

Reprinted From

Jan 2023

PAYTECH



APA's Past, Present, Future— Bright, Brighter, Brightest Yet

Executive Director Dan Maddux Continues at Its Helm

BY EILEEN GAUGHRAN

Opening photo by Mark Humphries

It is said that when you have Dan Maddux's attention—it is full and undivided.

You look straight at him. You must, because he looks straight at you. He hears ... rather, he listens ... to everything you have to say. And, if you don't have a similar conversation the rest of the day, the rest of the week, or the rest of the year, you've at least had one fully engaging experience—one with lasting consequence.

When asked about the value of people skills, Dan says, "I am most gratified by the power of one-on-one relationships. Being able to give each other our undivided attention, for that moment in time, is singularly the most meaningful aspect of my career and life."

The same is true of Dan's relationship with the APA. Over the span of 40 years, Dan's role has developed from a part-timer—employed first to help grow the APA back in August 1982—to the position of Deputy Executive

Director where he oversaw day-to-day operations, and then into Executive Director in September 1992, where Dan remains today. Recently, Dan accepted an offer from the APA's Board of Directors to renew his position for another 10 years, at least. (Read more on Dan first becoming Executive Director in the 1992 *Payroll Exchange* article and then in a 2007 PAYTECH article celebrating APA's 25th anniversary.)

Dan's longtime relationship with the APA reflects his personal leadership style—a fully engaging experience with lasting consequence.

The Power of People

Personal and team growth have always been Dan's underlying vision for the APA. His many accomplishments in the areas of training, education, and personal development help add fuel for advancing members' careers.

One of the ways payroll professionals have advanced their careers and elevated their status is by attaining their certification through the APA. The highly respected Certified Payroll Professional (CPP) designation is currently

Eileen Gaughran is the Chief Professional Development Officer of the APA. She has been with the APA for nearly 33 years, working closely with Dan since 1990.



held by more than 10,800 newly certified and recertified individuals, while the Fundamental Payroll Certification (FPC) designation is held by more than 6,000 individuals.

Through it all, Dan has always been insistent on sharing the stage with his extended family—his employees, their families, APA members and its stakeholders, including the Board of Directors, vendors and sponsors, educators and trainers, government officials, and fellow leaders from payroll associations around the world.

A recent list of top accomplishments features the many areas in which the APA and GPMI excel: customer service, education, finance and administration, government relations, publications, technology, certification, public relations, and partnerships.

However, when asked about accomplishments of which he is most proud, Dan says, “It is something I am often asked ... and beyond our many, many accomplishments, I’m

most proud of our people. Collectively, we are an unusually engaging group.”

New attendees to Payroll Congress, or Congress “virgins” as Dan lovingly calls them, may not have realized it at first, but it was Dan’s own vocal stylings of America the Beautiful, accompanied by a visual mosaic that helped celebrate the beauty of diversity that perfectly captured the mood for a week of education. But, in a real way, it was also emblematic of Dan’s unrelenting approach to individual empowerment.

One of the most important leadership traits that Dan models is his listening skills. His colleagues, many whom have worked with him for decades, recognize how his sage guidance propels their path forward, and with it, the

growth of the APA.

“To be a great manager is to understand the uniqueness of others, to nurture and capitalize on their skills and talents,” Dan says. “It is to figure out at what they will be merely

The American Payroll Association (APA) and the Global Payroll Management Institute (GPMI) engaged with nearly 191,000 individuals over the past year. These interactions with APA members, GPMI subscribers, education participants, publication customers, and website visitors create opportunities and forge a community by providing the skills and resources necessary for payroll professionals to stay in compliance and become successful.



On previous page, clockwise from top left: Dan shows off some APA merch in 1984; Dan welcomes several international sister payroll associations on stage during the 35th Annual Payroll Congress; Dan meets with a member in 1988; Dan has some fun with member Sue Darring, CPP, in 1999; Dan greets members at the Annual Payroll Congress in 1983; and an early pose from 1995.

Above, clockwise from top left: Dan, pictured with APA's Eileen Gaughran, is in costume ready for the 1994 Payroll Congress party; Dan celebrates with APA staff during the 2008 staff holiday party; Dan with Mike O'Toole, Esq., at the 2018 Payroll Congress; Dan poses for the 2007 PAYTECH article celebrating APA's 25th Anniversary; and Dan meets members like Cynthia Coates during the 2022 Payroll Congress in Las Vegas.

competent, at what they will be great, and where they will excel—even when they don't know themselves."

Tammy Trascher, CPP, APA's Chief Operating Officer, has worked alongside Dan for the past 27 years (see separate sidebar article "Reflections on Working With Dan Maddux").

"Talent management remains a high priority for Dan and the leadership team he has assembled," she says. "Dan can visualize a talent path for anyone by empowering them to learn, acquire more professional education, and increase their skills. He makes an investment in the staff so that they invest in themselves."

Dan's vision for members taking an active role in the Association has differentiated it from other professional associations.

"You will not find 800+ member volunteers in other associations, combined with a highly engaged, dedicated, brilliant staff," Dan says. "I'm most proud of people, externally and internally, who make up our team and community at large. Our internal staff team is incredible. APA has impressive longevity, particularly in a time of significant turnover in employment. I cannot and will not take credit for anyone else's accomplishments. I will take credit for seeing and identifying the potential in others and pushing them to go further."

The growth of the payroll profession mirrors the growth of its members. APA President-Elect Linda Obertin, CPP, Senior Director, Human Resources, Global Lead Payroll at Hilton Worldwide, credits Dan for his personal mentoring, role

modeling, and coaching, which she said directly impacted her ability to be successful in executive positions for large global Fortune 100 companies.

"Dan continues as a constant influence on my career as an executive leader, colleague, and mentor," says Linda. "As a direct result, my career has grown to executive levels, both domestically and globally, to include managing more than 300,000 employees in 70 countries. Dan has directly impacted my ability to make what seemed impossible possible while being the most humble, brilliant, and kind person I have had the privilege of calling my mentor and friend."

Dan has also created a powerful working relationship with APA stakeholders.

"Among our Board and staff leadership team, we work in unison," Dan says. "We have nurtured true, long-term partnerships. I couldn't be prouder. The single most powerful and motivating aspect for me is, and has been, the power of one-on-one relationships."

According to Jason Low, Head of The Association for Payroll Specialists (TAPS) in Australia, "Under Dan's leadership, the American Payroll Association has become a model and mentor for similar associations around the world, including the U.K., Australia, South Africa, and Canada. Most importantly, I value Dan's generosity and willingness to help others achieve their goals. For me, he is a mentor who has played an important role in my career success and the success of TAPS."



Above, clockwise from top left: Dan in 1992 during a Summer Board Meeting; Dan enjoys time with volunteers, like his mom (pictured to right of Dan), and members during the 1993 Payroll Congress in San Francisco; Dan with Patricia Fripp, CSP, CPAE, at the 2022 Payroll Congress; Dan poses with member Phyllis Brown, CPP, during the 16th Annual Payroll Congress in 1998; During the 34th Annual Payroll Congress in 2016, Dan poses with members; and Dan on stage at the 2012 Annual Payroll Congress.

The Power of Communication

To further help personal and team growth, Dan values effective communication for APA's member growth. Dan explains, "In our early years we had only a few subject matter experts (SMEs) with natural public speaking skills. However, there were many more SMEs who had knowledge to share, but not necessarily the innate ability to communicate it. With a coworker, we tried to form a speakers' school. While the APA members and SMEs were very keen on the idea, we needed outside assistance."

Enter Patricia Fripp, CSP, CPAE, an unabashed APA favorite.

"Patricia has been a master and mentor towards improving and transforming our speaking skills among our SMEs and staff," says Dan.

An award-winning speaker, author, and executive speech coach, she was Dan's choice to give voice to hundreds of APA members, employees, and volunteers who have become part of its leadership team.

"Patricia joined us to provide the continuous mentorship we were missing to guide our SMEs to excellence—professional speech coaching," says Dan, reflecting on Patricia's value to the APA. "We have the knowledge and passion in the payroll industry, but I knew we had the need."

The ability to speak persuasively in front of colleagues and upper management is critical to the career growth of payroll leaders. As Dan activated the APA to elevate the payroll profession, along with it was the engagement of people skills required for advancement.

Patricia's work, honored in 2022 with the APA Partner of Excellence Award, has magnified the benefit of membership under Dan's tenure, which propelled the professional growth of payroll practitioners emerging from the back office (read the [May 2022 PAYTECH cover article](#) "Bringing Out the Best in Payroll Leaders"). Many payroll professionals have assumed leadership positions in their organizations in the United States and throughout the world.

"APA has been my family since the start in 1982, and Dan has been a true professional and friend," says James Paille, CPP, Corporate Member Advisor on APA's Board of Directors and Director of Compliance at Thomson Reuters. "My public speaking started at the New York Hilton as a young, scared speaker, and through the professionalism of Dan and the APA, I have grown into the man I am. I treasure the American Payroll Association."

The Future of Payroll

Professional advancement is the future. As Dan looks to the next 10 years, he sees that payroll data analytics will become a whole new value proposition to upper management, which in turn positions top performers in the payroll industry to have a seat at the table.

APA's new [Foundations of Payroll Analytics](#) program is one of the projects he is most proud of.

"It is a substantial first step into a vital content area that will continue to shift payroll's responsibility to substantially strategic methodologies that will eventually transform the



Above, clockwise from top left: Dan speaking at the 2014 Payroll Congress in Minneapolis; Dan enjoys time with APA staff during the 2006 Holiday Party; Dan playing musical chairs with APA staff at a 2009 holiday party; Dan with his "mini me" Lucas during the 2017 Payroll Congress; and Dan posing as Evel Knievel with John Raguz, CPP, at the 2019 Payroll Congress.

entire industry," he says. "Make no mistake. This is just the beginning of a new age for the payroll profession. The power of applying payroll data analytics will revolutionize the ROI of the payroll profession regionally, nationally, and globally. Payroll leaders are increasingly taking a seat at the table to participate in planning business strategy."

Dan emphasizes that the APA will continue to provide updated programs on ever-changing legislative and regulatory issues in the United States, as well as in other countries in which payroll professionals currently, or will eventually, have payrolls.

"While we continue to meet the needs that many of our constituents believe is the bedrock and continuity of their profession, we are also stretching their scope of responsibility and influence, some to match what exists for sectors of the industry today, but much of what will exist for most of the industry in future years," Dan says.

As a futurist, Dan sees just how the payroll profession will advance.

"When we look back at any point of time, we can correlate change with imposed and orchestrated growth in business, which does change the positions and responsibilities in payroll," Dan says. "Because the spectrum of payroll responsibilities is so broad . . . we must work to change the preconceived perception, to include the broad spectrum which defines payroll responsibilities. And while it is easier for the majority of the industry and management to reflect on the fundamental arc of payroll, a more purposeful exploration examines all the ways that payroll has developed

into specialties that penetrate other core disciplines, and in turn, have spun off into their own unique professional niches of the industry."

Accelerating the Payroll Professional

Earlier this year, Dan was a keynote speaker at Payroll Beyond Borders, a global payroll summit hosted by Neeyamo, a provider of global payroll and HR solutions and a consistent supporter of APA and GPMI events. Dan was introduced as a visionary leader and pioneer who, through APA's payroll education and training, equips payroll professionals with tools and knowledge to uplift their careers.

"In an ever-shrinking and inter-connected world, payroll and its professionals will be the common thread and center-spoke for all companies with employees worldwide . . . the role of the payroll professional has shifted permanently from the skilled to the highly skilled," Dan says.

One sees the future of the APA in Dan's appreciation of payroll professionals who bring "critical insights" of businesses and an understanding of cultures and business practices (globally) to accompany their technical payroll skills.

The pandemic highlighted the rapidly changing dynamics of how people work together successfully. This success is bridged by a multitude of stakeholders in business, government, technology, education, information, training, and the supply chain of vendor support services—and there, to look the future straight in the eyes, devoting his full attention—is Dan Maddux. ■

One-to-One With Dan

Payroll Congress is an annual highlight. Tell us about your approach to the event, the speakers, and what you most enjoy.

Payroll Congress and our General Sessions are essentially business theater. These are in-person professional experiences unlike anything else attendees will experience—anywhere. They universally represent the entire payroll industry.

There is a camaraderie, excitement, and overarching unity among attendees that took us decades to foster. This is an organic element that cannot be artificially created. First, it's about the messages, content, and subject matter we want to convey. Everyone in the audience should be able to identify and connect with one of the platform speakers more than the others. It may or may not be their content. It is not going to be the same one for everyone. If there was a sameness, there would not be these different rhythms, beats, and textures to attract people, and hopefully strike a chord. That chord could be a call to action. A heightened emotional awareness. The best laugh or lightbulb moment they had all year. Clearly, some of it is the subject matter. And some of it is the unique voice or way it is presented.

I've not heard anyone else use the term business theater. I'm using this to describe how we score a Payroll Congress event. So much talent and work go into creating the event from start to finish. This includes the professional platform speakers.

There is no set science or methodology for speaker selection. When I was younger, I used to say that I did not want APA to fall in the trap that I would see at so many other conferences and conventions. And that is having a professional platform speaker line up of all old white men. I'm an old white man now, so I can say this.

Our introduction of industry experts has been the icing on the cake. Industry expert presentations have been some of our main take-a-ways and most influencing highlights of our event, which says that despite that fact that we strategically cast a convention of professional keynotes, some of the most impactful moments from the main platform are shared by payroll industry peers. Not just through the awards they receive, but through the expert knowledge shared, by what have been remarkable presentations. We have had decades of professional speech coaching in preparation for these moments.

My favorite moments are spontaneous award acceptances. These are the moments that tie everything up for

me. It is what reminds me that what I do and what we do together is meaningful.

I love seeing others succeed—individually and as a group—our members, individual team members, and partners. While I do not know of another organization that has the number of volunteers that we do, especially when payroll professionals are overburdened in their day-to-day responsibilities, it's quite extraordinary.

I believe that the acceptances of awards are very influencing to others. They want to feel the same level of accomplishment and achievement, and these acts of graciousness become the conduit for others to volunteer.

Our national volunteerism is apparent. Whether a member participates in a local chapter or not, they are aware that the volunteer opportunities exist. They hear the high level of gratification experienced by volunteers.

I love frivolity. On a fun aspect, I enjoy when attendees dress up for our theme parties. It's an activity. Within the activity, costume, props, pomp, we give ourselves permission to play. So many adults never get permission to play, and it's part of being a well-rounded adult person. Everyone's approach to being part of that play is going to be different. A well-orchestrated party gives everyone the opportunity to participate and play on their own terms. It is the crescendo of the overall experience. Attendees don't just come back for the education. They come back to relive the arch and crescendo of the experience of group dynamics at a convention.

Let's talk about your over-arching vision for APA.

My goal has always been for APA to be an inclusive community. While we would have niches that provided for specialization, the circle must be big enough for everyone. Who wants to go to a conference or convention and feel like there are cliques or inner circles that they cannot penetrate? If the circle is big enough for everyone, and there are many ways to get involved, we grow a community that is recognized. We honor individuals for their uniqueness, and they enjoy the fact that we are an inclusive group.

There are plenty of folks who wonder what would your dream week, absent of your APA-related responsibilities, look like.

When I was younger, I would have told you some exotic trip is my dream week. Egypt still rates No. 1. Since I was in my early 20s, I've been going places. I remember

being in Florence in my early twenties, turning around in the Bargello Museum and literally stumbling into the small statue of Mercury. And I stood there and cried. It was an image that I'd looked at as a child for years in the encyclopedias. Mind you, there was no internet then. I knew it was in Florence. I wasn't looking for it. So that was a dream week. I still love going places. During the pandemic, like many, I was working at home. I adore my dog Whisky ("Whisk," pictured at right), but I never thought I would get to spend so much time with him.

Some of my dream weeks in recent years have been spent at home. We live in a loft. I could stay in the loft with Whisk for weeks on end. Granted, the internet, Uber Eats, electricity, and AC are a must. I prefer Sling and Netflix, while Whisk prefers Disney+.

Good thing I don't have kids. Whisk has watched "Cruella" more than 75 times and still enjoys it! ■



Reflections on Working With Dan Maddux

BY TAMMY TRASCHER, CPP

I have worked with Dan Maddux for 27 years. Dan is a visionary, strategist, innovator, and stellar Executive Director, who enjoys sharing his talents and experience with others, and is always encouraging the team, individually or as a group.

Dan is well known for caring about APA's employees and being generous with his time. He cultivates a strong trust with staff and is always thinking of the next step in their professional development.

APA's long-term employees know never to tell Dan that something is beyond their scope, or that they don't have the skills to do "X." Watch out, because that means they are getting assigned to do exactly what they don't think they

are capable of! There are so many examples of this over the years, but one that stands out is when a key member of APA's Editorial Division years ago, who was a great legal editor and researcher and thrived on working behind the scenes, told Dan one day (casually, while in the breakroom) that he was afraid of public speaking and "could never do it." Well, that all changed under Dan's leadership and guidance. He received presentation skills training, gained confidence (after sweating profusely in the beginning), and the opportunity to present APA compliance education. He went on to present many of APA's Payroll Congress workshop sessions and even became a frequently requested speaker at APA chapter meetings and statewide conferences. Dan forces you out of your comfort zone and pushes you to become what you never thought you could be. Suffice it to say, there is no "can't" with Dan.

Tammy Trascher, CPP, is Chief Operating Officer, for the APA.



At left: Dan and Tammy Trascher, APA's COO, in 2012 and Dan presents Tammy with the 20-Year APA Service Award in 2016.

Talent management has also always been a high priority for Dan. One of Dan's unique skills is seeing a career path for an employee, even when they can't see it for themselves, and empowering them to action. This culture of empowerment, which is also one of APA's core values, has led to APA receiving a "Top Workplace" award nine times by the *San Antonio Express-News*—an award that is a direct reflection of employee satisfaction.

While I was still a member of APA working at Tulane University, I was involved in many of APA's volunteer committees. Dan reached out to me and matter-of-factly said, "Your talents are being wasted ... you will work for APA one day." I didn't believe it at first, but... a few years later, after more discussions, I was offered the position at APA, and I relocated to San Antonio in May 1996. My focus was to help relocate the administrative operations from APA's New York City office to San Antonio, with no interruption in services for our customers.

Serving as Chief Operating Officer since 2010 has been very rewarding. In this leadership role, I'm privileged to be involved in every area of APA's business. Dan saw this vision for me back in 1996, and he was right. I really love what I do, seeing the many accomplishments the organization has achieved year after year.

On a personal note, I love how Dan and I strike a nice balance in styles and in our approach to business decisions. I'm a payroll person at my core, so I need data and facts before reaching a decision. Dan has great intuition and can typically move forward based on his gut instincts. So together, we serve the Association well in our long-term strategy. We also have a lot of fun together too. After all, fun is another APA core value.

Dan is proud of the culture he has built at APA. The words of Gary Burnison, from the book "The Five Graces of Life and Leadership," provide an apt synopsis of Dan's leadership style: "It starts with us. Our success is always measured in what others achieve." ■

Dan Maddux In His Own Words



Know and expand on your knowledge, skills, and talents.

To be a great manager is to understand the uniqueness of others, to nurture and capitalize on their skills and talents. It is to figure out at what they will be merely competent, at what they will be great, and where they will excel—even when they don't know themselves.

Give people credit for their work and successes.

Be confident enough in your own value proposition that you are never afraid to hire people who are more gifted, more talented, and frankly, smarter than you.

Know your own value. Don't act like you are the smartest person in the room. Sometimes you will be. Most of the time you are not. In most situations, it is a profusely annoying character trait.

Payroll leaders are increasingly taking a seat at the table to participate in planning business strategy.

