

**Message from the Chair**  
By John C. Macaulay, CMA



# Where the CMA Took Me

IMA® and the CMA® have contributed greatly to the personal and career growth and development of many members. They can do the same for you if you decide to pursue certification.

**D**uring my years of service to IMA® and in my current role as Chair, I've had the privilege of speaking to many members about their experience with the organization and what IMA has meant to them over the years. Some of the most inspiring stories come from those who have proudly earned the CMA® (Certified Management Accountant) designation, which is celebrating its 40th anniversary this year.

## Why the CMA?

My own experience with the CMA began while I was at General Mills, serving as a financial analyst in the corporate accounting department. In the fall of 1972, one of my bosses, Jerry Ford, told me about a new exam being offered by the National Association of Accountants (NAA) and asked if I'd be interested in taking it with him. Based on his description, I said, "Of course." I didn't know that much about the exam, except for an outline of the body of knowledge and a suggested reading list that

had been provided, but because I had recently completed my MBA studies, I thought I was pretty well prepared.

What I wasn't prepared for was the weather: We took the two-and-a-half-day CMA exam in December 1972 at the University of Minnesota when a blizzard occurred. We lost power one day, but that didn't matter as much as it would today because the exam consisted of a booklet of paper and No. 2 pencils. I certainly didn't learn my score immediately. In fact, it wasn't until a couple years later that I actually received my certificate because although I had passed all five parts of the exam, it was judged that I didn't have enough management accounting experience.

The CMA experience reinforced two valuable lessons: First, sometimes it's good to take a risk. Second, when you take a risk, you don't know where it may lead. When I learned I wasn't getting my CMA certificate immediately, I began to correspond with folks at the ICMA about the status of my certification. That correspondence led to my being asked to serve on the precursor to the CMA Exam Review Committee, which was the basis for my involvement in IMA.

For several years in the 1970s, I served as a member of an informal CMA exam review group, where I reviewed and tested questions. Later on, from 1996 through 2002, I became part of the ICMA Board of Regents, which is the governing body of the CMA program. These experiences made me appreciate even more the value of my CMA certification and the effort, hard work, and scientific analysis that are all incorporated in the CMA program.

## Create Your Story

My experiences with the CMA and IMA have contributed greatly to my personal and career growth. Later in this issue, you'll find stories from other CMAs, including Jerry Ford—those from the Class of 1972 and some other prominent IMA members. I hope, like me, you'll find their stories instructional and inspiring. If you aren't a CMA now, I urge you to consider becoming one. You can create your own "CMA story," and we can read about it 10 years from now when the CMA program celebrates its golden anniversary.

I encourage you to share your thoughts with me on this or any other subject at [jmacaulay@imanet.org](mailto:jmacaulay@imanet.org). **SF**