

A Rewarding Career

By Alfred M. King, CMA, CFM



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Five years out of business school I became controller of international operations for Walker Manufacturing, an auto parts business in Racine, Wis. One afternoon a colleague invited me to attend that evening's NAA meeting. The National Association of Accountants had recently changed its name from National Association of Cost Accountants (NACA). For the previous five years I had been a cost accountant, so it sounded good. Further, being new in town, it was a great way to meet people.

At that time, the monthly meetings had an attendance of perhaps 125 people (only one was a woman). The chapter was a combination of professional association and social club. I was immediately put at ease and started attending meetings regularly.

Then one day at work I got into an accounting dispute with my colleagues. I knew I was right, but management came to an opposite conclusion. I decided on the spot to write an article that presented my arguments. If it were published, then my views would become authoritative. Lo and behold, the article appeared in the *NAA Bulletin* (a predecessor to *Strategic Finance*) and, to my amazement, even won a Certificate of Merit.

I soon became active on the Racine-Kenosha Chapter board and in a couple of years became Chapter president. Next was service on the National Board, which was huge at about 250 people then.

In 1972, NAA introduced its Certified

Management Accountant (CMA®) program. By this time I had moved to American Appraisal, and my then boss, Ettore Barbatelli, had just finished serving as NAA President (now IMA Chair). He informed me that he expected five people to sit for the first exam. While I *had* to do it, I was unable to find any other “volunteers.” Since the December exam was the first, there were no back exams I could look at, so my preparation was supposed to be reading a list of 17 books. I couldn't find the time to read *all* the books, so I ended up reading *none*. I simply went to New York City and sat down for the two-and-a-half-day exam. As luck would have it, I did pretty well and was awarded CMA #23. Soon I joined the ICMA Board of Regents.

In 1981, I joined the NAA staff as managing director. Ten years later, I returned to private industry but kept active in the association. I volunteered for the Financial Reporting Committee and have been an active member of it since 1991.

My professional career has been intertwined with IMA for 45 years, and I believe that my overall performance has been greatly aided by the association. I still recommend to young people that they not only join but become as active as they can. “The harder you work, the luckier you become.” I have worked hard for IMA and have been extremely fortunate in my professional career. While I can't say that I owe *everything* to IMA, my career would have been far less rewarding without it. **SF**