Patsy Reeves is recognized as a United States Air Force (USAF) and Department of Defense (DoD) workforce development champion. She understands human talent is critical for future federal excellence and throughout her 36-year career she has demonstrated an enduring passion for recruiting, training, and mentoring. Her accomplishments have been publicized multiple times at USAF and DoD conferences and in the *Defense Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics* *(AT&L)* magazine. In 2005 the Partnership Roundtable selected her for the $5,000 John Magnotti Award for exceptional mentoring in acquisitions.

**Air Force Impact:** In 2001, Patsy Reeves was selected as the Chair of the Air Force Contracting Executive Development Panel (EDP) charged with creating a career development vision for 7,000+ worldwide AF Contracting mid and senior managers (GS-12 and above). In that role, she transformed the career broadening program from a local workforce augmentation tool into a corporate development program, complete with leadership training seminars, geographical reassignments, and GS-15 or Senior Executive Service (SES) mentors. High-potential candidates (GS-11 through GS-14) from AF bases worldwide were selected for 30-month geographic relocation to expand their experience in contracting or provide broadening assignments in program management, finance, or logistics. Annual, week-long professional development and networking seminar locations were selected to highlight a unique aspect of the AF mission and over the years included: a space shuttle launch site, an aircraft production line tour, briefings at the Pentagon, leadership experiences at Gettysburg, and a tour of Cheyenne Mountain (the AF facility for monitoring North American airspace). A key seminar feature was mentor/career broadener discussions on current assignments and future direction. Without exception, career broadeners were energized with strategic perspective; and participants from the early 2000s now serve as GS-15 and Senior Executive Service (SES) leaders. Patsy Reeves established the vision, led annual events, and served as a hands-on mentor to model her personal commitment to the future workforce.

In 2005, AF Contracting adopted a new, more stringent promotion system. Recognizing the need to communicate these changes with a positive emphasis, Patsy Reeves led the EDP in creating and briefing a professional development roadmap, explaining each aspect of a successful career (performance, breadth, development, academics, and certifications). To reach the 7,000+ workforce worldwide, Patsy Reeves briefed AF contracting leaders on the new path to professional development and provided a scripted briefing for these leaders to use in subsequent briefings with their employees. Clearly articulating this vision produced a workforce who understood the rating system and rationale for change. This career progression roadmap was documented in an AF Professional Development Guide and distributed worldwide. Within this Guide, the AF Deputy Assistant Secretary for Acquisition (Contracting) showcased Patsy Reeves’ career as a real-life example of positive career experiences. At that time, she had served at two product development centers, three logistics centers, a command headquarters, and the Pentagon. While contracting is her core competency, she modeled the benefits of career broadening through assignments in Program Management and Strategic Plans.

A zeal for leading people motivates Patsy Reeves to speak and write on professional development topics. Since 2006, she has served as a keynote speaker for workforce development seminars at AF bases, national and regional professional conferences, high school, college, and DoD events, and was featured on two radio talk shows. Her article “Seizing the Opportunity in Change” was published in *Contract Management* magazine, reaching a DoD and industry audience.

**Robins Air Force Base (AFB) GA:** Patsy Reeves’ enthusiasm for developing people was demonstrated during her 2001–2008 assignment as the Director of Contracting at Robins AFB, Georgia.

Identifying a lack of supervisory training at the base, Patsy Reeves approached the 2-star Commanding General about instituting a leadership development program. He embraced her vision and appointed her the AF base champion charged with creating leadership training for the 1,500 officer, enlisted, and civilian supervisors at Robins AFB. This 1-year program provided a 2-3 day experience each month on leadership principles and qualities, navigating change, setting priorities, communication and influencing others, resolving conflict, constructive feedback, problem-solving, conducting performance reviews, and giving recognition. The Command Headquarters contributed $150,000 for the inaugural class as a pilot initiative for later expansion across the AF. In addition, Patsy Reeves sponsored two book authors to speak to 500 base supervisors on Servant Leadership and Leading a Multi-Generational Workforce.

As baby boomer civil servants retire, the DoD Human Capital Strategic Plan documents the looming crisis in attracting employees to the acquisition disciplines that include business. In 2007, Patsy Reeves brokered a partnership with Defense Acquisition University, Macon State College, Robins AFB, and the Aerospace Industry Committee to create a future pipeline of trained contracting employees. Three

3-hour electives formed a Government Contracting Concentration within the College of Business at Macon State College. College graduates who successfully completed these courses, if hired as civil servants, met the legally mandated Acquisition Professional Development Program (APDP) Level I and II contracting course requirements. This arrangement shifted training responsibility from the AF to the college; saving over $13,400 per student while providing ready-to-work employees. Student response to the January 2008 first class was overwhelming, with 40 enrolled plus a waiting list. The Office of the Secretary of Defense (OSD) Director of Defense Procurement and Policy asked Patsy Reeves to brief the college partnership to a conference of DoD Contracting SES members and General Officers to facilitate replicating this workforce pipeline at other locations. This innovative college partnership was featured as a best practice in a 2008 edition of the DoD *Acquisition Technology and Logistics* magazine.

**Wright-Patterson Air Force Base OH (Aeronautical Systems Center (ASC)):** In 2008, Patsy Reeves accepted the position as ASC Director of Contracting. She found herself at the helm of an organization charged with purchasing $20B per year for DoD national security requirements with a reduced staff, 40% of the 800+ personnel positions vacant, and no hiring budget. Shortly after her arrival, Congress (Section 852 of the 2008 National Defense Authorization Act) identified funds to beef-up the DoD Acquisition Corps through recruiting, hiring, and training. Through Section 852, and a variety of other funding sources, in December 2008, Patsy Reeves’ organization secured 142 intern allocations to be filled by August 2009. Concurrently five other organizations received funds to reinvigorate their contracting workforce. Patsy Reeves energized the group to strategically form a “workforce cooperative” to pool resources to recruit, hire, and train together. Leadership from each of the five contracting organizations formalized a partnership through a Memorandum of Agreement and shifted the dynamic from a competition for talent into a collaborative recruiting/hiring team.

Patsy Reeves challenged this team to formulate a hiring plan focused on excellence and diversity. Her organization led a highly successful 2009 recruiting process and filled 203 positions. When additional Section 852 funds were released to DoD, calls poured in from locations across the country seeking how-to guidance on hiring exceptionally qualified employees. 2010 college hiring trips embraced recruiters from other career fields and netted 153 new contracting personnel and 62 program managers. Over a 2-year period, this hiring cooperative filled 400+ positions with highly qualified candidates (67% have Master of Business Administration or Juris Doctorate degrees; 31% have Bachelor of Science degrees). Patsy Reeves’ workforce development team received the 2009 Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Acquisition (Contracting) Special Recognition Award and the 2010 Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Diversity Award.

The hiring challenge had been met, but it was followed by concern over how to provide exceptional training for the newly arriving employees. Patsy Reeves’ team developed “Jumpstart” –a multi-week federal contracting-specific course to accelerate new employee development. Tapping into the expertise of two retired managers, the Jumpstart training program was created in partnership with the Defense Acquisition University. Since May 2009, 375 new interns have completed the Aeronautical Systems Center Jumpstart program and are Level I APDP certified.

Recognizing recruiting and retention are equally important, Patsy Reeves makes career management of the interns in her organization a priority. Structured training plans and 18-month job rotations across base contracting organizations facilitate broad experience and strategic thinking. Relationships facilitate retention so Patsy Reeves’ intern management team created service and social organizations to foster intern networking. The intern service organization, Community Action Reaches Everyone, received the 2010 Wright-Patterson Air Force Base Martin Luther King Humanitarian Award recognizing 500 hours of community service. Patsy Reeves’ hiring and training initiatives at Wright-Patterson AFB were featured in the Spring 2011 special workforce edition of DoD *Acquisition, Technology, and Logistics* magazine as a unique model for injecting talent in the federal workplace.

**Wright-Patterson Air Force Base OH (Air Force Materiel Command (AFMC) Headquarters):** In 2011 as AFMC Director of Contacting, Patsy Reeves envisioned a program to deploy Air Force contracting interns to U.S. Central Command's area of operations. The Junior Civilian Deployment Program is a win-win opportunity for volunteers to enhance their professional development and reduce the deployment demands on military contracting officers. The pilot implementation of this vision commenced in spring 2012 with 6-month deployments for four civilians – two to Afghanistan, one to Qatar, and one to the United Arab Emirates (UAE). Using lessons learned from these initial experiences, planning is underway to select the next group of civilian interns who will substitute for their AF military counterparts during 6-month deployment rotations in the future.

Career broadening and geographic mobility are essential experiences to groom future DoD civilian leaders; however historically many civilians spend their entire career in a single location. To stimulate interest in broadening, in 2011 Patsy Reeves created an opportunity to foster a new paradigm. Her team “recruited” interested organizations and sought volunteers from “graduating” interns willing to relocate. Using a competitive interview process, over 20 interns were matched to vacancies and will fill a permanent position, in a new organization, in a different state. Strict qualifications (advanced degree, contracting officer warrant, APDP certifications, etc) will ensure success of the initial cadre and encourage future interest as the career broadening initiative is expanded to a larger group of candidates.

In each assignment during her 36-year federal career, Patsy Reeves has envisioned, promoted, and instituted unique opportunities for military and civil servants to experience the reward and excitement of a federal career. The enthusiasm and breadth of experience generated by this career development is the best guarantee that future leaders will be committed and equipped to tackle tomorrow’s government challenges.