



# The Best Days are Ahead

By David Gray

I am writing this not from the standpoint of the Immediate Past President of APPA International, but instead as a facilities officer who wants to make a great institution even better—in some way—everyday. That has been my goal for the past 18 years, and that is still my goal for my remaining years at Middle Tennessee State University.

And while I cannot say that I achieve that goal each and every day, I can look back on the drastic growth and positive changes at my own university and know that our facilities services organization has provided numerous services that have contributed to and enhanced the success of the university. As I reflect on this past, I am reminded that past successes are no guarantee of the future success.

Now is the time for facilities officers in general, and APPA members in particular, to look forward. Our best days should be ahead of us. I encourage you to plan for success as you look forward in your own career and to your service to your institution and community. I also want to offer you some thoughts about what success might look like.

- *First, success has to be long term.* There is a great temptation to incorporate short-term solutions in response to the physical and fiscal challenges we face on our campuses. While often rooted in financial constraints, this thinking is particularly tempting for the increasing numbers of us who could retire sooner rather than later.

We have all dealt with legacy issues of all types on our campus—to the



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- best extent possible. Don't kick the can down the road; encourage others to think long term as well. Winston Churchill once said, "There are two kinds of success—Initial and Ultimate—long-term—Success." It's about tomorrow.
- *Second, success in facilities must reflect as success for the institution.* Facilities Management has always been a support enterprise. We design and construct buildings – then we maintain and operate them to be safe, clean, and functional for others to use. Then we redesign and renovate buildings to accommodate program

changes. It's about the institution.

- *Finally, success at our institution is a team sport.*

George W. Cane once said, "There is no future in any job. The future lies in you—who have the job."

It's about the people. ☺

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