



A sincere “thank you” to every corrections professional for the dedication you have demonstrated in serving our communities and keeping our best interest a priority in your life.

The Best of the Best

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Every single minute, every single day, thousands of our peers are working feverishly to ensure the safety and well-being of our nation’s youths and adults who have been charged with an offense or are serving time, whether in an institutional setting or on probation or parole in our communities. That is a major undertaking, considering it is our primary responsibility to protect our communities.

As a young girl, I recall following my dad around the house, garage and cotton fields, trying to help fix the tractor or the car or trying to assist with home repairs. I know I must have annoyed him many times because I slowed him down, but I wanted to be with my dad, so I did my best. I also knew when I was starting to slack. He would say, “Conganas!” Those two words were loaded. They meant, “Do it with passion!”; “Do it like you mean it!”; “Do it like your life depends on it!” Being the little girl that I was — yes, daddy’s little girl — I familiarized myself with the different tools and related tasks needed to do various jobs. From a young age, a “hard worker” ethic was instilled in me. Mostly, I knew that it made my dad proud, and that was all the encouragement I needed to do my best.

When really pressed, we have to admit that our jobs in corrections do not stop once we head home at the end of the day/shift. In fact, they continue into our personal lives as we balance our professional careers with our personal obligations. This issue of *Corrections Today* highlights a few of these individuals who have been selected to reflect the “Best in the Business” and what corrections is all about: dedication, commitment, integrity, loyalty, courage, perseverance and, many times, varying degrees of personal sacrifice. These same leaders take on the never-ending challenges, daring to make a difference in people’s lives and in their respective communities. These are the same individuals who have chosen to step up to the plate and make a statement: “If I am going to do something, I want to be the best.”

Without the leadership of these individuals, those my dad would say have the “ganas,” our system would fall apart and our communities would be severely compromised. These individuals have demonstrated the true qualities of leadership. It is their efforts — which include responding to clients, acting as agents of change, taking necessary risks and being role models — that impact the quality of our future.

The efforts of corrections professionals cannot be taken lightly. Often professionals go unrecognized for the things they do, which we know can lead to a big crisis if they are not done. For example, failing to maintain proper key control can result in an escape. In other words, failing to be at our post day in and day out would result in an unsafe environment for our communities. Being the best is choosing to be at our post regardless of the risks and having pride in our profession, which is ensuring the well-being of the public.

If we could have it our way, all corrections professionals and their stories would be highlighted in this issue. We know those who are highlighted in this issue represent all of us because, like my dad would say, they do their job “conganas” — with the passion that only a true professional would. A sincere “thank you” to every corrections professional for the dedication you have demonstrated in serving our communities and keeping our best interest a priority in your life. And a most heartfelt “thank you” to your families and loved ones, for without their support we would not be where we are today. ♦

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