

# MEMBER PROFILE

**CINDEE LAVERGE, FCPA, FCGA**  
CHAIR — CPA MANITOBA BOARD



A five-hour drive north-west of Winnipeg, near the Saskatchewan border between the Duck Mountains and Porcupine Hills, sits the town of Swan River. Home to about 4000 residents, it's known as a quiet, hardworking place surrounded by nature with a built-in understanding of the importance of community. It's against this backdrop that Cindee Laverge, FCPA, FCGA, Chair of CPA Manitoba grew up.

"Growing up on a farm in a small community, my parents always taught the value of giving back and supporting your community," Laverge remembers before adding, "I taught Sunday School growing up at our church and figure skating as well."

It was perhaps these two experiences, along with another in high school that ultimately paved the way for Laverge's career, focused on education, community and accounting.

"I was so fortunate to have some really great high school teachers," recalls Laverge. "I attended Swan River Regional Secondary School and at the time they had a business program. That really interested me and more specifically, I really admired my accounting teacher. We got along great and his love of accounting was something that inspired me to think about the profession as a career for me."

After graduating high school, Laverge moved to Winnipeg at age 17.

“ Giving back has always been important to me, and I was able to assist the designation that had previously opened doors for me. ”

"It was a very exciting time. Most of the people I knew went west to Alberta but I had a friend in Winnipeg so I decided to move south."

Before long, Laverge was looking for a job. Remembering her high school teacher, she decided she wanted to do something in business.

"It was sort of a case of me saying, who wants to hire me and what will I be doing?" Laverge says with a laugh. "I got a job with an insurance company filling out forms. After a few



months, I realized that I'd need more education if I wanted to pursue business and accounting as a career."

Laverge looked at different opportunities before finding one that jumped out.

"I enrolled in the Teacher Education Program at Red River College, which was three years. I guess I didn't really know it at the time, but teaching was always something I had in me and that's probably why I chose the program."

While enrolled in the program, which was then a joint offering between Red River College and the University of Manitoba, Laverge decided to continue her education and get a four-year Bachelor's Degree.

Upon graduation, she got a job at a high school in Pinawa, Manitoba teaching business and accounting to students in grades 9 to 12.

“During my studies at Red River College, I met a teacher who was working on his legacy CGA designation and he ultimately inspired me to pursue it as well. I am so glad I did, as the designation helped me not only obtain my next job but in all my roles after that.”

After six years of teaching in Pinawa, Laverge moved back to Winnipeg and found an opportunity as an instructor at Red River College’s Teacher Education program. It would be a job she would hold for the next 19 years.

“In that role, I taught accounting and business-related courses to people who wanted to be teachers in the public-school system. I got to teach methodology courses and go out to schools to observe teachers as they worked. It was a fantastic job and it paired my love of education with accounting and business,” Laverge says.

She also gave back to the profession as part of the CGA Education Committee, first as a board member and then as Chair, before moving on to the CGA Board.

“I got to know a lot of people which is sometimes overlooked. It’s not just contributing to the organization, but also getting to know the organization and the people involved. Giving back has always been important to me, and in this way, I was able to assist the designation that had previously opened doors for me,” she recalls.

In 2004, Laverge was named Chair of Teacher Education at Red River College. She provided the vision and leadership necessary for faculty development and fostered partnerships with other post-secondary institutions.

“I was honoured to join the first CPA Manitoba Board. It is so important that our designation inspires people to become CPAs.”

She would go on to become the Dean of Student Services and ultimately, Vice-President, Student Services and Planning.

“My CPA designation was extremely helpful because it gave me the theoretical background on business planning and creating strategic plans. In my role as Dean, we helped students through their entire college experience, from admission to convocation and everything in between. I also had the opportunity to work with our sports groups and was part of a team that started the Red River Rebels soccer program.”

As Vice-President of Student Services and Planning, Laverge led a feasibility study for purchasing a new building for Red River College’s downtown campus and led the development of the organization’s 2016-2022 strategic plan. Through it all, she still was there for the profession.

“I was honoured to join the first CPA Manitoba board. It is so important that our designation inspires people to become CPAs. Our work includes taking steps to ensure our members are proud to be CPAs and that the designation is something that all people want to pursue, no matter your age, background or where you come from.”

“If you want opportunities to grow within an organization, become a CPA.”

Recently, Laverge decided to reconnect with her passion and accepted a teaching position in the Applied Business Management program at the University of Manitoba.

“It feels like home again to be back in the classroom. The program started three years ago with five students and is now over 500. It’s a one-year program for internationally-educated professionals who are living in Canada and wanting to work in business management. They’ve given up so much of their lives to come here and I’m in awe of their hard work and determination. It’s such an honour to get to know them and play a small role in helping them along their career path.”

Laverge has dedicated over 35 years to teaching and has undoubtedly inspired countless students interested in accounting and business. Because of her unique perspective, she took a moment to offer some advice to those considering the designation.

“The CPA designation opens many doors. I am so glad I was encouraged to pursue the designation myself. If I hadn’t been, I may never have been hired at Red River College as an instructor. There are so many connections and opportunities that become available as a CPA. If you want opportunities to grow within an organization, become a CPA.”