

Experience IMA!

By Tasheé Singleton



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In 2001, I attended the 2nd Annual Student Conference in Atlanta, Ga., and fell in love with IMA®. I learned interviewing techniques, dressing for success, and how to have fun meeting new people while conducting business. During one of the breakout sessions, Larry R. White, then a Captain in the U.S. Coast Guard (and now former IMA Chair), sat at the table with me, and we had casual conversation about school and career goals/options. I didn't expect to encounter such high-ranking professionals, let alone to have a one-on-one as a student. Another session was on financial leadership programs. Two very young Johnson & Johnson (J&J) employees made working in the corporate arena look like the way to go, and J&J had a financial leadership track that seemed very attractive. I knew at that moment that learning and understanding a business and helping from the financial perspective was what I wanted to do.

I've been engaged in IMA activities ever since. I went back home and became involved in the local chapter—Chattahoochee Valley. The members welcomed me with open arms. This chapter was also my introduction to the accounting community, and I eagerly wanted to be part of it because of their compassion and the passion they had for technical skills, leadership, and how they welcomed people to the organization. One person who stands out for me is Vicki Franks. No matter how small or large my excitement or question, she always encouraged me to continue going after my dreams, follow my heart. Thanks, Vicki!

Throughout this journey of learning who I am, I gained unparalleled leadership experience. I became a director for community service and student activities, which later led to being president of the chapter four times, three years consecutively. In the midst of enjoying chapter activities, I heard about the Gulf South Council and got excited about this level of engagement. I became director of meeting arrangements and activities. Later I kept the books as the secretary. Now I have the honor of holding one of the highest positions with IMA as an At-Large Director on the IMA Global Board of Directors.

IMA has been a great supporter all the way. When I faced some challenging business decisions, IMA members offered sound advice. A few even took me under their wings to mentor me. Not long afterward, I was able to advance from my position as an accountant II to accounting manager to comptroller within one year. I know it's because of the sound advice, listening skills, observation of decision making, and participation on committees that I've been awarded the best experience. It's because of my faith and IMA that I've been able to persevere. Without IMA, I would have made some improper or heated decisions. With IMA, I've grown more confident about my accounting skills and decision making. Now I'm studying for the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) exam, and I look forward to continuing this new journey with IMA.

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