

We are delighted to recognize

Varley M. Simons, as our 2017 AWSCPA of Georgia Honoree

Varley started her accounting career in 1951 in the Corporate Reports Accountants office of Southern Bell as a clerk-statistical typist immediately after high school not knowing a thing about accounting but soon learned "how" to do bookkeeping but never "why." She ended that job 4 years later keeping the company general ledger in pen and ink but still never knowing the "why."

After a break of 8 years, raising 4 children, she went back to work with her husband also a CPA who, at age 21 passed the exam with the highest grade in GA and 2nd highest in the US so her personal accounting training began. Varley sat for the May 1967 CPA exam which was the last exam before college was required. She passed two parts the first try, and was "grandfathered in" for 5 more tries but passed the remaining 2 parts 6 months later to receive her CPA certificate in May, 1968, the only woman in a room full of men.

Varley worked full time as a CPA for 30 years slowing down in 1998 and finally fully retiring at the end of 2012.

Varley served as president of the Atlanta affiliate of American Society of Women Accountants (now known as Women in Finance) which was a local organization begun by AWSCPA before there were enough women CPAs to establish local CPA groups.

After the by-laws of AWSCPA were amended in 1982 to allow local affiliates, she and a friend, Carla Russell of Houston, had a friendly bet as to who would get the first affiliate approved. The Georgia Affiliate was officially approved by National on April 26, 1982. Georgia won by 2 weeks and Carla came to Georgia for the charter dinner and installed Varley as the first affiliate president. Varley attended the Houston dinner a few weeks later.

Varley was elected AWSCPA National president in 1987-88 - the year AICPA was 100 years old. Under her watch the national AWSCPA issues papers were started. She is now a Life Member of both the AICPA and Georgia Society of CPAs. She was born the same year as the National AWSCPA organization (1933) and attended the 50th and 75th Anniversary meetings.

Varley was previously active in the Woman's Chamber of Commerce of Atlanta and the Parkwood Garden Club. She has been a church organist and pianist and sang in a church choir for many years. She loves music and is an avid reader. She has 4 children, 4 grandchildren and 3 great grandchildren who keep her busy.

Varley, thank you for having the foresight to push for local affiliates of our national organization 35 years ago. To be willing to lead the group both locally and nationally, and to continuously strive to make the accounting world a more welcoming place for women. We appreciate you and want you to know it!