Association of Government Accountants (AGA) began as the Richmond Chapter of the Federal Government Accountants Association (FGAA) in the Spring of 1972. John Cooley, Washington D.C. Chapter, provided strong leadership in coordinating and establishing the Richmond Chapter FGAA at the Defense General Supply Center (DGSC) in Richmond, Virginia. Initial evening dinner meetings were held at the Bellwood Officers' Club at the DGSC. On March 1, 1973, the FGAA Richmond Chapter was officially chartered, with Wayne Clements serving as President. Other members included Ann Andrews, TJ Bise, and John Adams, who each served as president after Wayne. John was a cornerstone of the chapter and remained active until he passed away in 1996. In 1975, the FGAA amended the bylaws to allow qualified state and local government employees to become full members, and the organization changed its name to the Association of Government Accountants, as we know it today. The Richmond Chapter grew to 30 members, primarily federal employees.

1980s – Building Diversity:

During the early 1980s, most of the federal members of the chapter did not renew their memberships. Early chapter leadership was lost and only through the efforts of a few chapter members, led by John Adams, did the chapter survive. John felt that an AGA presence in the Richmond area would be beneficial. The chapter had very little active membership and only held intermittent monthly meetings. In 1984, a strong and committed Regional Vice President serving in the Mid-Atlantic region, Donald Ingram, took a personal interest in the chapter. Donald convinced Ed Soniat, a member of the Virginia Peninsula Chapter who lived in the Richmond area, to take a leadership role in reviving the Richmond Chapter. With the help of Donald and the support of the National Office, Ed was able to revitalize the Richmond Chapter. Ed Soniat continued to serve on the National level for many years after.

During the mid to late 1980s, the Richmond Chapter began to attract highly visible speakers, primarily from federal and state government, as well as greater participation in regular monthly meetings. The chapter's membership growth was triggered primarily by state employees from the downtown Richmond area. The 1986-1987 program year achieved quite a bit of support from state officials as they began to become more active in chapter events and activities. The program changed to a combination of downtown luncheons and evening meetings at the DGSC Bellwood Officer's Club. The Richmond Chapter also began to co-sponsor an annual spring meeting with the Virginia Peninsula Chapter.

The chapter newsletter, which had mostly been phased out, began again in 1985 via Ed Soniat. The Richmond Chapter sponsored its first all-day seminar in January 1987, which was very successful in fulfilling the educational needs of the members. Ed Soniat served as the Regional

Vice President for the Mid-Atlantic Region for the 1988-1989 program year. Chapter membership grew as the Richmond Chapter began to offer all-day seminars twice a program year. During the late 1980s, federal financial managers and local government officials joined the chapter, building a more diverse chapter base. Even today, this diversity is reflected in the speakers from federal, state, and local governments at monthly meetings and seminars.

1990s – Professional Expansion:

In the early 1990s, chapter officers concentrated membership drives at local governments. As a result, the Richmond Chapter was recognized by the National Office for membership growth for chapters of similar size. Membership had expanded from the City of Richmond into Chesterfield and Henrico counties. In 1991, the State Board of Accountancy approved the Richmond Chapter's request to award continuing professional education credits for Certified Public Accountants. This was a major milestone demonstrating the high caliber of education and training events within the Richmond Chapter. In 1995, the joint meetings with the Virginia Peninsula Chapter became the joint Annual South-Atlantic Professional Development Trainings, which attract over 100 attendees each year.

The chapter began supporting the Certified Government Financial Manager (CGFM) program. In addition to encouraging members to apply, selected chapter members served in an advisory capacity to the National Office on various aspects of the examination.

In the 1994-1995 program year, the chapter expanded training and education events from two to three all-day seminars. The highlight of this year was John Adams receiving the National Chapter Service Award. This was the first award the Richmond Chapter had received from the National Office. This was also the first year the chapter earned national recognition for earning over 10,000 points in the Chapter Recognition Program.

In the 1995-1996 program year, the chapter hosted the first joint seminar with the Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (ACFE). In September 1995, the chapter achieved the highest attendance at a monthly meeting with over 60 attendees to hear a presentation on the Commonwealth of Virginia's new travel regulations. The chapter also hosted the AGA National President, Virginia Brizendine, as a guest speaker. Expanding into the student population, the chapter established the first local Governmental Accounting Award with Virginia State University. Overall, the chapter sponsored 11 educational events, with over 250 attendees earning over 780 hours for Continuing Professional Education (CPE) credits. This year, the chapter established the Chapter Awards Recognition Program to formally recognize key personnel making significant contributions to the chapter. The first award was presented to Joe Kapelewski, who recently celebrated his 30th anniversary with the AGA.

In the 1996-1997 program year, the chapter achieved an all-time high membership of 110 members with over 75% certified as Certified Government Financial Managers (CGFM). The chapter received the National Highest Overall Growth Award for membership for chapters with 50-100 members. The chapter published the first Richmond Chapter Directory. The chapter also expanded the local Governmental Accounting Award to a second university, Virginia Commonwealth University, as well as increasing the scholarship

amounts. Michael Westfall was selected to serve on the National State and Local Government Committee, prompting his receipt of a chapter leadership award for Outstanding Leadership. A second chapter leadership award was presented to Betty Akins for Sustained Superior Performance. The Chapter President, Robert Dodson, was elected as the Vice President-Elect for the Mid-Atlantic Region, as well as being selected to serve on the National Awards Committee. Bob was selected to represent the Richmond Chapter at the AGA's 47th Annual Professional Development Conference (PDC) in Phoenix, Arizona in June 1997. Ed Soniat received one of four National Chapter Service Awards at the PDC. The chapter was also honored as an All-Star Chapter for the first time for achieving the 10,000+ point level under the AGA Chapter Recognition Program for the third consecutive year.

In the 1997-1998 program year, the Richmond Chapter celebrated its 25th anniversary during the March meeting with the AGA National President, Doug Haywood, as the guest speaker. The Virginia General Assembly also honored the chapter for 25 years of service to the government financial management community. The National Executive Committee bestowed the honor of selecting the Richmond Chapter to host the National State and Local Government Leadership Conference to be held in October 2002. The chapter was honored for the second consecutive year as an All-Star Chapter for achieving the 10,000+ point level under the AGA Chapter Recognition Program. This year the chapter established a mission statement and goals and moved into the next largest chapter grouping due to membership growth totaling 139 members! This was the 2nd consecutive year the chapter received the National Highest Overall Growth award. Now offering 40 hours of CPE credits during the year, more than 2,800 CPE hours were awarded to seminar and meeting attendees. The chapter's three full-day seminars were moved to Henrico County's Dorey Park Recreation Center. The board increased visibility with participation in National committees: Long-Range Strategic Planning, Awards, State and Local Government, and Ethics. Jack Reagan was honored with the National State and Local Government Award for the Private Sector, as well as the Richmond Chapter's award for Outstanding Government Financial Manager. Bob Dodson also received the Chapter Service Award for the year, and served as Regional Vice President-Elect.

In the 1998-1999 program year, the chapter received All-Star Chapter status for achieving the 10,000+ point level for the third consecutive year (fifth year reaching that point level). For the third consecutive year, the chapter received the National Highest Overall Growth Award for membership for the chapter size grouping of 100-150 members. By the end of the year, the chapter's membership stood at 216 members. National Committee participation increased with members serving on the Long-Range Strategic Planning, National Awards (Vice Chair), State and Local Government, Ethics, and the Finance and Budget committees. Bob Dodson served as Regional Vice-President and Joe Kapelewski was nominated for Regional Vice President-Elect. Ed Mazur and Lane Ramsey both received the National State and Local Government Leadership awards. And the Richmond Chapter hosted its first ever volunteer program filing tax returns for the disadvantaged.

In the 1999-2000 program year, the chapter received recognition for the sixth consecutive year earning over 10,000 points under the Chapter Recognition Program. Members served on the

National Awards, Ethics, and Finance and Budget committees. Joe Kapelewski served as the Regional Vice President-Elect.

By the end of the decade, the Richmond Chapter membership topped 200 members and the chapter was well-represented with over 125 CGFMs. Participation in Regional and National operations increased, and the chapter even developed its own web page.

2000 – The Millennial Years:

As the Richmond Chapter entered the 21st century, the opportunities abounded! The chapter hosted the National State and Local Government Leadership Conference in October 2002, led by Conference Committee Chair, Joe Kapelewski. Barbara Bilmyer presided over the chapter from 2001 to 2003 with a large focus on early careers. This focus brought in younger members with fresh ideas. Women led the chapter as seven of the next nine presidents served in that role that was once dominated by men. Both Dick Bunce and Joe Kapelewski served on the National Executive Committee, with Joe as the Senior Vice President (SVP) and Dick as the SVP, National Treasurer, and achieving a significant milestone by serving as the AGA's 62nd National President! The chapter diversified with representatives from federal government agencies, state government agencies, local governments, quasi-government commissions, academia, private sector, CPA firms, and retirees. Disciplines represented by membership included government accounting, public accounting, auditing, administration, education, budgeting, students, information systems, and retired members. Professional certifications of membership include CGFM, CPA, CIA, CRMA, and many others. A significant number have Master degrees or Doctorates, in addition to Bachelor's degrees.

20-Teens – New Ideas:

As we are in the midst of the “two-thousand-teens,” the Richmond Chapter is branching into the virtual age! The chapter began using Cvent to automate meeting invitations and maintain membership. In April 2014, the Richmond Chapter used Cvent to spearhead a new newsletter to encompass ideas provided by National, as well as to communicate chapter information to the members. That same year, Tim Brown renovated and revitalized the AGA Richmond website (www.agarichmond.org) to both freshen up the site as well as provide more relevant information to members. Saa'dia Talbert became president in the 2014-2015 program year and began a new campaign to pair up a current committee member with a new member to bring new ideas to the table and provide for some longevity on committees. This idea took solid ground and became a “best practice” at the Sectional Leadership Meeting held in May 2014.

At the National PDT held in Orlando in July 2014, Dick Bunce received the Robert W. King Memorial Award for distinguished service of such significance that has greatly advanced the AGA's national prestige and stature. During 2014, several Chapter Executive Committee (CEC) members were named as Regional Coordinators (RCs) with Randy Sherrod serving as Chapter Education RC, Saa'dia Talbert serving as Chapter Accountability RC, and Corrine Louden serving as Chapter Development & Assistance RC.

In May 2015, the Chapter Service Award was presented to both Thomas Bland and Corrine Louden, who worked together on the Membership Committee and tied for the vote. Thomas was instrumental in taking on Cvent and increasing the chapter's visibility by figuring out how to

expand on our capabilities within the system. In June 2015, the “Presidential Selfie” was established, with Corrine Louden taking her own photo with each speaker instead of the standard “hand-shake in a suit” – this was well-received by much of the younger generation, and helped gain some momentum for the chapter on Facebook and Instagram. In December 2015, the Richmond Chapter joined with the Virginia Peninsula Chapter to host the 20th Annual South-Atlantic Professional Development Training at the Great Wolf Lodge in Williamsburg, Virginia. Randy Sherrod, Education Chair and Past-President has done an outstanding job leading the PDT Committee over the past few years. This was also the first year the Richmond Chapter followed National’s lead with electronic check-in. Ramona Howell and the Communications Committee has done a great job leading the Chapter and keeping us up with this new age.

And in January 2016, the chapter celebrated our 300th member!

AGA Chapter Presidents:

2016-2017	Randy Sherrod
2015-2016	Corrine Louden
2014-2015	Saa'dia Talbert
2013-2014	Randy Sherrod
2012-2013	Algappan Subramanian
2011-2012	Alfred Washington
2010-2011	Fred Hoover
2009-2010	Karen Conrad
2008-2009	Vickie Bridgeman
2007-2008	Joy Yeh
2006-2007	Jennifer Cavedo
2005-2006	Nancy Sanders
2004-2005	Bill Cole
2003-2004	Melinda Barbish
2002-2003	Barbara Bilmyer
2001-2002	Barbara Bilmyer
2000-2001	Ken Gunn
1999-2000	Richard O. Bunce
1998-1999	Nauri Ahmed
1997-1998	Joseph A. Kapelewski
1996-1997	Robert L. Dodson
1995-1996	Robert L. Dodson
1994-1995	Betty G. Akins
1993-1994	Michael Westfall
1992-1993	Clarence E. Weeks
1991-1992	Ronald M. Grignol
1990-1991	Carolyn M. Barnard
1989-1990	Charles A. Cheek
1988-1989	Lawrence E. Davis
1987-1988	Janet L. Manchey
1986-1987	Edwin J. Soniat
1985-1986	Carol Creed

1984-1985	George Hanna
1983-1984	Wallace Hutchinson
1982-1983	T.J. Bise
1981-1982	Mary F. Forrest
1980-1981	Ronald K. Layne
1979-1980	Robert L. Aylor
1978-1979	James L. Coen
1977-1978	Robert L. Seward, III
1976-1977	John Adams
1975-1976	T.J. Bise
1974-1975	Ann Andrews
1973-1974	Wayne E. Clements