

Inspectors General Auditor Training Institute

Graduation speech

for

Introductory Auditor Training Class

Friday, February 2, 2001

11:30am - 1:00pm

Fort Belvoir, Virginia
(Fort Belvoir Community Club)

James G. Huse, Jr.
Inspector General of Social Security

Good afternoon and thank you for the kind introduction and warm welcome.

Thank you for inviting me to speak on this special day which marks the successful completion of this Introductory IG Auditor Training class.

It is an **honor** for me to address the newest members of this fine profession and to **welcome each of you** into government service.

I would also like to **thank the IGATI staff** for their outstanding efforts and ongoing contributions to the success of this training program.

As IG auditors, your goals are to **promote economy, effectiveness, and efficiency** as well as to **prevent and detect fraud, waste, and abuse** in agency programs and operations.

Keep in mind that there are three important principles to improving government:

- deliver great service;
- foster partnership and community solutions; and
- find a way to get the job done with less resources.

Due to each of your varied backgrounds and experiences, I know **you will bring new ideas and insights**, and **improved means of dealing with the many issues we face** as an organization and as a member of the IG community.

Challenges to be addressed include limited resources, complex legislation, shrinking budgets, a rapidly changing technological environment, and the report editing process.

Another challenge is that due to the nature of the audit profession, which is to look for problems and weaknesses, it can be difficult to cultivate trust with agency personnel.

However, each of you can do much to show that we're not out to get anyone by **ensuring that the facts are right and that the recommendations are reasonable and realistic**.

In addition, advancing technology is a special challenge for us in keeping employees up-to-date on current applications. New technologies and new work environments demand new skills.

In fact, for each auditor, success will depend on their ability to learn and relearn. That, in and of itself, is quite different from past workplace development challenges.

The result of this trend is that **the distinction between working and learning is becoming blurred**. Part of every employee's job is to stay abreast of the ever-changing work to be performed. Thus, this class that you have completed is just the beginning of what you will continue to learn both on the job and in professional training.

Ongoing training is vital to success for all employees. These trends in the nature of work and in the workforce constitute significant challenges. We are changing to meet the ever-shifting environment of the new, leaner, more efficient Federal government.

We need more tools and strategies that meet the challenges of today's workplace. And we need people to take advantage of the tools that are already there.

Each OIG office has worked to attract to their organization the most outstanding persons from a variety of academic disciplines.

You exemplify the talent, dedication and fresh perspective that the government needs by bringing your diversity, intellectual curiosity and energy to the job.

Successful applicants were those who had expressed an interest in, and a commitment to, a career in the analysis and improvement of public policies and programs.

Why are you so sought out? The answer is simple. In a downsized and increasingly complex and constantly evolving government, it is ever more important that we have the best auditors, the best workers, the best team we can possibly assemble.

In other words, we want -- we need -- YOU, the best and brightest, to be a part of our public service team. Assembling that team -- and taking proper care of it -- is the foundation of good government.

As an IG, I remain **committed to developing the full potential** of our current workforce. It is good for the employees, good for morale, and good for productivity. I believe we have a tremendously competent workforce that--if given the opportunity--is capable of great things.

Our mission is too important, our opportunities too valuable, to accept anything less than constructive engagement and cooperation.

And that's where each of you comes in. You must be part of the team. I expect that each of you will be " part of the solution, not part of the problem".

To that end, I have directed our Social Security Administration, Offices of Audit and Investigations to continue to work together to **identify the most vulnerable areas** of SSA and to submit recommendations for improvement.

The Office of Audit provides recommendations to the Agency that, when implemented, **has a significant impact**.

Each of you has the opportunity to truly make a difference and have the issues that you raise be addressed by your Agency, by Congress, and even the President.

Another aspect of the job that I am sure you will find rewarding, is the fact that you will get to know a lot about the agency you work for as you complete a variety of important projects.

In order to lay the foundation for what I am certain will be outstanding careers in public service, **you need to understand why and how the current systems have evolved**.

As IGATI graduates, you have gained the background understanding that you need to be successful auditors.

Although you are expected to be agents of positive change leading innovation and improvement, please remember – the wheel has already been invented.

If you don't know the status of what has come before – and why things are the way they are, you could waste a lot of time working on something that those who came before you already reviewed.

So take advantage of the information in front of you and build on it. We'll all benefit from the new and improved Federal government that you help create.

Your contributions, large or small, count individually and collectively, in determining the direction we will take as an organization.

So remember, working both harder and smarter is imperative as we face the challenges of today and tomorrow. **You are the future** of our Federal government. I know the American people can count on you to help make that future government into the best, most efficient, hardest working government ever.

In addition, **I challenge you to continue to grow** in the following ways:

- First, I challenge you to **insist on real results** and to utilize performance measurement standards as a tool to improve and champion your programs.
- Second, I challenge you to **be good listeners** and to learn from the people that you work with - Ask lots of questions and expect quality, sensible answers.
- Third, **ask good questions**. If you have an idea or better way of doing something, say so. We are relying on it. Don't be afraid to speak up.
- Fourth, **treat everyone with respect** – from the most senior folks with whom you work to the most junior.
- Fifth, I challenge you to **be thoughtful auditors**. In an age of instant communication – and instant access to information – auditors must still be guided by policy and legislation, moral principles, strength of character, restraint in the heat of the moment, and determination in the face of uncertainty. Know that each of your actions represent the OIG.

And I hope you'll remember one more thing during your career in government; **make each day count**.

- Make each day count by having both the courage of your convictions and the courage to keep an open mind.
- Make each day count by making a contribution and a difference.

In closing, **let me offer my congratulations** on your IGATI graduation.

Over the past few weeks, you have successfully met every challenge and demand of this prestigious and vigorous program.

I have no doubt that you'll continue to demonstrate the same dedication and drive, the same creativity and commitment, the same sense of service and spirit that brought you here today.

Thank you for your time, and for your commitment and dedication. I value your professional expertise and welcome your assistance as we forge ahead.

Thank you again to each one of you and congratulations. It will be my honor to distribute the certificates of completion to the graduating students in this class.