

Have you ever seen the movie “Rudy?” Rudy was a little boy who aspired to play for the University of Notre Dame. All his life people had told him he would never go to college and certainly never play for Notre Dame.

Rudy was too small to ever be a football player. When he graduated from high school, his grades were not good enough to get into any college, much less Notre Dame. You see, Rudy was dyslexic; he barely made it out of high school. So Rudy started working in a steel plant, like his Dad.

Rudy had a very close friend who always believed in him and believed that Rudy could do whatever he set his mind to. His friend told him one day that he shouldn’t wait to pursue his dream...that he should go to Notre Dame and play football there.

The next day that friend was killed in an accident at the plant where they both worked. This touched Rudy so deeply and he remembered what his friend had said...don’t wait; go for it. So he took off with little money in his pocket and no one pulling for him.

He met several struggles along the way – no place to live, people who laughed at him. Rudy had to work and study very hard. He had many obstacles in his way. But he had several people who at that point in his life saw his potential and encouraged him to never give up.

In the end Rudy fulfilled his dream, and he thanked God for giving him what he needed and placing certain people in his life to push him toward his goal.

I won’t tell you the end of the story but I hope you do watch this movie. It was a great inspiration for me in writing this speech.

I am much like Rudy. I had a dream to be Georgia Division President – not all my life, but certainly for the last 10 years. The only difference is that I was the one who told me that I couldn’t do this.

I’ve had lots of encouragement and support from some very special people in my life.

My husband, Ferrel...boy what a cheerleader. You’ve been there for me throughout my IAAP involvement. You’ve always been on the sidelines, cheering me on. You carried all my luggage, boxes, whatever I needed. Aside from my Heavenly Father, who carries me spiritually, you carry me when I feel I can’t go on. When I needed anything, you were there.

But it’s not just me you’ve helped...you’ve helped other IAAP members and chapters too. And this coming year if things get tough, I know you’ll be there for me. You are an awesome person! I hope you know that!

My daughters, Karen and Sheri, are also my cheerleaders. As they were growing up, they believed their Mom was invincible. After they grew up and had a family of their own, they knew that it was just part of my job as their Mom. I thank God for protecting them as they grew up to be fine young women.

My son-in-law Jason – it blesses me to know that my beautiful Sheri is married to such a wonderful man, who loves and respects me, with all my faults as a mother-in-Law.

I have a wonderful Pastor in Buddy Lamb. I've known Buddy and Carol for many years. They have seen me go through good times and bad. Buddy has always been a great sounding board and gives me spiritual advice when I ask for it. He's one of a kind Pastor.

All of my long-time IAAP friends, Jo Parker CPS/CAP, Sue Halley CPS/CAP, Dot Murphy CPS/CAP, Janet McGraw CPS...there were so many Georgia Division members who have inspired and mentored me that I can't begin to list everyone, but you know who you are. You had more confidence in me than I had in myself. You were the ones who told me you can do this! Thank you for your words of wisdom, encouragement, and all your support.

I want to share with you why I know that my serving as your Georgia Division President is part of a bigger plan.

The year that I seriously considered running for the board, I procrastinated until someone else submitted her nomination for Treasurer. I thought this was God's way of closing the door on my dream. That it wasn't meant to happen. You see I had prayed for God to open the door when it was time but it wasn't God that closed the door...it was me. So when the person withdrew her nomination before Annual Meeting that year, I knew it was time...that God was giving me a second chance to do this...to fulfill my dream. I know now beyond a shadow of a doubt that God was in control. The reason I say this is because of what happened with my precious Karen.

Karen is my oldest daughter. She was diagnosed with ovarian cancer in December 2005. I was devastated by this news, but she went through chemotherapy and we believed she was healed in April 2006.

Two weeks after I submitted my nomination for Georgia Division Treasurer in 2007, we learned that Karen's cancer had returned with a vengeance. I knew I would want to be with her to help her through more chemotherapy if that's the route she decided to take so I thought about withdrawing my nomination. But Karen was so proud of me when I submitted my nomination and she wanted this for me.

I don't know how many of you know this, but Karen was a member of IAAP at one time so she knew how important this was to me. Besides we just knew that God was going to heal her once again and everything would be okay.

So I kept my nomination in and was elected Treasurer. Karen was so proud and she seemed to be getting better so life was good.

As you all know, Karen wasn't healed, at least not on earth, and she went home to be with the Lord on April 30, 2009. Although Karen isn't here in person tonight, I know that she is with me and she's beaming with that beautiful smile of hers.

I am truly blessed to have people in my life who support me completely – my wonderful husband Ferrel, my daughter Sheri, who is beautiful inside and out, my son-in-law Jason, who accepts me with all my faults. I have 3 beautiful grandchildren, 1 who is here tonight – Jordan. She brings so much joy to my life.

Here I am tonight at this magical moment – your Georgia Division President. I am realizing my dream!

The 2011-2012 International theme is “Making the Leap to REMARKABLE!” We have shaped the future and kept our association forward moving displaying excellence in action, and our power of commitment that exemplifies our passion and purpose for IAAP has made us ready for making the leap to remarkable.

We have used the book, *The Seven Measures of Success, What Remarkable Associations Do That Others Don't*, as the blueprint for success for changing the culture and operations of IAAP. We have laid the foundation of what it takes to be a remarkable association. With our foundation in place, it is time to make the leap and set our first benchmarks of what remarkable is for IAAP.

Remarkable is not a destination, but rather a journey, and the path changes constantly. We cannot remain in one place. IAAP will have to continue to change and grow so we, rather than others, will be challenging and defining remarkable, not only in our Association but in our profession.

By embracing a remarkable and a winning attitude, together we will take IAAP to the next level and beyond, thus ensuring members and leaders will be leaving a Legacy of Excellence, Achievement, and Passion for others to follow, and that will always keep IAAP remarkable.

How will Georgia Division make that leap during the 2011-2012 year?

For the next few moments, I'd like for you to envision a ship. This ship is traveling toward the port of remarkable success, but along the way, it must be navigated by 3 things in order to reach its port.

There must be **relationSHIPS**. One of the most important contributing factors to obtaining any level of success in IAAP or in any part of our lives is in the relationships we build.

Instead of solely focusing on projects, timelines, activities, we need to learn the value of managing and building relationships with others. Relationships often come second to the task that needs to be done. On the flip side, what can get in the way of the task that needs to be done is the relationship itself. Therefore, it's important for IAAP members to learn to strike a healthy balance. While finding the right balance can be very taxing, it can be very rewarding as well. This has to be one of our goals for Georgia Division for the coming year – building relationships within IAAP and outside our organization.

Having good healthy career relationships will help us reach our goal – to increase and maintain our IAAP **memberSHIPS**. How do we do this?

We have to reach prospective members. We have to build up IAAP...there are so many people who don't know what IAAP stands for or how it can benefit them and their companies. Through membership recruitment meetings and networking with corporations, we can raise awareness of IAAP in the communities where we work and live.

To keep our members, we have to make sure that we are meeting their expectations for personal and professional growth. We have to help them realize the many benefits of their membership.

We have many members who dream of being IAAP leaders. We have to inspire, encourage, influence...help them recognize and appreciate the value of their unique talents and viewpoints so they can fulfill that dream.

Once dreams are fulfilled, members will see that they owe much of what they've accomplished to their involvement with IAAP. And we all know how word of mouth can be the best way to further promote anything. That will help us in two ways – to keep current members **and** to get new ones.

We have to ensure that companies see the benefits of IAAP membership. What's in it for them? Why would having their assistants, office managers, administrative professionals as members of IAAP be an asset to them?

We have to get in front of those decision-making Executives to explain the importance of having their Admin belong to a professional organization.

Your 2011-2012 Board is committed to helping you do just that.

Once we have accomplished healthy professional relationships and increased our memberships, we must keep both strong.

We'll do that through **MentorSHIP**. We must find mentors we can learn from, and we must serve as mentors...sharing our experience and knowledge with others.

There are few things in our careers that are more rewarding than sharing ideas with someone who aspires to follow in our footsteps, or gaining knowledge from someone who has been where we are now.

We must proactively seek opportunities to learn from others who have successfully developed their own careers, and who are willing to share their experiences and knowledge about how they got where they are.

We have many opportunities this year to mentor and to be mentored. There are many seasoned IAAP members who have so much knowledge to share with those just getting started in the organization.

And new members bring fresh ideas to the table. We must develop these teams of mentors and mentees. Mentors and mentees must accept reversed roles at different times and in different situations.

Through these mentorships, we will build a cohesive team that focuses on the overall accomplishments for IAAP. With all the challenges we experience, it's essential that teams work as effectively together as possible.

It's important that we develop a strong team of members by communicating the value of teamwork and encouraging individuals to contribute their talents to the overall success and ultimate progression of the entire team. Leaders of IAAP who have effective teambuilding skills are seen as valuable assets to any organization. Therefore, leaders who demonstrate they can develop successful teams are more likely to advance within IAAP.

I've talked about 3 ships – RelationSHIP, MemberSHIP, MentorSHIP. Every ship uses a compass to navigate toward their destination.

During 2011-2012, IAAP will be the compass to navigate our Ship of Success as we Make the Leap to REMARKABLE!

Please join me in Making the Leap to REMARKABLE as we build relationships, increase membership, and expand our mentorship program?

Thank you for this opportunity to fulfill my dream to serve as your 2011-2012 Georgia Division President!