



## AGA BATON ROUGE CHAPTER HISTORY REPORT 2019 – 2020

The 2019-2020 Association of Government Accountants (AGA) program ended on June 30, 2020, with another successful year. Although there were unprecedented challenges with the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Chapter continued its forward momentum and achieved the following goals: participated in several community service events, awarded one (1) endowment and five (5) chapter scholarships to two (2) universities in the community, provided 24 continuing education CPE hours to members, established a mentoring program, obtained state and local CGFM Proclamations, and received platinum status at the AGA National level.

The Chapter Executive Committee (CEC) held six meetings from July 2019 through June 2020 to discuss and vote on chapter business throughout the year. There was a great deal of focus not only on the current year activities, but also on updating the Chapter's bylaws, financial policies and reviewing how to ensure the future sustainability and accountability of the chapter. The CEC meetings were held at the East Baton Rouge Library on Wednesdays at 5:30 pm. After the COVID-19 pandemic halted all gatherings, meetings were held virtually. Chapter members were invited to attend these meetings through announcements in the newsletters and the Chapter website. The CEC members for the 2019-2020 program year were as follows:

### **Chapter Roles**

President  
President – Elect / Web Administrator  
Immediate Past President  
National Council of Chapters Representative  
Secretary  
Treasurer  
Accountability Outreach Chair  
Awards / Student Relations Chair  
CGFM Chair  
Chapter Recognition Chair  
Community Service Chair  
Meetings & Program Chair  
Membership Chair  
Newsletter Editor  
Scholarship Chair  
Sponsorship Chair

### **Chapter Officers**

Marella Houghton, CPA  
Tiffani Dorsa, CPA  
Lesha Woods, CGFM  
Carolyn White  
Vita Archie  
Jennifer Case  
Carissa Wesley  
Sarah Wade  
Jovan Haynes  
Susan Broadway  
Bettina Camper  
Travonda Brown  
Priscilla Hall  
Kimberly Stewart  
Centelia Battiste  
Rodney Combs, CPA, CGAP, CFSA, CGMA

We had sixteen (16) new members added to the AGA Baton Rouge Chapter for the program year. Several resources were used to communicate with chapter members. Upcoming events were



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announced through the quarterly newsletter, chapter website, calendar of events on the National website, Chapter Facebook page, and various email blasts throughout the year.

The Chapter participated in several community service projects during the program year including the Capital Area Court Appointed Special Advocates Association's 25th annual CASA playhouse fundraiser by volunteering our time to help promote the event. We partnered with Kendra Scott for an in-store charitable event, participated in the Making Strides Against Breast Cancer Walk, collected 22 new toys for "Toys for Tots" that were distributed by St. Vincent de Paul, collected 100 pounds of can/dry goods, which were donated to the Greater Baton Rouge Food Bank, and we distributed 100 holiday gift bags to residents of Sterling Place Nursing Home.

At the onset of the year, the Chapter established specific goals that would provide long-term benefits to our members and the profession. These goals included re-skilling our workforce, increasing network opportunities, and mentoring young professionals and students. We set out to blaze a trail in raising the awareness of education in governmental accounting by reaching out to our young professionals and students, providing scholarships to deserving students, building relationships between the university community and the BR AGA Chapter, partnering with Govern for America to establish a mentoring program for the Chapter, and hosting one Student Night event. We visited Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU) during Business Week, providing an overview of AGA and benefits of being a member as well as obtaining the CGFM Certification. Interaction with students was encouraging, enlightening, and uplifting.

Our mission at the AGA Baton Rouge Chapter is to educate and give back to the financial community. To accomplish this goal, the Chapter has established and contributed to endowments for Louisiana State University (LSU), Southeastern Louisiana University (SLU), Nicholls State University (NSU), University of Louisiana at Lafayette (ULL), and the University of New Orleans (UNO). Five recipients were awarded the endowments at the following universities: (3) Nicholls State University and (2) Louisiana State University. In addition, we contributed additional principal to the Southeastern Louisiana University endowment.

In order to provide our members with quality CPE, the Chapter held its Fall Professional Development Training Conference at the Embassy Suites of Baton Rouge. Packed with 133 attendees, a fantastic line-up of speakers from across the United States provided 16 hours of CPE. The speakers covered topics that included leadership, fraud, audit, CAFRs, SEFAs, Federal Programs, branding, internal controls, transformation and future of the profession, and other industry trends. Immediately following our first day of the Fall PDT, the Chapter hosted a networking social at Tio Javi's restaurant. It was a fun and successful networking event. Several sponsors and 45 PDT participants attended and played interactive games that encouraged



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networking, resulting in fabulous prizes and an increase in their professional network. This CEC continued the momentum from last year by working very hard to restore the confidence in and quality of our PDT Conferences to a higher level of professional excellence. An additional 8 CPE hours were promoted through email blasts and the chapter website advertising the webinars offered at the National Level. With the COVID-19 Pandemic and very little time left to redesign the Spring PDT to a virtual experience, we shelved it out of concern for the safety and well-being of our members and participants. However, the CEC has continued to work behind the scenes to provide quality and engaging virtual learning for the future.

Having limited funds, the Chapter's Sponsorship Chair worked very hard to recruit sponsors to promote the annual professional development training conference. Funds generated from sponsorship has enabled the chapter to attract more members and to afford engaging speakers for our conferences. We want to thank our sponsors, Postlethwaite & Netterville (P&N), Empower Retirement, Capital Area Transit System (CATS), Louisiana Asset Management Pool, Inc. (LAMP), Oracle, KG Consulting, Letterman's, and Faulk & Winkler. Without you, we would not be on the move. Our continued goal is to develop corporate sponsorship to increase our working capital and to benefit from the involvement of our corporate sponsors' professionals.

In addition, the Baton Rouge Chapter members attended two AGA National Training events. The two events were the 2020 Virtual Professional Development Training (PDT) from July 20 – 22, 2020 and the Virtual LEAD on August 20, 2020. We had two (2) board members representing the Baton Rouge Chapter attend the National PDT and three (3) board members attending the LEAD.

Overall, the chapter was able to accomplish its goals with the help of hard-working CEC members and dedicated members. President Marella Houghton received the Platinum Designation Award at the PDT National Award Ceremony for reaching platinum status for the 2019-2020 program year. Reflecting on the challenges of limiting participation and ceasing several planned events caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic, obtaining Platinum status is quite an accomplishment for the Chapter.