

## ASWA HISTORY: THE BEGINNING

By Rita Hull

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Twelve years after ASWA's founding, the Richmond Chapter became the 22nd chapter of ASWA to be chartered. For nearly fifty years, the Richmond Chapter of the American Society of Women Accountants has encouraged and supported women in the accounting profession in the greater Richmond area. Today, women receive 55% of the bachelor's degrees in accounting and account for slightly more than half of those in entry-level accounting positions. This was not always so. Let's look back to what life was like fifty years ago.

In 1950, Harry Truman was President of the United States; the musical, *Guys and Dolls*, was a smash hit; Senator Joseph McCarthy of Wisconsin was beginning his witch hunt against Communists and Communist sympathizers in America; Beta Alpha Psi amended its national charter to allow women members; and obstacles restricting the advancement of women in business were firmly in place. Although manpower shortages during World War II provided women opportunities in accounting; once the war was over, women lost the employment to returning service men and discriminatory practices against women were re-instituted.

Practices that restricted women's access to the accounting profession included controlled access to accounting employment, limited certification opportunities and, denied participation in professional organizations such as Virginia Society of CPAs. Women who obtained an education in accounting faced experience requirements for certification and most practitioners refused to hire them. Some women actually worked for years without pay just to acquire the necessary experience to obtain certification. A survey report released in 1952 by the American Institute of Accountants (the predecessor to the American Institute of CPAs) indicated that over two-thirds of the CPA firms did not intend to hire women staff members unless the Korean War caused another manpower shortage.

In the fall of 1949, a small group of Richmond women accountants met and decided to apply for chapter status in the American Society of Women Accountants (ASWA), a national organization founded in Chicago in 1938 to further the opportunities for women in the profession by stimulating discussion of common problems and providing women with the prerequisites needed for attaining professional experience. Eleven women signed the application to join. These charter members were Iva Adkins, Bessie Anderson, Nora H. Avery, Lenora Hart, Marion Latimer, Nellie A. McClellan, Mary Nolan, Mary V. Stith, CPA, Lucille F. Taylor, CPA, Ellen E. Turnbull, and Alma Westermann Otto.

Nina Avery served as Chair Pro Tern until officers were elected. Alma Westermann Otto was elected the first president of the new Richmond chapter. She served in this position until June 30, 1952 when she moved to Washington,

DC and transferred her membership to that chapter. She later served as the National President of ASWA from 1957-1958,

From the beginning, the chapter emphasized professionalism. The chapter members were enthusiastic about their new organization. The chapter grew and by June 30, 1950, membership in the chapter had increased to eighteen.

During the past fifty years we have seen many positive changes in women's place in the profession. Legislation prohibiting discriminatory practices and increased numbers of women in college accounting programs have resulted in an influx of women into accounting and other traditionally male fields. Still, with women only accounting for 13% of partners in accounting firms, women are still on the lower rungs for advancement. Gender equality remains elusive.

Organizations, like people, develop in stages. The Richmond Chapter's formation and growth were determined by its members, the national organization and the culture surrounding it. During the next few months, we will examine each decade of you chapter's herstory in order to provide an historical overview of our experiences of the past as we prepare for new opportunities and challenges in the future.

### **HerStory: The First Decade (1950-1959)**

By Rita Hull

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The 1950's: The Second World War was over and, although surveys showed an overwhelming majority of women wanted to continue working, women lost their jobs to returning servicemen. Women accountants were once again denied employment and promotion. "After all," according to an editorial in the *Journal of Accountancy* (1951, p 675) "it must be admitted, [it] was the shortage of competent men" that accounted for women's gains in the profession during the war. "When the soldiers came back they were re-employed of course, and some of the women accountants had to give way. This undoubtedly caused a measure of disappointment and disillusionment."

Despite overwhelming testimony that women had performed highly satisfactorily in public accounting during the war, prejudices against them remained. Women responded by working together to encourage each other. In the early 1950's, ASWA grew rapidly; by 1952, there were over 1,600 national members.

Determined to make Richmond a viable chapter, President Alma Westermann Otto and four other officers and directors attended the joint annual meeting of AWSCPA-ASWA in New York City in the fall of 1950. There they met women accountants from across the United States who inspired them to promote the purposes of ASWA to other women in Richmond. These charter members worked hard. By the end of the first **full** year, the Richmond Chapter of the American Society of Women Accountants ranked tenth in the ASWA National Award Program.

Under the inspiring leadership of Alma Westermann Otto (1950-1952), Genevieve Moore (1952-54), Lucille Taylor (1954-56), Elizabeth Collins (1956-58) and Marguerite Brugh Mount (1958-1960) membership in the Richmond chapter increased. Many programs were initiated to interest women in accounting and to assist members in their professional growth. Some of these basic programs are still in use today.

Monthly programs were planned so that members could be informed of new challenges in accounting. Study classes and tours of local plants and offices were organized to encourage members to continue their education and to enhance their understanding of the business world. A highlight of any year was the Public Relations Meeting when members invited employers, other business and professional women, spouses and friends to our meeting to promote the accomplishments of women accountants.

In 1956 a cash award program for scholarship was established to honor the most outstanding woman student enrolled in Intermediate or Advanced Accounting at the evening school of the University of Richmond. Our own Belle Anderson was the first winner in 1957.

Also in 1956, Richmond member Margaret Oberby had her article on "Internal Check and Control" published in the October issue of *The Woman CPA*. The Richmond Chapter successfully assisted the Norfolk women accountants in organizing an ASWA chapter. In January 1957, eighteen members from the Richmond Chapter accompanied Lucille Taylor to Norfolk to present the Norfolk Chapter with their new charter.

Several of the Richmond Chapter members were elected or appointed to serve on the National Board. In the late 1950's Margaret Overby and Myra Barden Grainger were appointed General Editor and Coast-to-Coast Editor, respectively, of the ASWA *Coordinator*.

The Richmond Chapter was represented every year at the joint annual meeting except for 1959. At the end of the first decade there were forty-two active members and the chapter ranked eleventh in the National Award Program.

Women made little progress in the 1950s. Obstacles restricting the advancement of women remained in place. The goals of changing roles and reshaping images continued to be unattainable. So much of what we take for granted now was beyond the reach of women during this time.

A review of the written history of significant events of the 1950's suggests that just about everything important involved men only. Yes, Elizabeth II was crowned Queen of England in 1953; Eva Peron of Argentina died in 1952; Princess Margaret announced, in 1955, she would not marry Peter Townsend, a divorcee, and Grace Kelley's wedding to Prince Rainier II of Monaco was televised in 1956.

The women in the Richmond Chapter of ASWA, without a lot of encouragement other than from each other, against a lot of odds, had the courage and determination to make a path for us. They made a difference.

Nearly ten years ago, I wrote in my President's Message in *The BottomLine*, "I have no way of knowing what the charter members might have visualized for the chapter forty years later, but certainly, one of the major objectives was to

increase the opportunities for women. We are grateful for their vision. We are proud of our heritage in the Chapter." I still feel that way .

### **HerStory: The Second Decade (1960-1969)**

By Rita Hull

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Winds of change were blowing in the 1960s and they were changing fast. The decade began with the election of the youthful John F. Kennedy as the 34th president of the United States. Mini-skirts, the Beatles and Andy Warhol appeared on the scene. An emerging youth culture, with values that seemed to challenge those of previous generations, was revolutionizing music, fashion, literature and the arts in the US and Britain.

A few significant occurrences of the decade impacting women's lives include the marketing of birth control pills in the US in 1961, the creation of the President's Commission on the Status of Women in 1961, the publication of Betty Friedan's *The Feminine Mystique* in 1963, the passage of Title VII of the Civil Rights Act barring employment discrimination based on race, sex, and other grounds in 1964, and the founding of the National Organization for Women in 1966.

In 1960, women earned sixty cents for every dollar earned by men. This was actually a decline of three cents since 1955. Despite the Feminist Movement, women were making slow inroads in the accounting profession. A report issued in 1963 by the President's Commission on the Status of Women documented discrimination against women in virtually every area of American life. Results of a 1964 survey showed that "None of the partners nor personnel interviewers of national and local public accounting firms were overly enthusiastic about women in public accounting" (Brandon, 1964, p. 6)

During the 1960's, ASWA continued to grow and change but the pace was slower than that of the previous decade. Total membership reached 3,400 in 1961 as the national organization prepared for its twenty-fifth anniversary celebration .

In the Richmond Chapter, the charter members continued to do a great job of inspiring qualified women to enter the accounting profession and encouraging them to continue their education and become certified public accountants. Audrey H. Nelson (1960-1962), Myra Barden Grainger (1962-64), Rhonda E. Wilkinson (1964-65), Belle T. Anderson (1965-67), Elizabeth K. Jarrett (1967-68), and Mary T. Cody (1968-70) served as our very capable presidents during this decade.

The chapter had a good nucleus of forty-two interest and energetic members. During this decade thirty-four new members were recruited. We reached a peak of fifty-two members in 1966; however, due to retirement, loss of interest, and death, our membership had a net increase of only one member during this ten-year period.

We were fortunate to have knowledgeable and interesting speakers at our monthly meetings. We held tax classes to keep us informed of the numerous changes in the tax laws. Members also studied Parliamentary Law, Public Speaking in Ten Easy Hours, Depreciation Guidelines, Work Simplification and the New Approach to Mathematics. We continued to meet jointly with the Credit Associations and to enjoy the fellowship with these groups. In addition, we maintained the tradition of the Public Relations Meeting, which was begun in the first decade.

A first for this decade was the Treasurers Workshop that was developed to assist local club treasurers and financial officers to maintain adequate records, to prepare budgets and reports for their organizations, and to prepare income tax returns. The first workshop was held in May 1964 and they continued as an annual event as long as interest in attending existed. Only four people attended the first year, but ASWA members learned a great deal about putting on this type of program. The second workshop attracted fifty-two participants, and the third, sixty-nine. The speakers were mainly members of our organization.

Another "first" for this decade was the 1962 election of Edna Welchin as our first honorary member. Edna served the Richmond Chapter well in her quiet, dependable fashion until illness prevented her from regular attendance.

President Belle Anderson reactivated the Research Committee to find articles for publication in the *Balance Sheet* and to encourage members to write articles in *The Woman CPA*. As a result, three of our members, Audrey Nelson, Mary Wells, and Mary Cody, had articles published in *The Woman CPA*.

Our Award Program for outstanding students in accounting was revised to a Scholarship Fund. The winners were: Janet Snowden (1961), Carol Eggleston (1962), Helen Draney (1963), Lavelle Sheffield (1967), Mary Stanley (1967), Ruth Doumlele (1968), Lavelle Sheffield (1968), Evelyn Windmueller (1968 and 1969). Several of these women were members or joined ASWA after finishing school. Two of them, Carol Eggleston and Belle Anderson, passed the CPA examination in 1965. We now had three CPAs as members.

Chapter members honed their skills as speakers and managers by speaking at our chapter meetings as well as at other chapters and organizations. Evidence of the professional growth and executive abilities of our membership was the significant number of promotions to secretary-treasurer and vice president of several members of our chapter. Many of our members were also presidents of other organizations, which again demonstrated their abilities to lead and manage groups of people. Several of our members joined NAA and became active participants in that organization by serving as committee members and directors. In 1969, Lucille Taylor was elected President of NAA, a first for women.

The Richmond Chapter was represented at every Joint Annual Meeting (JAM) during this decade and only missed representation at one of the Eastern Regional Conferences. Our members participated in the programs of some of these meetings. Margaret Overby and Myra Barden Grainger conducted Bulletin Workshop in Philadelphia in 1960. They were still serving as General and Coast-to-Coast Editors at that time. At the same meeting, Audrey Nelson served on the

Resolutions Committee and Marguerite Brugh Mount and Elizabeth Collins were pages. Audrey Nelson served on the Credentials Committee at the Milwaukee meeting in 1961.

The highlight of this decade was hosting the Eastern Regional in Richmond in May 1965. With Lucille Taylor and Rhoda Wilkerson as co-chairs, we pursued the theme of "Accounting Trends in Sixty-five." The program consisted of excellent technical sessions. The event closed with our Public Relations Banquet on Saturday night. National President Phyllis Peters presided at the conference; President-Elect Margaret Bailey was also in attendance. Frank Rowley, a local portrait artist and husband of Dot Rowley presented Phyllis with a charcoal sketch of her.

The second decade, 1960-1969, was one of growth in strength, skills, and knowledge. Membership reached an all-time high of fifty-two members in 1966 before slipping back to forty-three at the end of the decade. Although our membership faltered in number, our zest for attaining our goals remained constant and we earnestly sought new ways to achieve our goals.

Our legacy to the chapter for the next decade was a well-organized, active membership working together to build a greater chapter in ASWA for all women accountants.

### **HerStory: The Third Decade (1970-1979)**

By Rita Hull

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The 1970s began with idealism and ended with disillusionment. The heady beliefs of the youth of the 1960s that they could change the world crumbled in the era of Vietnam and Watergate and gave way to disenchantment and cynicism. In the western world, it was a decade of rising oil prices, industrial unrest and economic decline. By 1977 more than 15 million people were unemployed in the US, the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy and Japan. In 1970, women's wages fell again; in the US, women not earned only 59 cents for every dollar earned by men.

But all was not stagnation. The Women's Rights Movement was chugging along. In 1970, the Equal Rights Amendment was reintroduced into Congress. The non-partisan national Women's Political Caucus was founded in 1971 to encourage women to run for public office and in 1972, Congress passed the Equal Employment Opportunity Act.

Roe v Wade, in 1973, established a woman's right to abortion and in Connecticut, in 1974, Ella Grasso became the first woman to win the office of governor in her own right. Also, in 1974, we began to see a rise in the number of women in public office – women now held 8% of the seats of those graduating with bachelor's degrees in accounting.

In 1975, the first women's bank opened in New York City and, in 1976, US military academies opened admissions to women. In the following year, the First

National Women's Conference, chaired by Bella Arzug, was held in Houston, Texas. By 1977, women accounted for 28% of those graduating with bachelor's degrees in accounting.

In 1978, for the first time ever, more women than men entered college. Also, during 1978, the Pregnancy Discrimination Act that amended the 1964 Civil Rights Act to ban employment discrimination against pregnant women was passed. And in 1979, women Margaret Thatcher was elected the first woman prime minister in the UK.

Meanwhile, members of the Richmond Chapter of ASWA were actively pursuing the goals of ASWA. There were new programs and new people. Members were enthusiastically participating in chapter events and committee chairs were innovative in attaining their goals.

Two well-attended Treasurers Workshops were held in 1971 and 1972. Frances Gordon and Belle Anderson traveled to Washington and Lee University, Lexington, to teach a Treasurers Workshop for the Student Government Association. Helen Sharp taught a workshop on income taxes for the DECA and VICA classes at Hopewell High School. Helen was also a member of a panel discussing recent changes in state laws regulating assessments at a Local Government Officials' Conference at the University of Virginia.

Three members, Ann Holdren, Sandra Gordon, and Marta Dickinson passed the CPA exam. Ruth Sones spoke on Governmental Accounting to accounting students at J. Sargeant Reynolds Community College. Corrinne Calvasina attended a public hearing at the Virginia General Assembly on ERA. (It did not pass.) Frances Tinnell, Mary Ann Smith Elizabeth Jarrett audited the books of the Women's Club, Lee District of Richmond. Ruth Doumlele was an auditor for the 1975 Miss Richmond Pageant.

Leadership for this third decade was under the direction of five dynamic women. They were: Dorothy F. Rowley (1970-72), M. Jane Straughan (1972-74), Ruth H. Doumlele (1974-76), Elsa P. Brooks (1976-78) and Nancy A. Weinstein (1978-80).

The jewel of this decade was the 25th Anniversary Celebration in March 1975. Under the guidance of President Ruth Doumlele and Ruth Sones and their able committee, this was a very special occasion. The program included the history of the chapter, with Lucille Taylor, a charter member, presenting the first twelve years and Belle Anderson presenting the remaining thirteen years. Jean Hunt, of Alabama, who was to become the next national president of ASWA, was the featured speaker.

Interest in attending the joint annual meeting continued. The Richmond Chapter had representatives at all but two meetings held during this decade. In 1974, Richmond received national recognition for the Community Activities Award. The Award recognized chapter member's many hours of service to the Channel 23 Auction, several speaking engagements by President Ruth Doumlele, and the participation of the Student Activities Chairs, Ann Holdren and Elsa Brooks, at the Career Days high school programs.

The Joint Annual Meeting in Philadelphia in 1976 sparked considerable interest. It was the Bicentennial Celebration and six members from Richmond attended. Ruth Doumlele served on the Resolutions Committee.

During the Bicentennial Year, Nancy Weinstein presented vignettes of the nation's history about the thirteen original states in the union, taking them in the same order as they signed the Constitution. These were presented just prior to the featured speaker. Nancy supported her statements with pictures and objects she had collected in her travels.

Ruth Doumlele was elected to the Editorial Board of The Woman CPA in 1976 and in 1979, she was reappointed to another three-year term. Ruth was listed in the "World's Who's Who of Women" for 1974-1975.

The Mid-Atlantic Area Day, chaired by Marian Condrey, was held in Richmond at the Roadway Inn in May 1976. National Secretary Gain Gentry attended and updated attendees on what was happening at the national level of our organization.

The Chapter sponsored an Area Day – Public Relations Banquet in October 1977 at the Jefferson Hotel. National President Joan Smith and representatives from Norfolk, Baltimore, and DC chapters attended.

The Chapter formed a Long-Range Planning Committee and named Past President Elsa Brooks as the first chair.

From the beginning, the Richmond Chapter has endeavored to encourage young women in the accounting profession. Scholarships were awarded to Kathy Shelton in 1976 and to Valarie Petre in 1977. The chapter initiated a Student Achievement Award in 1979 and awarded eight certificates to Richmond area high school and college students.

In 1978, Elsa Brooks was elected to the National Board of Directors. She was the Awards Committee Chair during 1978-79. Several members of the Richmond Chapter served under her on this national committee.

When the Norfolk Chapter hosted the Eastern Regional Conference in 1979, the Richmond Chapter was invited to plan one luncheon. We gladly accepted and we were fortunate enough to obtain Sally Buck as our luncheon speaker. Ms. Buck was President of the Women's Bank of Richmond, a new bank operated entirely by women.

In 1979, the chapter received a Certificate of Achievement Award for Chapter Bylaws. Eight members traveled to the national meeting in New Orleans to watch Ruth Doumlele accept the award. Ruth has been chair of the Bylaws Committee that submitted the award-winning bylaws. Members were doubly proud at this meeting. Elsa Brooks was elected National Vice President. At this same meeting, the Richmond delegation presented a proposed amendment to restore the right to vote to retired members. It passed.

Our chapter also received national recognition for earning the highest number of award points for Administration in 1979. The articles submitted by Ruth Doumlele for publication in The Woman CPA were a major factor in achieving this award. Ruth's first article was published in the January 1976 issue and her second article appeared in April 1980.



At the beginning of the decade, fewer than 10% of bachelor's degrees in accounting were awarded to women. In 1979, according to the Census Bureau, 34% of all accountants and auditors were women. No doubt the combined efforts of women in ASWA – both in the Richmond Chapter and nationally – and AWSCPA had something to do with the influx of women into accounting. Still, while women had made some progress in hiring, the bulk of the women in public accounting were clustered in entry-level positions. Discrimination had shifted from hiring to promotion. And women earned only 60 cents for every dollar earned by men.

Our struggle for equality was far from over.

### **HerStory: The Fourth Decade (1980-1989)**

By Rita Hull

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**The 1980's:** By 1980, women represented between 35% and 50% of all new employees in public accounting. Unfortunately promotions, wages, training, responsibilities, and influence were not allocated proportionately between men and women. Very few women held the position of partner.

The decade began with the election of Ronald Reagan at the 40<sup>th</sup> president of the United States and ended with swearing in of George Bush as his successor in the White House. During the latter part of the decade, the Reagan-Gorachev summits resulted in improved relations between the West and East. *Glasnost*, or openness, became part of our vocabulary. Some other terms added to our language during the 1980s included Solidarity, Irongate and AIDS.

There were a number of 'firsts' for women during this decade. In 1980, as a result of her election as a bishop of the United Methodist Church, the Reverend Marjorie Mathew became the first woman in the US to sit on the governing body of a major religious denomination. Also, during this year, the 'gender gap' first showed up at the polls as women reported different political priorities than men.

Sandra Day O'Connor became the first woman to be appointed to the US Supreme Court in 1981. By 1982, more than 900 held positions as state legislators compared with 344 a decade earlier. But efforts to ratify the Equal Rights Amendment failed in 1982 despite support by a solid majority of the public.

In 1983, Sally Ride became the first US woman in space and, in 1984, Geraldine Ferraro became the first woman vice-presidential candidate of a major political party. Also, in 1984, the AICPA identified the upward mobility of women in public accounting as one of the 14 major issues facing the profession and formed Upward Mobility of Women Committee to study the problem.

In 1985, Wilma Mankiller was the first woman to be installed as the principal chief of a major Native American tribe, the Cherokee in Oklahoma. Amy Eiberg was ordained as the first woman rabbi by the Conservative Rabbinical Assembly in 1986. During 1987, Ellie Smeal founded The Feminist Majority Foundation to assist woman candidates running for office.

In 1988, Reverend Barbara Harris, an African American, became the first female bishop of the Episcopal Church. Also in 1988, ASWA celebrated its fiftieth anniversary at the Joint Annual Meeting in Indianapolis, Indiana. And at the end of the decade, 300,000 marchers (including at least one member of the Richmond Chapter) demonstrated for women's reproductive rights in Washington, DC.

The 1980's were a time of considerable growth for ASWA. By 1988, ASWA had grown to 132 chapters and more than 7,000 members. In this respect, the Richmond Chapter paralleled the National Organization. The Chapter grew from 41 members at the beginning of the decade to 56 members (21 of whom were CPAs) at the close.

Richmond members continued in their personal growth, as evidenced by their professional accomplishments. Elsa Brooks, a national vice president at the beginning of the decade, continued to serve in that position until June 1982. Nancy Weinstein served, from 1982-1983, as a Trustee for the Educational Foundation of AWSCPA and ASWA. Nancy and Ruth Doumlele were included in several editions of *Who's Who in American Women*. Rita Hull was a frequent contributor to the Uniform CPA Examinations; she also taught numerous professional development courses for the Virginia State Society of CPAs in Richmond and northern Virginia.

There were some 'firsts' in our Chapter too. Elsie Rose became the first woman member to the Hanover Rotary Club. Rita Hull was the first woman to be promoted to full professor in the School of Business at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Presidential leadership during the decade was in the hands of the following women: Dorothy D. Harris, CPA (1980-81), Christine B. Naumann (1981-82), Marjorie Chrichelow (1982-83), Mary R. Cross (1983-85), Elsie Rose, CPA (1985-87), Christine B. Naumann (1987-88) and Rita P. Hull, PhD, CPA, CIA (1988-90).

Many of the traditional activities were continued during the decade. Tax seminars were held to keep members informed of the latest tax changes. There was a seminar on the metric system and another on investment strategies.

Public Relations meetings continued to be a special event of the year. Some of our speakers included the Honorable John N. Dalton, former Governor of Virginia in 1982. The Honorable Eva Scott, State Senator, 17<sup>th</sup> District, in 1984, and The Honorable Alice W. Handy, Treasurer of Virginia in 1989.

Two very successful Mid-Atlantic Area Days were sponsored by the Richmond Chapter. The one in 1982, held in Richmond, featured former National President Joan Smith on the program. In 1987, we held Area Day in Williamsburg, Virginia. Another past national president, B. Jean Hunt was on the program along with our 1988-90 Chapter President, Rita Hull and her husband, John Everett.

In 1984, the Richmond Chapter and the DC Chapter sponsored a Joint Mid-Atlantic Meeting at Afton, Virginia. Virginia Martin chaired the Committee representing the Richmond Chapter's involvement in this event.

During 1985 and 1986 several members of the Richmond Chapter made numerous trips to Raleigh, NC to assist women there in starting a new chapter. Their efforts were successful. In early 1987, Ruth Doumlele and Chris Naumann attended the chartering of the Raleigh Chapter.

In 1986, Mary Cross spearheaded a project to publish a brochure about ASWA. Among other things, the brochure described the history of the organization, membership requirements, activities, and the Richmond Chapter's scholarship fund.

The Student Member program recruited three student members in its first year. Scholarships and certificates of achievement to the most outstanding students in accounting were awarded at the area high schools and colleges. Our 1985 scholarship winner, Gabrielle Melka, a student at Virginia Commonwealth University, also placed second in national competition and received a scholarship award of \$1,250 from the National Educational Foundation of AWSCPA-ASWA. At the close of the decade, two of our chapter scholarship award recipients, Rose Baldwin and Kay Einsman were student members and two of our award recipients, Lola Singletary and Lisa Grimm were regular members.

Ruth Doumlele, Frankie Gurganus, and Rita Hull had articles published in *The Woman CPA*. Rita's 1987 article, "An Unconventional Success Profile," profiled Ann Nuckles Richmond, who became a chapter member in 1989. Ruth continued to serve on the editorial board of *The Woman CPA*, throughout the decade; Rita joined the editorial board in 1989.

Rita was appointed to the American Accounting Association's National Trueblood Seminar's Committee in 1988 and served, in 1989, as the National Coordinator of Regions for the new Gender Issues in Accounting Section of the American Accounting Association. At the end of the decade, Rita was slated as a nominee for ASWA's national board of directors.

Ruth was president of the Richmond Board of National League of American Pen Women from 1984-86. In 1989, she was appointed to the local board of the selective service system, a presidential appointment.

The Richmond Chapter's Children's Miracle Network Telethon Special Committee was established in 1989 as a means for the chapter to become more involved in the community. In June 1989, the Chapter participated for the first time in the 21-hour Telethon, broadcast in the Richmond community on WWBT 12. Under the leadership of Committee Chair Estelle Fenner, nine chapter members volunteered a total of 31 hours. Proceeds were used to benefit the Children's Hospital and Children's Medical Center of MCV Hospitals in the Richmond community.

In 1989, the Chapter honored Audrey Nelson, the Chapter's sixth president, by unanimously approving her election as the Chapter's second honorary member.

Because of our commitment to student scholarships, the Chapter voted, at the end of the decade, to contribute \$500 to Educational Foundation of AWSCPA and ASWA. This contribution qualified the Richmond Chapter for "Lifetime Member" status with the Foundation.

We worked hard but we had fun too. In 1985, members had "Their Colors Done" at a luncheon at Elsie Rose's home by Especially For You. Audrey

Nelson and Nancy Weinstein hosted a Friday night Happy Hour on behalf of the Richmond Chapter at the Joint Annual Meeting of AWSCPA-ASWA at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel, New York in September 1987. Renee Antolik ran in the Richmond Marathon in 1987 and came in 3<sup>rd</sup> place. Nancy Weinstein announced our October 1987 chapter meeting on WRVA while taking a "birthday ride" on the morning traffic helicopter.

Chapter members attended musicals at the Carpenter Center and the Swift Creek Mill Playhouse, a Crabfest at Corrotomon by The Bay, hosted by Chris Naumann; a picnic and crab feast for chapter presidents at Ruth and John Doumlele's summer cottage in Lancaster County, and pool parties at the home of Kathi Cooper and her family.

1988-1989 was "A Banner Year" for the Richmond Chapter. We added 16 new members to our chapter, an event that qualified us for recognition at the annual meeting. Nancy Weinstein and Myra Grainger watched with pride when President Rita Hull went forward at the 1989 JAM in San Antonio to accept our Chapter's banner for the membership increase. Rita went forward two more times at the meeting: once to accept the National Recognition Award in Administrative Reporting for our Bulletin, *The Bottom Line*, and again to accept the Honorable Mention Award for Membership. Ruth Doumlele, Chair of the Bulletin Committee and Lola Singletary, Chair of the Membership Committee, submitted the award-winning reports.

On March 1, 1990, several chapter members met at the Virginia General Assembly in the State Capitol Building. There on the Senate floor, Lieutenant Governor Donald Beyer recognized the Richmond Chapter in honor of our Fortieth Anniversary. Afterwards members toured the Senate offices and ate lunch in the state government cafeteria.

We celebrated our Fortieth Anniversary with a champagne reception at the James Center on March 29, 1990. This highly successful event, chaired by Elsie Rose and Ruth Doumlele, attracted 100 attendees. They included Gayle Powelson, National President-Elect from the Memphis Chapter; Alma Westermann Otto, the chapter's first president, Sue Brookman, National Director from the Baltimore Chapter; Sue Marcum, Southeast Regional Area Director, from the DC Chapter; and Cookie Cottrell, President, DC Chapter. Also in attendance were several members from the Virginia General Assembly, local CPAs, other businessmen and women, spouses and friends. Past Presidents were recognized individually for their service to the Chapter. We received proclamations from the City of Richmond and Commonwealth of Virginia. We also received a letter of congratulations from our National President, Rachael Query. These were read at the reception and the week was proclaimed "The Week of the Woman Accountant" by Governor Douglas Wilder.

At the end of this decade, Ruth Doumlele, editor of *The Bottom Line*, penned our hopes and expectations for the Richmond Chapter in the next decade:

*1990 will be a time of changing roles. Our president will become a member of the National Board. New chapter officers and board will bring new emphases and directions. I said in a July 1974 message to the membership, "Let's not content ourselves to be keepers of the flame, Let's fan the flame and*

*fire ourselves to new achievements." As a link in the chain, we must meld the experiences of the past to the opportunities of the future.*

### **HerStory: The Fifth Decade (1990-1999)**

By Rita Hull

Originally printed in the March 2000 issue of The Bottomline

**The 1990's:** By 1990, the world's population had reached 5.3 billion. Washington's National Cathedral was finally completed after 80 years of construction. The federal deficit had risen to three times its 1980 level causing President Bush to renege on his campaign promise not to raise taxes.

In 1991, the Dow Jones Industrial Average finished above 3000 for the first time. Susan Faludi's *Backlash: The Undeclared War Against American Women*, became a best seller.

1992 was declared "The Year of the Woman." A record number of women ran for, and won, public office. Twenty-four women were newly elected to the House of Representatives. Women won all five of the gold medals won by Americans during the Winter Olympics. Also by 1992 women-owned business employed more workers in the United States than the Fortune 500 companies employed worldwide; still women earned only 71 cents for every dollar paid to men.

In 1993, Janet Reno became the first woman to serve as Attorney General of the US. Women held a record number of positions in both state and federal government that included 3 governors, 11 lieutenant governors, 8 attorneys general, 19 state treasurers, 6 US senators and 48 US Representatives. Because of the increased number of women members, the 103rd Congress passed into law 30 bills on women's issues during its first year and 33 during its second year. (The previous record for any one year was five.) The Family Medical Leave Act was finally signed into law.

According to the US Department of Labor, women in 1995 were still over represented in relatively low-paying jobs and earning only 75 cents for every dollar earned by men.

In 1996, the Dow Jones Industrial Average broke through the 6000 mark. This same year, the male-only admissions policy of the Virginia Military Institute was declared a violation of the Fourteenth Amendment (*United States v. Virginia*).

The Supreme Court ruled, in 1997, that college athletics programs must actively involve approximately equal members of women and men to be eligible for federal funding. Coached by Pat Summit, the University of Tennessee's Women's Basketball Team went undefeated for the entire 1998-1999 season. In 1999, 2.9 million households watched one of the largest women's sporting events to date as the US Women's Soccer team defeated China to win the third Women's World Cup.

During the last few years of the decade, the Y2K problem was a major topic of conversation. Would the world shut down at the dawning of the new millennium?

Leadership of the Richmond Chapter of ASWA during this final decade of the twentieth century was in the hands of the following women: Estelle Fenner, CPA, CFE, CGFM (1990-91), Lola Singletary, CPA (1991-93), Katherine Mann, CPA (1993-94), Sue Alvis (1994-96), Nancy Cuffia, CPA (1996-1998), and Catherine Staples, CPA, PhD (1998-2000).

The 50<sup>th</sup> Joint Annual Meeting of AWSCPA-ASWA was held in Washington, DC in October 1990. A number of Richmond members attended. At the business meeting, the Richmond chapter was presented with an emblem for 90% member retention. The chapter also received honorable mention for Public Relations in the Administrative Reporting Program. National President Gayle Powelson appointed Rita Hull, a national director to the Executive Committee of *The Woman CPA* and Ruth Doumlele as a contributing editor to the *Coordinator*. We had some time for play too; chapter members dined out together and attended a lively performance by the Capitol Steps.

In 1991, the chapter moved its monthly meeting place to the Omni Hotel. Also in 1991, our chapter undertook a new community service project. In December, ten members sorted approximately 1,000 pounds of food at the Virginia Food Bank. Chapter members continued this activity in addition to volunteering time with the Children's Miracle Network Telethon until 1995, when we identified Jackson-Field Homes as the community service organization with which we would focus our volunteering efforts.

Chapter members continued to participate in traditional activities during the decade. The chapter sent representatives to the annual meeting (including Hawaii and Anchorage) every year except 1999. There were tax seminars and student night programs. The Chapter co-sponsored professional education seminars with the Institute of Management Accountants. We continued to award scholarships to area college students. Our 1991-1992 scholarship winner, Donna Pickering received a \$1,000 scholarship from the Educational Foundation of AWSCPA and ASWA.

In 1992, the Chapter named Alma Westermann Otto, the Richmond Chapter's first president, as our third honorary member.

In keeping with the chapter's goal of increasing chapter visibility, Lola Singletary and Rose Baldwin attended the Networking Reception sponsored by the Women's Yellow Pages of Greater Richmond in January 1993. ASWA became listed as a woman's organization in the Yellow Pages Directory.

In January 1993, our National President, Marilyn Vito spoke at our monthly chapter meeting. On April 30-May 1 of that year, the Richmond Chapter hosted Mid-Atlantic Area Day. Co-chaired by Sandy Johnson and Katherine Mann, the weekend began with our annual Public Relations reception and featured a full day seminar with our National President-elect, Courtney Cowgill from the Denver Chapter, as one of our speakers. Members from the Baltimore, Washington DC, Charlotte, Norfolk and Boston Chapters attended this very successful event.

Chapter members continued to be involved, dedicated and successful. Two of our members, Ruth Doumlele (1991) and Rita Hull (1994) received the ASWA Woman of Achievement Award in recognition of their significant contributions to ASWA, accounting and other community organizations.

Three of our members Lola Singletary (1996), Nancy Cufia (1996) and Elsie Rose (1998) were named Outstanding Alumni of Beta Alpha Psi at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Elsie Rose became the second woman to be accepted for membership in the Bull and Bear Club and she served on its board of directors for most of the decade. In 1992, Elsie opened her new CPA firm, Rose, Creasy & Co. Elsie was elected to the Board of Directors for the Virginia Society of CPAs for the 1994-95 year. She remained on the Board and by the end of the decade (1999-2000) Elsie was the *first* woman to be president of the Virginia Society of CPAs.

Kathy Cooper received the 1992 "Homebuilders of the Year" award from the Southside Builders Association. Kathy was the *first* woman to receive this award.

Carol Bryant was promoted to Vice President and Comptroller and Bernice Walls was promoted to Vice President of Operations at Consolidated Bank and Trust in 1992. In 1993, Carol Bryant became Co-Area Director of the ASWA Mid-Atlantic Area.

In 1993, Karen Lankford was promoted to Manager of Financial Systems Development in the Corporate Accounting Department, Southern States Cooperative. In 1994, Lola Singletary was promoted to the position of Property Accountant Manager at Southern States.

Rita Hull was the recipient of The Richmond Professional Women's Network's annual Pathfinder Award in 1991. She continued on the national board of ASWA until 1993 – serving as Secretary (1991-1992) and Vice President (1992-1993). Also during 1992-1993, she was the president of the Gender Section of the American Accounting Association. She was the Associate Editor of ASWA's national publication, *The Coordinator* from 1992-1993. In 1993, she was selected to serve as the Administrative associate to the President of Virginia Commonwealth University during the Spring semester – the *first* and only faculty member from the School of Business to have received that honor. In 1993-94, Rita was a member of the ASWA National Nominating Committee. She served as the ASWA representative on the Beta Alpha Psi Advisory Forum from 1994-1995. In 1995, she was one of the ten Richmond women to receive the 15th Annual YWCA Award for Significant Contributions to the Greater Richmond Community. Rita was listed in several editions of the *International Who's Who of Professional and Business Women*, *Who's Who in America* and *Who's Who of American Women* during the 1990's.

In 1995, Estelle Fenner passed the CPA exam and earned the Certified Government Financial Manager Certificate. She opened her own business the same year.

In 1996, Virginia Martin was appointed to the Henrico County Historic and Preservation Advisory Committee.

Ruth Doumlele published an article in the June 1994 issue of *Virginia Woman* entitled "Of Bluebloods and Bohemians: Virginia's Women Suffragists." In 1997, she was listed in *Who's Who in the World* as well as *Who's Who in American Women*. In 1999, Ruth became the President of the Powhatan County Historical Society.

Rita Hull served as chair, and Cathy Staples served as a member of the Laurels Committee for the Educational Foundation of the AWSCPA and ASWA from 1998-2000. In 1999, Cathy Staples became the department chair at Randolph Macon College.

During this decade, the Richmond Chapter recognized, at our annual public relations dinner, a number of our members for their outstanding contributions to the chapter. The honorees were Myra Grainger (1991), Nancy Weinstein (1992), Elsa Brooks (1993), Helen Sharp (1994), Elsie Rose (1996), Lola Singletary (1998) and Dorothy Rowley (1999).

In 1999, our president-elect for the new millennium, Karen Langford earned her masters degree through the Fast Track Executive MBA program at VCU.

By the end of the 20th century, women, locally and nationally, had achieved many gains and accomplishments. Still, gender inequality remained in the form of lower earnings relative to men, concentration of women in lower-level positions and the clustering of women in sex-typed jobs. Political, economic and social equality with men continues to be our goal in the 21st century.