



*Leadership is about being proactive when approaching responsibilities and taking the initiative to make one's facility and agency better.*

# Best in the Business Embody Corrections' Progress

**Harley G. Lappin**

Director

Federal Bureau of Prisons

It is a privilege to introduce this issue dedicated to corrections professionals who have been selected by the American Correctional Association and *Corrections Today* as the "Best in the Business" for their heroism, innovation, community service and overall excellence. These selections are real-life examples of ACA's emphasis on correctional leadership and best practices, and reinforce the fact that an individual can and does make a difference.

The correctional workers who are featured come from across the country and represent the entire spectrum of our corrections system: from pre-trial to post-release, both large and small agencies, juvenile and adult services, and line staff to management officials. The group includes professionals involved in the daily supervision and care of offenders, as well as individuals whose major duties involve interaction with constituency groups. And the specific disciplines represented, which are as diverse as our field, each contribute in their own way to our systems' ability to effectively protect the public.

The individuals who have earned the title Best in the Business, have been identified as excellent role models for other staff to emulate. Their inclusion in this issue extends their scope of influence to the entire field of corrections. Generally, professionals

acknowledged with such titles earn that distinction over time. It is not a single event, but rather their work day in and day out that distinguishes them. And, I am confident that none of these individuals were motivated to do their best by the possibility of recognition or glory.

That quality — performing one's day-to-day duties and conducting oneself in a manner consistent with only the highest of standards — is one of many that contribute to effective leadership. The internal compass of true leaders allows for nothing less. Leadership is about being proactive when approaching responsibilities and taking the initiative to make one's facility and agency better. It means being an effective problem-solver who makes informed, sound decisions, even under stress, and who accepts responsibility for his or her actions.

Leadership requires one to be keenly aware of his or her strengths and weaknesses and be a good judge of character in others. It requires a willingness to challenge oneself to be the best and to create an environment in which others strive to do the same. Effective leaders pursue excellence and, as such, are exceptional representatives of their agencies.

Fortunately, exceptional performance in the field of corrections is not restricted to these individuals. It is important to acknowledge those who

stand out based on their stellar performance and accomplishments, but we must not forget that each and every staff member makes a difference every day in the lives of inmates. We rely on them, individually and collectively, to perform their best — and they too have every reason to be proud of their achievements

To those profiled in this issue, congratulations on being named Best in the Business. Your selection by ACA is confirmation that the public has benefited from your hard work and dedication. Your contributions to your respective agencies and the field in general are highlighted by ACA in this issue of *Corrections Today* as examples of excellence.

The future will undoubtedly bring many challenges, but with individuals such as those recognized herein, there is cause for optimism that corrections will continue to progress and successfully meet and overcome future challenges. The individuals featured in this issue have already demonstrated that they can be relied on to meet and excel in the roles they play in their organizations. I have no doubt they will continue their fine work in the future.

For this coming year, I challenge each of us in the field to pursue excellence in our individual and group efforts, to give our best every day in all that we do. ♦