

## THE GOOD OLD DAYS

Back in the 1970s the Federal Government's Information Technology programs were under the general guidance and management control of three agencies, the Office of Management and Budget, the General Services Administration and the National Bureau of Standards, what we called the "Central Management Agencies." In the late '70s two very wise men, Wally Haase (OMB) and Frank Carr (GSA) realized that they needed better two-way communication with the agency managers, located across the country, who had responsibility for implementing the policies and regulations promulgated by their agencies. There needed to be better understanding of the "whats," "whys" and "hows" of these policies and regulations: as well as a better understanding of the realities of their implementation.

Two men, Ed Dancy and Clint Durland, both senior managers in GSA's Regional Office in Atlanta, were asked to set up a forum for this communication. A few days before Christmas, 1979 they called a meeting. Invited to this meeting, in Kenner, Louisiana, were representatives of ten of the existing "federal ADP councils" which met periodically, in their own geographical domains, to exchange information about the problems, challenges, strategies and solutions of the still new information technology discipline. From this meeting was born the Federation of Government Information Technology Councils (FGIPC – ACT).

I attended this meeting as a delegate, representing the Intergovernmental Council on the Technology of Information Processing of Northern California and Nevada (ICTIP – pronounced "icy tip"). (Our logo was the tip of an iceberg.) It is hard for me to know if I was more surprised or more honored to be elected as the first President of the FGIPC. However, looking back over 30 years I do know that I was truly blessed with the opportunity to be associated with some genuinely outstanding people, leading, molding, nagging and cajoling, all for the purpose of keeping the Federation current, on-topic and responsive to the needs of this ever changing and vibrant community.

Many of these people I put in the "great human beings and cherished friends" category. However, for the first two-thirds of the life of FCIPC/ACT, there was one person who was truly the lynch-pin, the one who held it all together through the formative and early growth stages. This person was a remarkable individual. Not a super-grade executive, not a senior manager, not an agency major domo, Virginia McCormick, as a mid-level, GSA staffer in Atlanta, was a doer, a person constantly leaned on by most of us to keep our purpose and enterprise moving, contributing and vital. My favorite story about Ginny is the time she asked an Air Force Colonel if he believed in free speech. When the Colonel responded, "Why, of course, Ginny, I believe in free speech," she said, "Well, will you come to Atlanta and give one?"

Our "good old days" were packed with such inspiration, dedication and wisdom in all corners of our country. It was a privilege to be associated with these people and I encourage the move by ACT to, once again and soon, welcome this talent back into our national deliberations.

Jim Ridgell – First President, FGIPC/ACT