There weren’t that many internal auditors in Austin in the late 1970s but there were enough of us to have a vision for the future and the desire to act on that vision. For many of us this was the beginning of a road that led to our understanding and acceptance that internal auditing was a profession and not just a job.

You could count on two hands the number of members who attended meetings the first few years. The organization is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year and now has over 700 members! That is unbelievable to those of us who remember the early years with many chapter meetings having single digit attendance.

I’ve been around since the beginning and it has been truly astounding to observe the growth and development of the Chapter, our members, and the profession as a whole. It is also hard to realize I am now one of the dinosaur members of the profession in Austin, Texas. Where did all that time go?

The IIA motto for many years has been “progress through sharing” and it has certainly been true for Austin Chapter members over the years. Professional auditors continually help one another through their willingness to share ideas, information, and copies of audit programs, policies, procedures, flowcharts, and reports. We readily share what we know and what we have with our peers in an effort to better the profession and ourselves.

The Early Days

There were several unsuccessful attempts to form an Austin Chapter in the 1970s. There were few certified internal auditors in town and most of them had been grandfathered in when the CIA Program began in 1974. The IIA Standards (known as the “Brown Book” in those days) were issued for the first time in August 1978 and contained less than 20 pages.

The 13 IIA members living in Austin in 1978 were assigned to the San Antonio Chapter. Representatives of the Alamo City met several times with a small group of interested Austin auditors and on December 5, 1978 the IIA Austin Chapter had its origins.

Six members signed a commitment agreement with the IIA headquarters in Florida. The charter members and their organizations were:

- Alice Bryant (Austin ISD),
- Michael Doggett (Texas State Comptroller’s Office),
- Jim Gerick (Texas Department of Community Affairs),
- David MacCabe (Texas State Comptroller’s Office),
- Karl Meredith (American National Bank), and
- Bill Weathers (City Auditor).

Austin Becomes a Chapter

We were officially recognized and chartered by The IIA on March 8, 1979 as the Austin Audit Club of the San Antonio Chapter.

Jim Gerick did an outstanding job leading the Chapter through these early days. Other officers included Alice Bryant, Michael Doggett, David MacCabe, and Gerald Weller. In April 1979 new chapter president Michael Doggett attended the IIA Leadership Conference in Orlando. On September 5, 1979 The IIA formally recognized the Austin Chapter.
As the saying goes, “You need to crawl before you can walk” and that was the case with this new group of eager internal audit professionals. Our meetings were held anywhere we could get a room – Bonanza Sirloin Pit, Luby’s Cafeteria, and some state agencies but most often, the Department of Mental Health-Mental Retardation auditorium.

Attendance was meager – often less than 10 members were present. However, at the time that represented 20-30% of the Chapter membership in the beginning! Bob Cates often recalls the embarrassment of one meeting in his presidency when there were only 3 attendees to listen to a distinguished speaker.

The Chapter’s early leaders were a determined bunch of conscientious audit professionals. The group envisioned a bigger and better Chapter, expanded professional development offerings, and a network of internal auditors throughout the Austin area. None of us could have believed then how the Chapter has evolved over 30 years.

The chapter leadership got to work studying the various rules, procedures, and reporting requirements promulgated by The IIA, determining what committees were essential for a new chapter, developing a newsletter, finding speakers for monthly meetings, and conducting professional training activities.

**Chapter Programs & Accomplishments**

Some of our early meeting speakers included State Senator (now Congressman) Lloyd Doggett, Governor’s Budget Office director Paul Wrotenbery, as well as numerous internal audit and public accounting practitioners based in Austin.

For several years starting in 1979 the old American National Bank (now Chase Bank downtown) on 6th Street served as the test site for CIA exams. Karl Meredith and Jim Gerick contributed many hours to the success of the exam participation.

The years 1982-1983 brought two major accomplishments sponsored by our Chapter:

- Governor Clements 1982 first-ever proclamation of *Internal Audit Week* throughout the state of Texas, and
- a 1983 operational auditing seminar featuring Larry Sawyer, the distinguished author, lecturer, and father of modern internal auditing.

The Chapter leadership also began an outreach involving other professional groups including the State Agency Internal Audit Forum, the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants, the Association of Government Accountants, and the EDP Auditors Association (now known as the Information Systems Audit & Control Association).

The Austin Chapter has been an important professional association for local internal auditors for the past 30 years. All of us who have connected with the Chapter are stronger professionals because of our association with the organization and with each other. It has been an honor and privilege to see the Chapter’s remarkable transition to an effective and vibrant force for internal audit networking and professional development.

I encourage all Austin Chapter members to seriously consider serving as a committee member, committee chair, or officer. Such opportunities allow you to contribute towards your profession and also expand your leadership experiences.