

# MEMBER PROFILE



**SHERYL HAGENSTEIN, CPA, CMA**

**SENIOR MANAGER, BUSINESS PLANNING AND PERFORMANCE  
ASSINIBOINE PARK CONSERVANCY**

**S**heryl Hagenstein, CPA, CMA, grew up in Landmark, Manitoba, 40 kilometres south east of Winnipeg. For her, it provided a unique upbringing with a blend of city and country life.

“I loved growing up in Landmark – a small town of just over 1,200 people. It had a great balance of relaxing country-side while being close enough to Winnipeg to enjoy city amenities and entertainment.”

She moved from Landmark at age 22, where she found a new home in Winnipeg and unknowingly started her journey towards an accounting career.

“When I first moved to the city I worked in various retail locations and eventually landed a job as a doctor’s assistant at the Manitoba Clinic. Interestingly, my favorite part of working those jobs was reconciling at the end of the evening, or doing billing at the Clinic, it was foreshadowing of my accounting career!”

In 2001, Hagenstein accepted a role at the Manitoba Centre for Proteomics & Systems Biology (MCPSB) at the University of Manitoba. It was in this position that she had her first exposure to accounting which required her to manage grant funding for the department. “It was clear to me that managing the grants was not only a strength of mine but also something I really enjoyed,” says Hagenstein.

“My accounting designation has proven to be versatile and has enabled me to serve my community both in my work and in my volunteer positions.”

Within five years of beginning her role at MCPSB, she became the Finance and Administration Coordinator and began taking on more complicated projects – like major infrastructure grants for the department. Wanting to further her accounting knowledge, Hagenstein decided to take advantage of working on campus and investigated educational opportunities for advancing her career.



“I wanted to dive into accounting and discovered I really enjoyed managerial accounting. During these classes, I overheard my classmates talking about the various accounting designations and knew that this was something I needed to explore.”

Working full-time, Hagenstein began pursuing her accounting designation. During that time, she attended a conference which ultimately lead to her current role with Assiniboine Park Conservancy (APC) – the non-profit behind one of Winnipeg’s most celebrated public spaces.

“I will never forget this. I went to an accounting conference in 2012 and heard APC CEO Margaret Redmond speak. After her keynote, I looked over to my colleague and said, ‘I want to work for her!’ A year later, I found a job posting for the role of Manager, Budgeting and Grant Accounting at APC. It was the perfect role for me at the time. I

interviewed and was ultimately offered the job. It was the next step in my accounting career.” says Hagenstein.

She obtained her accounting designation in 2015 after two years at APC. The knowledge and experience gained from her studies was immediately put to good use.

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In her initial role at APC, Hagenstein was a part of the financial team that worked on APC’s biggest projects at the time, including Journey to Churchill and the beginnings of Canada’s Diversity Gardens. In 2017, she was promoted to her current role as Senior Manager of Business Planning and Performance.

“It is surreal for me, looking back to when I first started handling grants over 15 years ago. I’m extremely grateful that my journey led me to work with such a dynamic organization. It would not have been possible without my designation”

Now, Hagenstein is responsible for the development of APC’s operational budget, works with the CEO and Leadership team to develop and support the strategic and operational planning cycle, and develops data analytics for the leadership team, while implementing performance measures for the future.

“The designation equips you with a diverse skillset that opens many doors, including those you didn’t know existed.”

Hagenstein’s planning and strategy helps keep the park well maintained throughout the year – no small task considering the space sees over five million visitors a year.

“It is motivating to think strategically and look at accomplishing the goals of the organization, which results in the best possible park for the public every year. It’s exciting to be a part of a team that thinks creatively and analytically.”

The biggest take away from her career to date and the advice she has for future CPAs is explore all your options to find what works best for you.

“Being an accountant has provided me with so many incredible opportunities, but it was when I decided to explore them that I found where my strengths could best be utilized. The designation equips you with a diverse skillset that opens many doors, including those you didn’t know existed.”

When Hagenstein isn’t working at APC, she is teaching and operating her yoga business, Yoga for Every Body (YFEB), which helps advocate body positivity and self-love to participants through relaxing and inspiring classes.

“I love yoga. When I started YFEB, I noticed a gap in the market for classes that supported and embraced those who wanted to participate but didn’t feel comfortable in their own bodies. Creating that space for those individuals is such a rewarding experience and the reason why I have continued to operate YFEB for almost 10 years now.”

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Hagenstein’s work at APC is high-level and impacts thousands of people annually. Her work as a yoga instructor is often more intimate. Both experiences allow her to give back and make a positive experience in her community.

“I’m thankful for the opportunities I’ve had. My accounting designation has proven to be versatile and has enabled me to serve my community both in my work and in my volunteer positions.”