

By Rick Thompson, CMA, CFM, and Dennis Whitney, CMA, CFM

40

YEARS OF  
EXCELLENCE  
1972 – 2012

# Celebrating the CMA

From the first CMAs to current candidates, everyone is experiencing a sense of pride and accomplishment as we continue to enhance the certification and what it means to the management accounting profession.

Although we've been honoring the 40th anniversary of the CMA® program all year, we had a special celebration during IMA's Annual Conference & Exposition in Las Vegas. At the Annual Meeting of Members on Sunday, June 24, Al King, Ben Mulling, and Rosemary Amato described what earning the CMA has meant to them. Then on Monday, June 25, we hosted a party featuring delicious food, a birthday cake, entertainment, and many of our great IMA® friends. On Tuesday, at the Annual Dinner, we had the opportunity to present exam performance and Board of Regents chapter awards to this year's winners as well as commemorative 40th anniversary clocks to distinguished CMAs in attendance who took the first CMA exam. The esteemed class of 1972 blazed the trail for future generations of management accountants. Attendees included Denny Beresford, Jim Edwards, Jerry Ford, John Macaulay, Ron Huefner, Al King, Karl Reichardt, Malcom Todt, and

Dick Troxel. Two other special guests were Priscilla Payne, previous vice president of ICMA, and Lou Vlasho, the first IMA Chair who was a CMA.

Besides the anniversary, the CMA program has enjoyed two other great recent achievements. We added more than 10,000 new candidates to the CMA program this fiscal year, and we awarded more than 2,300 new CMA certificates, a record number granted in any year. Another record is the number of active CMAs at more than 19,000. We are honored to be the current stewards of the program and to carry on the tradition of excellence that began 40 years ago.

## Certifying Excellence

During the past four decades, the CMA credential has become known as the most rigorous assessment for business-performance-minded accounting and financial professionals. When we started the CMA, things were a lot simpler than they are today. Advancements in technology, the true globalization of business, and changes in regulations have dramatically impacted how accountants do their jobs. The exam has also changed to keep pace with the current business needs in terms of knowledge,

skills, and abilities. Now the CMA is a must-have for management accountants who want to get ahead in the competitive workplace by developing the skills of planning, analysis, internal controls, risk management, and decision support. An indicator of professional excellence, our certification demonstrates that those who achieve it are true professionals.

The CMA program is growing in all IMA regions—North America, the Middle East, Europe, and Asia-Pacific—in numbers as well as influence, and it is viewed positively around the world. Since the CMA has become a globally recognized credential, it's fitting that this year's Bulloch Award was presented to SAFEA, China's State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, for its continued support of the CMA in China. It is with SAFEA's partnership that the CMA program continues to grow there.

For those of you who aren't familiar with SAFEA, it's an administrative agency of the state council of the People's Republic of China, responsible for bringing foreign experts into China to help train Chinese people to become experts and for introducing foreign certifications into China. SAFEA is

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## Certification

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also in charge of organizing overseas training for Chinese technical and managerial professionals working in government departments, state-owned enterprises, and government-related entities. In an average year, SAFEA will bring more than 480,000 hours of foreign expert training into China and will send more than 30,000 Chinese professionals abroad for training. Its Training Center is responsible for bringing foreign professional certifications, such as the CMA, into China.

The Bulloch Award honors the memory of Dr. James Bulloch, the first managing director of ICMA. He created the original CMA framework and the high standards of the CMA program that we still follow today. The award recognizes an organization that has demonstrated outstanding sponsorship, encouragement, and support of the CMA program. Previous award winners include Johnson & Johnson, Caterpillar, Milliken & Company, Kimball International, Air Products and Chemicals, Canal Industries, Defense Finance and Accounting Services, Saudi Aramco, and Xerox Corporation. Accepting the Bulloch Award was Zheng Jie, chief representative in SAFEA's New York office, on behalf of Jixun Bai, general director of the Training Center of State Administration of Foreign Experts Affairs, P.R. China. Mr. Zheng gave an inspiring acceptance speech about the future of management accounting and the CMA program in China.

### A Sense of Pride

The CMA speaks to the needs of

CFOs and their teams, and the 40th anniversary attests to the continued respect and relevance of this credential. We are proud to be part of this elite group. All CMAs—and those who are pursuing the CMA—should feel a sense of personal and professional pride at the accomplishments and significance of the credential. Next month we will continue to commemorate the 40th anniversary with a special issue of *Strategic Finance*. We are confident that the next 40 years will be even brighter as we continue to strive to achieve the vision of those IMA volunteers who had the foresight to create this great designation! **SF**

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