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William G. Heinrich, CPA reflects  
on his accounting career and  
new role as WICPA president

# Suited to a tee

By Cynthia M. Hodnett



For William G. Heinrich, CPA, a good day in the office can turn into a better one on the golf course. During the warm months, the golf course is where Heinrich can escape from the demands he often faces as a shareholder and director of quality control at Schenck SC in Green Bay.

*"Golfing is an individual performance sport," Heinrich said.*



"You'll never learn it to the point where you can repeat it to perfection. To some extent, it's not all dissimilar to being an accountant. With all of the changing rules, you can't stay where you are and stay competent."

Helping the organization move forward is one of several priorities that Heinrich plans to address as 2010–2011 president of the WICPA. One specific goal includes reviewing the Institute's relevancy to current and prospective members.

"There are so many resources out there that members or potential members can get things that they feel are important to them for free on the Internet," he said. "When that occurs, whether that is CPE resources or other types of information, the issue of relevance as a membership organization involves what benefits we provide to our members. Part of that will hinge on communication, touting our services and letting members and potential members know what we do."

A WICPA member since 1982, Heinrich has served in various roles, including president-elect and as a member of the Peer Review Committee.

"A good component of it for

me is that I feel that as a professional, it's important to have a professional organization to represent the members and to be an active part of that organization," he said. "It's more of a personal responsibility to get involved."

"I think that being active in the (WICPA), the people that I've met, I've been impressed with their passion and their commitment to serve the Institute," he said. "It has been a great networking opportunity to meet other professionals in the state that I wouldn't have had the opportunity to do. That's the message that members and non-members need to hear. They need to hear how becoming an active member is important to their own personal development and the profession."

Heinrich comes from a family of CPAs. Two of his brothers and a brother-in-law are CPAs. His father has an accounting degree and later pursued a law degree. Although Heinrich enjoyed working with numbers as a child, he didn't initially plan to pursue a CPA career.

"It came down to, 'I've graduated from high school so what do I want to be?'" he said. "I thought about it and decided that this (accounting) is what I would pick, and I stuck with it."

After earning an accounting degree from Marquette University in 1979, Heinrich began working at Grant Thornton LLP. Then he moved to Shinners, Hucovski & Company in 1986, which later merged with Schenck. Seven years later, he became a shareholder at the firm.



His expertise includes accounting and auditing, business planning and consulting, and employee benefit plan audits.

“Most staff accountants, I think, go into a public accounting career with that as an outside goal,” he said. “Not everybody finds public accounting to their liking. But sticking to it and becoming successful at it, to become an owner, is an accomplishment that I’m proud of.”

Those accomplishments include coordinating the implementation and monitoring of quality control standards among a variety of constituents not only in the local office but firm-wide, said Brad G. Frank, CPA, and a shareholder at Schenck. Both men met in 1990 when Frank interviewed for a position at the firm.

“From this initial meeting, Bill has always shown great concern and interest in staff development and training,” Frank said. “He is personable and approachable as a firm leader and mentor. Bill is a much sought-after sounding board for his tech-

nical expertise and sound advice related to client matters and financial reporting.”

As president, Heinrich also plans to continue the WICPA’s financial literacy efforts, including Reality Stores and having CPAs speak to high school students. He also plans to encourage more members, especially young professionals, to become active in the organization. Accomplishing that goal, he said, goes back to the organization’s need for relevancy.

“We need young blood and the new ideas — not that the more experienced or more seasoned CPAs don’t know what’s going on in the real world,” he said. “But it’s the future of the organization. With all the changes in the profession, with technology, we aren’t the same profession we were 20 years ago and I’m sure 20 years from now, things will change dramatically.”

Although Heinrich’s plate is full, he finds time for several hobbies, including hunting and fishing. But the one he

enjoys most is golfing, which he has done since junior high school. Whenever possible, he plays twice a week, sometimes more than 18 holes. Golfing provides him a chance to network or be with his wife, Lori, and their three adult children.

“Whether you golf with clients or potential clients, you get to know people,” he said. “Golf is a sport of integrity. Not that those other sports aren’t, but from my perspective, that’s how it is. That’s how I would like to define myself, as a man of integrity.”

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