

MEMBER PROFILE



Doug McLean, CPA, CGA **Director, Winnipeg Tax Services** **Canada Revenue Agency**

“When I meet with new employees or people who are just starting out in their career, they always ask me, how did you get to where you are today? And honestly – it’s a bit of a mystery to me,” laughs Doug McLean, CPA, CGA, Director of Winnipeg Tax Services with the Canada Revenue Agency (CRA). “Hard to believe but, up until grade 12 there was no question I was going to study to become a marine biologist.”

To this day, Doug remains an avid scuba diver who has swam with the likes of seven foot sharks. However, he opted to steer his education and career path down a different stream. After carefully exploring his options, he landed on a collaborative business administration degree that was once offered between the University of Winnipeg and Red River College. “It looked like an interesting program and I decided to

make accounting my major,” Doug explains. “I can’t really explain why. I didn’t know anyone who was an accountant. Thankfully, as I continued my education I found I really enjoyed it.”

While pursuing his degree, Doug attended presentations on obtaining a professional accounting designation. “I kept the idea of becoming a designated accountant in the back of my mind while I was in school,” Doug says. “I realized that a professional designation offers immediate credibility within the accounting and business community. While you certainly need to establish your own professional reputation, having an accounting designation is an asset from the perspective of employers, clients and colleagues.”

After completing his education, Doug began his career at Toronto Dominion Bank where he acted as a Senior Account Officer for a year before landing an opportunity as an Assistant Controller with Gendis, an umbrella corporation for Sony. “The position with Gendis was a fantastic experience as an accountant,” Doug recalls. “The work was interesting and the job gave me an opportunity to work on and consolidate financial statements. I was able to work closely with internal and external auditors and learn about different functions of the business.”

Doug developed an interest in audit and decided that the CRA was the place to go. “Most of my career has been in audit, but I knew at a very early stage I wanted to be something beyond auditing,” Doug explains. “I always looked for opportunities to step outside my comfort zone and take on work outside of audit that would allow me to gain a broader range of experience.”

Doug's passion, ambition and commitment to professional development has paid off, leading to his current role that oversees 750 employees. "A very large component of my role is leadership. I strive to encourage employees to reach their full potential professionally and to be creative and innovative," Doug says. "There are so many opportunities to provide insight and suggestions to the direction of the organization and our tax policies. Whether it's a new way to improve a process, streamline an idea or overcome an obstacle. My best days are where people succeed and those achievements are recognized."

Coming on board in 1981, Doug has been with the CRA for 35 years. "I was actually going to retire this year, but I like it so much I am staying another year," Doug laughs. "In all seriousness, it is a great place to carry out a career. There's a lot of diversity in the work that we do and there is also plenty of opportunity for growth within the organization."

While Doug's successful career is firmly rooted in his drive to develop a breadth of skills and experiences, he also acknowledges the value of a professional accounting designation and encourages aspiring business and accounting professionals to dive in and pursue the CPA program.

"It doesn't matter where you work. Getting your CPA designation is the key to unlocking the door to so many possibilities -not just as an accountant," Doug says. "This profession has so many diverse roles available and the designation opens the doors to all of them."

