



LAYING THE GROUNDWORK

The Foundation for today's Indiana CPA Society was built during the early years

The Indiana CPA Society is celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2005. The Society has seen numerous changes over the years in the profession including its substantial growth. In the next three issues of *CPA IN Perspective*, we will share a historical overview of the past 90 years and look ahead to the future of what is yet to come.

The first 30 years 1915 – 1945

When it all began 90 years ago, the founding five members of the Indiana Association of Certified Public Accountants (Charles Coen, Horatio Roney, Charles Freeman, Arthur Holt and Washington Lowe) may not have realized that the organization they were laying the groundwork for would become one of the most active and successful state professional accounting societies in the country. But that is exactly what would happen.

No matter what changes have taken place since then – whether related to the profession or the Society itself – one constant has remained intact throughout. Promoting and maintaining high profes-

sional and ethical standards has been the foundation of the Society's purpose.

From 1915-29, the association worked to establish an identity as the professional group representing CPAs in the Hoosier state. In truth, both the profession and the Society were in their infancy. The leadership dealt with issues of membership requirements and recruitment, ethics, legislative action and development of leaders. During 1924-26 the Board of Directors was active in drafting legislation that eventually led to the establishment of the Indiana Securities Commission.

From 1930-45, the Association's influence expanded considerably during the Depression and World War II. It has been said that in some respects, the history during this 15-year period was a time of continuity for IACPA. In the early 1930s, the Society's officers were actively involved in the enactment of new accountancy legislation pertaining to public accounting.

As membership expanded, the officers became more involved in the work of the American Institute, and in 1940, George

S. Olive Sr. was elected president of the AICPA. This action demonstrated not only Olive's respect within the CPA profession, but also the achievements of the state association. Olive once wrote, "A history of accountancy would not be complete without acknowledgement of the services of William M. Madden, who has served the association in practically every office, and who did yeoman work in connection with the merging of the American Society of Certified Public Accountants and the American Institute of Accountants in 1936."

The 1930s also paved the way for the Society to welcome its first female member – Alma Merkert of Marion. She held certificate #807. In a profession where a female was a rarity, Merkert was unanimously elected to membership in 1935.

*** Some of the information used in this article are excerpts taken from *Historical Highlights of the Indiana CPA Society* by Bruce Geelhold, who wrote the *Indiana CPA Society's Diamond Anniversary History* in 1990.

INCPAS Timeline 1915-1945

