

# "To Remain Current and Relevant"

HOW CONTINUING EDUCATION HAS HELPED 3 CHARTERHOLDERS' CAREERS

By Rhea Wessel

This year another round of CFA charterholders achieved 30 years of continuing education (CE). Elizabeth Miller, CFA; Kathryn Anischik, CFA; and Ken Levy, CFA, have achieved quite an accomplishment through long-term commitment to CE. According to them, it has been essential to their careers. In this article, they share their stories and explain why CE is so important.

## "SO MUCH INFORMATION"

Elizabeth Miller was working on her MBA when one of her bosses said, "Go pursue your CFA charter now while you still know how to study and you're still good at it." She did, she earned the charter and Miller immediately began CE. "I'm a lifelong learner," she says. "It was early in my career, and I knew I had a lot to learn."

Today, 30 years down the road, Miller works with a group of colleagues on CE, turning occasional Friday afternoons into a collegial meeting of minds (and drinking of coffee).

She is chief investment officer at the Kansas Public Employees Retirement System, which has an investment staff of nine. Among them, four hold the charter and two of the investment staff are working toward it. For about five years, the group has been doing what they call an "Offsite," all reading the same article and discussing it at a café.

Miller's advice about CE to others in the group is to focus. "There's so much information, and it's so dynamic," she says. "It changes by the minute. It's a bit like drinking from a firehose." In addition, she points out, "You have to be selective about where you're going to spend your time. It's so worth spending the time. It's essential to try to keep up with the changes in the investment industry."

Miller is fond of webinars for CE, but she says, "I still really enjoy reading the *Financial Analysts Journal*. There's something about sitting in a chair in a quiet room, spending time exploring ideas. That really resonates with me."

During the "tech wreck" in 2001, it was very challenging to manage money for clients because everything you did made you look foolish, according to Miller. "The CE program provides a foundation of knowledge that is helpful no matter what the market environment is," she says.

## SETTING THE RIGHT EXAMPLE

Kathryn Anischik, CFA, who also completed 30 years of CE in 2017, began to study for her CFA charter directly after college because many of the professionals around her were

charterholders. "There was no question. This was the thing you did," says Anischik, who is senior vice president and portfolio manager at US Trust, Bank of America Private Wealth Management, in Hartford, Connecticut.

From the beginning of her career, there was an emphasis on the CFA Program and earning your charter in order to get to the next level of being a senior analyst or portfolio manager. Anischik served as the president of her local CFA society for two years and considered CE an important part of her agenda. "It's important to set a good example."

For Anischik, it's impossible to max out on CE. "This business is so dynamic, and the market is changing so fast. There's always something new or something else of interest. I've always been able to explore my interest and my experience. I've done some real estate investing and I'm very interested in women in investing, so these are things you can explore."

## "THE WORLD IS ALWAYS EVOLVING"

Ken Levy, CFA, also reached 30 years of CE this year. Back when he started studying for the CFA charter, he had recently come out of the doctoral program in finance at Wharton.

As a young quantitative researcher, he thought the CFA Program curriculum would be helpful in his career. "I was so impressed by the learning process that I offered to help out, and I was asked to serve on the curriculum committee, which I did for three years," says Levy, who is co-chief investment officer and co-director of research at Jacobs Levy Equity Management in New Jersey.

Why did Levy stick with formal CE? Because he was making his own contributions to the body of knowledge and his own CE was a part of staying in the conversation.

Levy's CE of choice includes the *Financial Analysts Journal* and other journals, conference proceedings, as well as summaries of academic and other industry publications. "The world is always evolving," he says. It's important to learn how to learn, to absorb new information because there is going to be an onslaught of it for the rest of your life."

"I was doing all the things I was doing to earn the CE 'checkmarks' anyway. I wouldn't dream of missing an issue of the *FAJ*," he says. "For me, life is continuing education and that pertains professionally as well," says Levy. "To remain current and relevant in any profession, you need to continually be learning."

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