

# MEMBER PROFILE

**ANGELA CHAMBERS, FCPA, FCMA**  
PRESIDENT AND MANAGING PARTNER  
MERCER BRADLEY



After graduating from Elmwood High School in Winnipeg, Angela Chambers, FCPA, FCMA was like a lot of recent graduates, she wasn't sure what she was going to do next.

"I decided to enroll at Red River College and take the Business Administration program. I still wasn't sure what I wanted to do but I had a really good Introduction to Accounting instructor and because of her influence I decided to major in accounting," Chambers explains.

She went on to complete the program but it was perhaps that experience – the ability of a great teacher to inspire her students – that would, in part, be responsible for Chambers' belief in education for all, which would feature prominently throughout her career.

"I got my first job at Colliers Pratt McGarry (now Colliers International) working as a corporate accountant. While I was there, the controller I reported to was going through the CMA legacy program. She was also a big believer in education and strongly encouraged me to apply," Chambers recounted.

Chambers moved to British Columbia a few years later after taking a job at a property management company in Victoria.

"I was halfway across the country on my own and because I didn't know a lot of people, I had lots of time to think. It was a logical time for me to figure out what I wanted to do with my career."

She remembered the advice of her former boss in Winnipeg and enrolled in the CMA program.

"Back then, everything was done through mail correspondence. They would mail me assignments and I'd handwrite them and mail them back. Thankfully I know the CPA program is more convenient than the legacy programs were in those days," she says.

“ I had no idea I would be running a company across Western Canada, and yet, my designation helped prepare me for that. ”

During the time she was working towards her designation she changed jobs, leaving the world of property management behind after ten years in Manitoba and BC.

"I got a job working as a Senior Accountant and Assistant Controller for a company called Pacific Regeneration Technologies (now PRT Growing Services) which specialized in growing seedling trees in reforestation areas."

It was there that she honed her skills in the technical aspects of accounting and in 2002 she earned her accounting designation.

"In 2004, I moved back to Winnipeg to be closer to my family

and to reconnect to the city I grew up in. At first I didn't have a job so as part of my search I submitted my resume to a local staffing agency. They called me in for an interview and asked me a series of questions. I laugh as I look back now but I basically told them I wanted to be an accountant who didn't actually do a lot of hands-on accounting which I think was strange at the time."

Still – they found her a job in no time.

"The agency offered me a job," she says with a laugh. "It was the first time I considered a role like that and I took to it right away. I was a Senior Staffing Manager there for almost three years."

“ Education has always been very important to me. I feel very strongly that education is a right and not a privilege. ”

After a brief stop working for Red River College, one of her former colleagues from the staffing agency got in touch with an opportunity and job offer.

"He had just started Mercer Bradley in Vancouver and he wanted me to go out there and work with him. I said 'no' four or five times."

Eventually he gave up trying to get Chambers to move and offered a different solution.

"He said if I didn't want to move out there, I'd just have to start a Mercer Bradley office in Winnipeg. I remember thinking: is he for real? It was totally unexpected and I had never even considered the prospect of doing something like that."

Chambers remembers going back and forth for weeks but eventually her decision and leap of faith would be rewarded.

"I started the Mercer Bradley office in Winnipeg almost ten years ago and I'm so glad I made that decision," she says.

Chambers did a bit of everything those first years.

"I ran our Winnipeg office, which meant I did everything from business development, recruiting, matchmaking, hiring and training of our own staff and other tasks critical to running the office."

With Chambers' guidance, Mercer Bradley is one Western Canada's premier accounting recruitment firms. She credits her accounting designation for helping to prepare her for the challenge.

"I use many soft skills in my current role: business process analysis, negotiations, strategic planning, change management and customer service. I have my hands not only in every aspect of my own business, but we get to the nitty gritty of our clients' and candidates' needs. My designation program prepared me to have tough conversations, see things from different perspectives

and integrate all the pieces to come up with solutions."

Two years ago, Chambers became the President and Managing Partner of Mercer Bradley.

"Now I find I spend a lot of time working procedurally with our Vancouver and Edmonton offices. I have recently been working on social media planning. But I still move from doing really high-level strategic thinking to negotiating a client deal within a couple hours. It definitely keeps me on my toes," she explains.

Chambers has also been involved in the profession by helping with the merger of the legacy accounting bodies, being a champion of the CPA Manitoba Foundation, as well as being a Foundation board member. She became a Fellow CPA in 2015.

"Education has always been very important to me. I feel very strongly that education is a right and not a privilege. It really bothers me when I see someone with potential and career aspirations who cannot afford to enroll in classes. I've had the chance to do some incredible things as the result of my education. Now that I am in a position to do so, I want to help provide others the same opportunities."

Chambers is in the process of setting up two bursaries that

“ It's so rewarding to see people succeed and that we can share a small part of their journey. ”

will be awarded to aspiring CPAs who take the Performance Management elective, are active in the community and require financial aid to complete their studies towards becoming a CPA.

"One of the great things about an accounting designation is that it can take you in so many different directions. When I first started out, I had no idea I would be running a company across Western Canada, and yet, my designation helped prepare me for that."

Chambers doesn't take for granted the success of others she has the privilege of seeing first-hand in her unique role within the profession.

"At Mercer Bradley I watch people grow and advance. There are people that we've placed in entry-level jobs, intermediate positions, and now they are directors and managers. It's so rewarding to see people succeed and that we can share a small part of their journey."

And with the new CPA Manitoba Foundation bursaries, Chambers and the Foundation are ensuring more people can find success as CPAs in Manitoba.