

I Treasure My 25 Years

By Susan E. Bos, CMA, CPA



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I recently received my 25-year membership certificate and a lapel pin with what looks to be a diamond chip in it. Thank you, Jeff Thomson, IMA® CEO and also a CMA®, for signing my certificate.

Time has flown by since I joined this association, and I've seen many changes. The organization changed its name from NAA (National Association of Accountants) to IMA (Institute of Management Accountants). We always had the CMA (Certified Management Accountant), but we introduced the CFM (Certified Financial Manager), then retired it. Along the way, we changed the CMA exam from five parts to four parts and now to two parts. We went from a large, representative board of directors of 243 to a strategic board of 52. We had chapters and councils when I became a member, but now we have chapters all around the world.

I changed, too, from a young, single, professional woman working as an accountant to a married working mother who earned a graduate degree and two certifications. In the late 1980s, I was working in the accounting department of a large manufacturing company in the baking industry. When I was visiting our plant in Louisville, Ky., the cost accountant there and I attended a computer show where IMA had a booth. We both decided it would be good for our careers to join an association in our field. Little did I know *how* good it would be for me personally and professionally! I soon joined our chapter board in Michigan

and gained confidence speaking in front of a group. I learned that volunteerism can be fun, especially when you're working with professionals of all levels.

Since I had passed the CPA exam years earlier, the next step was the CMA exam. Yet I was a member for 10 years before I decided that it was the best way to demonstrate competence. Studying for and passing the CMA exam actually helped me grow and develop as a person, knowing I could approach any problem and figure it out.

Service has also been a big part of my IMA life. As a chapter president years ago, I stood a little farther from the podium each month as my pregnancy progressed. Now my son, Adam, is a student member of IMA. When you are fortunate to serve at the council level, you volunteer with members who have more experience in IMA and in business. They are a source of inspiration and guidance throughout your career. At the global level, you're operating at a much higher level of purpose and provide strategic direction for IMA. The stakes are higher, and the visibility is greater. I'm glad I had many years of preparation and knowledge of IMA before I joined the global board.

What *hasn't* changed is the good people of this association. The staff and volunteers are committed to IMA and the accounting profession. We have friends and colleagues from California to Istanbul, Turkey, and from Ann Arbor to Bahrain. I am proud to be part of this great association and grateful for the wonderful experiences I've had as a member. **SF**