

# Learn from Experience

Being a city kid raised on the south side of Chicago, I had little experience with wild animals. One summer, I attended the Wisconsin State Fair with my cousins, and we found what we believed to be a cat and chased it until we cornered it. It raised its tail and sprayed us, because, as it turns out, it was actually a skunk. The worst part was the ride home with all of us in one car.



## Gene Agee

Gene Agee learned a healthy respect for skunks the hard way when he first encountered one as a boy. But military training at an early age helped him solidify his understanding of the need to always respect other people.

“Respect for people, regardless of their status in life, is a guiding principle,” he believes.

Agee joined the U.S. Air Force at age 17, and he considers that decision the most significant personal event in his life.

“The military taught me self-reliance and discipline and allowed me to travel the world, and those qualities served me well later in life.” Agee acknowledges that he was not a very good high school student, and he had to attend summer school every year to make up credits in time for graduation. “But I was able to attend college on the GI Bill, and my maturity while attending college allowed me to be focused and provide leadership throughout my college life.”

Now as Vice President of Enterprise Procurement, Facilities and Security Management for Sprint Corporation, Agee manages 235 people and a budget of more than \$260 million. His responsibilities include supplier sourcing and contract negotiations that have an annual impact upon the company of \$16 billion, as well as management of more than 20 million square feet of real estate. The corporate-security component of his job ensures the physical security of all locations and also coordinates with federal, state, and local law enforcement.

In his current role, he managed to reduce staff by a remarkable 60 percent while still delivering quality service, but Agee has a history of outstanding results. In his previous position, for example, he generated more than \$1 billion in savings within 36 months.

“Despite his drive to meet and exceed business targets,” explains his Eagle Award nominator, Robert H. Brust, Chief Financial Of-

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ficer for Sprint, “Mr. Agee has always dedicated time and untiring effort to Sprint’s inclusion and diversity efforts.”

Agee serves on Sprint’s Executive Inclusion and Diversity Council, is a representative for inclusion and diversity for the finance organization, and he serves as a mentor to minorities and women within the Sprint organization. He is also on the board of directors of 100 Black Men, which improves the lives of African Americans through programs focused on mentoring, education, health and wellness, and economic development. Plus he has served as a board member for organizations including the American Stroke Foundation, the Menorah Hospital Foundation, the National Conference for Community and Justice, and St. Monica Church.

Agee says that his faith keeps him grounded and is his moral compass and that the members of the congregation at his church are his support.

“I believe my life’s purpose is achievement, the pursuit of excellence,” Agee explains. “It does not matter what you do, but once you decide to do something, it is a reflection of you. I want to be an example to others that anything is possible if you believe in yourself, apply yourself fully, and never give up.”

*CareerFOCUS Magazine*<sup>™</sup> and the National Eagle Leadership Institute<sup>®</sup> salute 2009 Eagle Award winner Gene Agee.

#### **Nominating Company** Sprint

**Current Position**  
Vice President, Enterprise Procurement, Facilities and Security Management

**Professional Milestones**

- Member, Sprint Corporate Inclusion Council Executive Committee
- Executive Representative for Inclusion and Diversity, Sprint Finance Organization
- Member and Presenter, Institute of Internal Auditors

**Community Leadership**

- Board of Directors, 100 Black Men
- Board Member, American Stroke Foundation
- Board Member, Menorah Hospital Foundation

**Leadership Principle**  
Listen, encourage open and frank discussion, and coach and counsel while focusing on the development of individuals.

**Education/Training**

- MBA, University of Missouri at Kansas City
- Bachelor of Science in Accounting, Southern Illinois University at Carbondale

**Birthplace**  
Chicago, Illinois

**Current Home**  
Leawood, Kansas

### **The Leadership Promise at Sprint**

Sprint is committed to recognizing, developing, and promoting the best and brightest talent among our employee ranks, and, as a diverse and inclusive employer, we realize that employees of African-American and Hispanic descent are critical to this mission. From our CEO-led Inclusion Council to our associate-driven Employee Resource Groups, Sprint has made diversity an integral part of our business culture and one that employees have come to value and respect.

At Sprint, our employees are our greatest assets. It is our role as an employer to see that our employees are able to achieve the greatest heights possible in their careers. Through our Employee Resource Group mentoring program, our All-Inclusive Workplace training, and other inclusive leadership-development programs, we are able to see that our employees are getting the development and encouragement they need to succeed.