

# MEMBER PROFILE

**GARY HANNAFORD, FCPA, FCA**  
CPA MANITOBA LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT  
AWARD RECIPIENT



**T**he 2018 recipient of the CPA Manitoba Lifetime Achievement Award, Gary Hannaford, FCPA, FCA, now retired, sums up his feelings this way:

“I was shocked but absolutely delighted when I received the telephone call advising me that I was this year’s recipient of the lifetime achievement award,” Hannaford said.

The award is bestowed annually to a CPA who has brought honour to the profession by distinction in service to the profession, career or community. While the award may seem like a natural fit to those who understand Hannaford’s contributions over the years, his path to accounting wasn’t always so clear.

“I was born and raised in Kitchener, Ontario. I attended high school there and then went on to the University of Waterloo. I wasn’t sure what I wanted in terms of a career and I initially considered teaching,” he recalls.

Instead, as is often the case, Hannaford was inspired by someone close to him which ultimately led to a career in accounting.

“A cousin of mine was an accountant working with one of the large firms. I was really intrigued by the work he was doing and I decided that it would be a good career choice for me too,” Hannaford explains.

In 1973 he graduated with a Bachelor of Arts, with a major in Economics, and got a job at a Big 8 firm in London, Ontario. There he focused on becoming a Chartered Accountant.

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remember being so happy to be part of the profession.”

For the next several years, Hannaford gained experience at the firm as an audit manager, returning home to Kitchener in 1977. In 1980, he took a job with the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Ontario (ICAO).

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membership vote a new peer review program called practice inspection. I was hired to lead that program and it was launched about a year later,” he says.

That was Hannaford’s first experience working directly for the betterment of the accounting profession, something he would continue to do for the next 36 years.

“I really enjoyed the role and what we were accomplishing. It was important work and I was glad to be part of it. I ended up heading the program for the next six years. I then held a number of other positions and ultimately became the general director of programs.”

In that role, he was responsible for anything related to running programs for members including student education, professional development and practice inspection.

“In the fall of 1994 I was approached about an opening at the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Manitoba (ICAM). It was essentially the CEO role, although back then it was called Executive Vice-President.”

After several interviews he was offered the job. “I had only been to Manitoba once before and didn’t know very much about it. I decided eventually that it would be a good move and that I could make a difference in the role, so I accepted the offer. I had no idea that I would stay there for the rest of my career and ultimately

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retire in Manitoba.”

Hannaford began his Manitoba-based career on May 1, 1995.

“Instantly I knew I was in for a challenge. The reality I came from at ICAO was different than what I was walking into. In Ontario we had a lot of resources and a staff of about 100 to do everything. In Manitoba we initially had a staff of only 10 or 11 hardworking people that had to provide all the same services.”

It was perhaps here that Hannaford’s management philosophy was born.

“If you want to be successful make sure you surround yourself with good people. I was fortunate to have great teams to work with throughout my entire career. The team at ICAM and subsequently at CPA Manitoba were outstanding.”

Hannaford has always been a strong believer in giving back to the community and the profession.

“I chaired the Royal Manitoba Theatre Centre (Canada’s oldest English-language regional theatre) after serving on the board for 11 years. I remember one day I got to meet Andrew Lloyd Webber as part of the role. I also had the opportunity to serve on the Pan-Am Games finance committee and was at the ball park when Canada beat the United States.”

He also served in a variety of leadership roles in both his local church in Winnipeg as well as in the wider structures of the United Church of Canada. This included 9 years as Treasurer of the Manitoba and Northwestern Conference of the United Church of Canada. He currently serves on the Governance Board of his local church in his new home of Belleville.

While he was initially appointed to the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants while he was CEO of ICAM, he continued in a volunteer capacity for the past two years involving more than 1,000 hours of volunteer time.

Hannaford played a key role in the merger of the legacy accounting bodies and formation of CPA Manitoba. He regards

that process as one of the highlights of his career.

“In 2011 merger talks had started up again. Because I did work in a previous merger attempt a number of years prior, I was part of the steering committee for the CAs. I felt a merger was best for the profession, our members and the public.”

He was appointed the Chief Executive Office of the CPA Manitoba Joint Venture –the organization that worked to merge the accounting bodies provincially – and ultimately poured hundreds of hours of work into the merger to help his team accomplish its goal of unification.

“Nobody could have guessed it would have taken as long as it did and getting the news that the CPA Act was passed by the Government was a major highlight in my career,” he recalls proudly.

In September 2015, he became CPA Manitoba’s first President and CEO, working to provide a direction and a stable foundation for the new organization until his retirement in June 2016.

“I’ve been so fortunate in my career. I’ve had the pleasure of travelling all over the world during my time on the International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants. I think the only continent

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I haven’t been to is Antarctica. We really do have a global profession and one we should be extremely proud of.”

Hannaford took a moment to reflect on what it means to him to be a CPA Manitoba Lifetime Achievement Award recipient.

“It’s quite flattering, very humbling and an honour. I’m really appreciative that someone even thought of nominating me, let alone being chosen to receive this award. I know others with amazing achievements who have received this type of recognition and it’s extremely moving to know that I’m being included in the same category,” Hannaford says.

When asked if there was anything else he’d like to add, he quickly replied, “I don’t think I could ever thank everyone enough. From the people I worked with to those I met serving on boards and committees at the Manitoba, regional, national and international levels, I thank you. They are the reasons why we got so much done. I consider myself lucky to have made so many very close friends throughout my career. It’s been truly wonderful.”