

MEMBER PROFILE



Beverly (Bev) Passey, FCPA, FCGA **VP Donor Relations & Resource Development**

Beverly (Bev) Passey, FCPA, FCGA started her career in accounting shortly after finishing high school. Bev took a job with Westfair Foods as an accounts payable clerk. It was there she got her first glimpse of a career as a professional accountant.

"I happened to sit beside a fellow who was a junior accountant working towards his accounting designation," Bev explains. "When I didn't have enough work to keep me busy, I would ask him to show me what he was working on. I found his work interesting, so we would often talk about his accounting studies. A year later, I enrolled."

Bev went on to work with Credit Union Central of Manitoba. After two years there as an auditor, she accepted an opportunity with Shelter Canadian Properties Limited where she worked for just over a decade.

"My career advanced fairly quickly," Bev says. "During my time at Shelter, I was also pursuing my accounting designation. I held roles in accounting, human resources and management."

In the earlier stages of her professional life, Bev was balancing her work and her studies with starting a family. "There were a few times I thought about not completing the designation, but I'm very grateful that I did," Bev says. "I wouldn't be in my role at United Way without my designation."

Bev became the Director of Finance for the United Way of Winnipeg in 1993. "I saw the opportunity as a means to use the various skills gained throughout my career and education to benefit the community," Bev recalls. "It opened up a whole new world for me. I was thrilled to join an organization that brings visionary leaders together from all over the city who are collectively focused on building a stronger, safer and thriving Winnipeg."

Bev's leadership abilities didn't go unnoticed. Shortly after starting at United Way, she got a call from CGA Manitoba inquiring if she would be interested in joining the board. "I said yes and eventually became the board chair. It was a priceless learning experience," Bev says.

From there, Bev's career continued to prosper. "My role at United Way evolved many times. I became the Director of Operations, Vice President of Operations and then finally landed in my current role as Vice President of Donor Relations and Resource Development," Bev says. Bev leads a team of 21 and has spearheaded a variety of exciting projects at United Way. Just before leaving her role as VP of Operations, Bev helped United Way relocate their offices to a central location in downtown Winnipeg. "It was important to us to be a part of revitalizing the downtown," Bev explains. "We needed an accessible space to position us as a link between the business community and the agency community."

The project had several large hurdles. “It wasn’t easy to find a plot of land. The land we did find ended up having 7 owners,” Bev recalls. “With the help of Centre Venture, we got that sorted out and it was my project to manage. I worked with the architect, engineers and contractors. We made sure we engaged our staff and volunteers to help design the space. It was one of my favourite projects because you could physically see it from start to finish.”

Working with volunteers and staff teams is Bev’s favourite part of the gig at her role with United Way. Operations and fundraising have allowed her to work alongside a variety of business professionals across all industries, including many fellow CPAs. She has been with United Way for just over 20 years and has no plans of leaving anytime in the near future. She credits her designation for not only giving her the necessary expertise, but also the credibility to succeed.

“I love the work that I do,” Bev says. “An accounting designation set me up to be someone who can not only do the job, but someone you can trust to do the job. The donations we receive are entrusted to us to be invested with respect to the donor’s wishes. If that were to ever be in doubt, we would see the United Way potentially collapse or erode very quickly.”

Bev’s career has weathered through the ups and downs of the economy and has given her a wide breadth of experience in several sectors of business. From an accounting clerk to helping lead an organization that raises and invests over 20 million dollars every year to build a better Winnipeg, her career is a testament to the opportunities a professional accounting designation provides.

“A CPA designation is the biggest door-opener there is when it comes to a career in business and accounting. The business acumen a professional designation provides can take you anywhere. If you’re looking for a career on this path, it is the best place to start.”

Learn more about Bev and United Way by [visiting their website](#).

