

MEMBER PROFILE



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Julie Labossière, CPA grew up in St. Boniface and graduated from Collège Louis Riel, the French-language high school with a view of the Richardson Building – as well as Winnipeg’s downtown skyline – from the field behind the school.

“I didn’t know what I wanted to do when I graduated but I knew I wanted to go to university, so I applied to the University of Manitoba,” Labossière recalls.

While she waited for the school year to begin, her dad, also a designated accountant, took the opportunity to talk to her about a career in the accounting profession.

“We were having a conversation about careers and he suggested that I might be interested in accounting. I wasn’t totally convinced at first, but after he taught me the basics of debits and credits I could tell it was something I liked and understood.”

Her mind not completely made up, Labossière decided to take Introduction to Financial Accounting in her first year.

“I had a great professor and I loved the class,” she says. “From that moment on, I knew I wanted to pursue accounting as a career. Since I was aware of the designation thanks to my dad, I set my sights on that as well.”

In her fourth year of university, Labossière got a job at PwC and went on to work there full-time as she transitioned from university student to full-time accountant and a CPA Professional Education Program (PEP) candidate.

“I really enjoyed my time there. I think it appealed to me partly because it provided a place for me to be both

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outgoing and friendly with coworkers and clients, but also allowed me to work individually on my audit working papers.”

While at PwC, Labossière also worked towards completing the CPA PEP.

“I had a great experience with the PEP. I thought the progression throughout the modules was great and they

do a good job preparing you for the next step within the program. The in-session classes were good too because you got to meet people who are going through the same thing you are. They're also the people who are probably going to progress in their career at the same pace as you. It was a great start to my professional network," Labossière explains.

Although the PEP is challenging and can require long hours of studying, Labossière recalls that there was always a lot of support at PwC.

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Even still, after writing the Common Final Examination (CFE), she wasn't sure what the outcome would be.

"I thought I might have failed after I wrote it. I really did. Of course you have to wait a few months to find out, so that didn't help either," Labossière reflects.

But much to her genuine surprise, she didn't fail the CFE. Far from it, in fact.

"They called and told me that I made the honour roll. I was completely shocked and really wasn't expecting that at all. The hardest part was not telling anybody because they called me before the marks were officially released."

As for what enabled her to achieve such great results on the CFE?

"I just studied a lot! Although I didn't study for marks— I mean I wanted to get good marks, but I really just tried to understand the concepts. I knew that since this was going to be my career, it was something I wanted to fully comprehend."

A few months ago, Labossière left PwC for an opportunity to be an Assistant Controller for Tundra Oil & Gas.

"Tundra has always been a company I was interested in working for, as I knew it had a great management team, is owned by the Richardson family and is unique, being the largest oil producer in Manitoba. I decided to make the move and I'm really enjoying my new role. No two days are the same — I work as part of a team and it always feels like there's something new to learn."

Labossière appreciates how the CPA PEP has helped achieve success in her career.

"The designation gives you so much flexibility, which is one of the biggest benefits. People I studied with now work in accounting firms, private businesses and not-for-profits. Whether you work best in a team-based environment or more independently, you find your fit. There's a place somewhere in accounting that you'll enjoy."

As for advice Labossière has for those going through the program right now?

"Well, there were a few times in the PEP that I was learning something and wondered why because I didn't think I would ever use it. However, not long after graduating the thing I swore I wouldn't have to use? I was using it. What they teach really is useful even if it doesn't immediately seem so when you're learning it. Just keep an open mind and it will work out great."

And she has some special advice about the final group project, presentation and CFE too.

“ Study hard and you'll be just fine. You might think you bombed it, but you just might get a phone call explaining you made the honour roll instead. ”

"I know sometimes people can be skeptical about the value of group projects and the presentation but once again, I was glad we did it. Shortly after starting at Tundra Oil & Gas, I had to give a presentation to the board. It was kind of nerve-wracking, but my experience in the PEP helped give me confidence. Oh — and the CFE? Try not to worry. Study hard and you'll be just fine. You might think you bombed it, but you just might get a phone call explaining you made the honour roll instead," she says with a laugh.

Labossière recently received her letter officially welcoming her as a CPA. The woman who left her final day of high school with a view of the Richardson Building now has an office on the 17th floor overlooking the area in which she grew up.