



Mary Kay Foss has been a CPA for longer than she will admit to – she started in public accounting with Ernst & Ernst in Minneapolis shortly after graduating from the University of Minnesota. After passing the CPA exam, she continued with the firm and finished her experience requirement after transferring to the Detroit office. In Detroit, she was lucky enough to work for Tom Austin, the partner who handled the estate and trust practice. The office prepared Forms 1041 for one of the larger bank trust departments and also handled trust returns for families and a few other banks. This was in addition to a practice that involved many estate tax returns and gift tax returns.

E&E Detroit provided her first experience with trust accountings, business valuations for estate and gift tax returns and IRS audits of those returns. This training could not have been better for learning all of the basic skills of an estate and trust tax practitioner.

After a few years off to concentrate on motherhood, Mary Kay rejoined E&E in the Des Moines office. Estate and gift tax practice in Iowa was not the same as what you'd find in Minnesota or Michigan but she was able to use her experience in business valuations and gift and estate tax planning to great use. Des Moines was her first experience with an Estate Planning Council. Colleagues from other national CPA firms and local estate planning firms found that the Estate Planning Council was not really available to female practitioners. Although some of them remained on the “waiting list” for years, we started our own Estate Planning Council. This was spear-headed by Anita Mandelbaum of Coopers Lybrand. She was a terrific proponent of estate planning and had no qualms that women could do anything. And we did! The group was very successful in not only increasing our knowledge but sharing it with others who needed some practical experience in estate planning.

Mary Kay moved on to Deloitte in the San Francisco Bay Area and joined the East Bay Estate Planning Council in Oakland (President 1990-91) and the Mt. Diablo Estate Planning Council (President 2003-04). In addition, she was President of the East Bay Chapter of CalCPA in 1996-97 and chaired the Estate Planning Committee of CalCPA in 2007-2009. Previously she chaired the CalCPA Committee on Taxation 2003-2005 after being a member since 1987. She is still a member of those CalCPA committees.

Ms. Foss is a past chair of the AICPA Trust Estate and Gift Tax Technical Panel (TRP) that she served on 2009-2019. She's current on the AICPA Individual Self-Employed TRP.

Mary Kay began teaching classes for other CPAs in 1994 and currently teaches six classes for the CalCPA Education Foundation and even more classes for Western CPE. These continuing education classes deal with both retirement and estate planning.

Ms. Foss is also quoted in various publications. CalCPA Magazine had published a number of her articles on various estate planning topics but she's also been quoted by Ed Slott's IRA Advisor, Accounting Today and FA Magazine among others.

In addition, she speaks for various Estate Planning Councils and Conferences and is a member of the planning committee for the AICPA Advanced Estate Planning Conference which is part of AICPA ENGAGE as well as a speaker at that Conference.