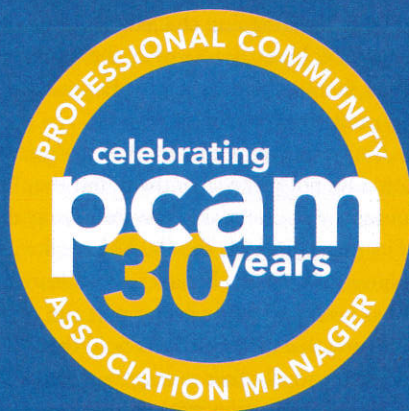


# 30 years of pcam

In 1982, a group of managers paved a path to the top of the community management profession. Thousands have joined them since.



Ronald Reagan was president; a brief, but severe recession began; a new home sold for an average of \$83,800; a gallon of gas cost \$1.30; and the U.S. Postal Service charged 20 cents for a first class stamp. Stephen Spielberg's blockbuster movie *E. T., the Extra-Terrestrial* debuted. The computer was named *Time Machine* of the Year in the magazine's annual nod to the biggest influence on the events of the previous 12 months. And 17 community association managers were awarded CAI's first Professional Community Association Manager (PCAM) designations.

That was 30 years ago. Presidents and recessions have come and gone. A new home averages \$262,000, a gallon of gas: \$3.71 and a stamp: 45 cents. Many things have changed, including the requirements to obtain the PCAM, but the designation's status hasn't. The PCAM remains the pinnacle of community association management, the

highest professional recognition available worldwide to managers. Those who hold the PCAM are the elite, the select, the best.

More than 2,200 managers have earned the designation; the most ever—157—joined the ranks this past year. According to a 2011 survey of PCAM designees, 97 percent said they would earn the designation if they had to do it all over again. The same percentage said they feel they're better managers because of the education process.

*Common Ground* caught up with two members of the first class who are still active in the industry today, others who have earned the designation over the years and one who is completing the last step—the Case Study—now. We wanted to know why the PCAM is important to them, what it means to their communities and businesses, how it's impacted their careers and why it's important to the industry today.

These are their stories.

## MASTER'S DEGREE

The PCAM means that I have earned recognition for meeting stringent education and experience requirements and that I have agreed to pursue continuing education. The designation also signifies that I have agreed to a code of ethics and embrace the code in a way that dictates my professional conduct. To me, it signifies a high level of professionalism, and respect for the profession increases with every new designee. I feel like it is the master's degree for community association managers.

In 1981, it was important to quantify the effort I had gone through to educate myself in the field and perform this job with ethical standards. It gave me great satisfaction that others like me were trying to establish tough standards for managers.

My personal feelings on why I have the designation have not changed since. I have facilitated the Case Study for 21 years and get tremendous satisfaction interacting with the candidates in their final effort to earn the designation. The quality of the candidates has remained consistently high, and the desire to earn the designation has not diminished. These new PCAM designees are instrumental in continuing the growth of quality management in community associations.

In 1981, very few people knew what the PCAM was. I used my designation to demonstrate to my boards the effort it took to achieve it. Initially, the PCAM didn't necessarily bring more business or money, but as the designation was recognized, and as more colleagues earned it, it provided value.

The PCAM is used today as a marker for clients to evaluate managers. Five of the eight managers in my company hold the designation. It makes a difference in marketing; some management proposal requests now contain specific questions about professional designations. Watching the growth of CAI and the PCAM designation has been immensely gratifying.

**STEPHEN BUPP, CMCA, AMS, PCAM #2** (earned May 1982), president, Condominium Venture, Inc., Columbia, Md.



**ELITE COMPANY.** Stephen Bupp, CMCA, AMS, PCAM, left, part of the first PCAM class 30 years ago, inducts the latest class at CAI's Annual Conference and Exposition in Las Vegas in May. The most managers ever—157—earned the designation this past year.

## IMPORTANT THRESHOLD

The PCAM means that I have crossed a most important threshold in my career in terms of experience and education.

I knew when I accepted the challenge to be a member of the first class that I would be making history. I knew that association management would become a major industry. In the early 1980s, it was already apparent that most future housing would be developed in associations.

The designation added to my foundation as a professional, allowing me to secure significant promotions with major companies and to teach for CAI in the U.S. and internationally. The latter is an opportunity I continue to cherish.

**MIKE PACKARD, PCAM #9** (earned May 1982), senior vice president, Associa, Carlsbad, Calif.

**Editor's note: Read more about Mike and his impact on the world of community associations in "Background" on p. 62.**

## DIFFERENTIATION

After committing myself to the industry, I felt it was important to differentiate myself from those who chose association management as a convenience or job *du jour*. A designation after my name helps and lets people know I am well-prepared to do the job.

I truly believe it's critical for us to educate the consumer on the importance of the PCAM. Community management has evolved tremendously over the last 30 years, becoming much more complex; new legislation and homeowner expectations continue to play a significant role in this evolution. Those committed to the industry know the impact that a knowledgeable community manager can have. Many volunteer board members also know, but because the turnover of volunteers is frequent, it's an ongoing challenge to share that value. Many don't realize the level of effort that has been expended to position a community for success.

One manager with a PCAM designation does not make a company, but the commitment one makes toward having all of its managers earn the PCAM speaks volumes to its true character and culture. It has been a strategic decision in our company that all supervisors hold the PCAM, and all other managers are on a reasonable education track to do the same.

The designation's formal education and practical experience allowed me to gain the respect of clients, colleagues and, most importantly, my current business partner, who encouraged his previous partner to sell his interest in the company to me.

**JOSEPH FARINELLI, PCAM #510** (earned October 1993), president, Walters Management, San Diego

## ONE OF THE BEST

The PCAM means I am set apart as one of the best community managers in the world. It allows me to be part of a group of professionals that also is committed to continuing education and constantly striving to improve an evolving knowledge base. It also means we pledge to be committed to the highest ethical standards and to assist colleagues in their pursuit of providing quality services. It means being a protector of the designation and not allowing it to be tarnished in any manner. It means you are tasked with and challenged to elevate the community management industry by sharing your knowledge. It means giving back to the industry that provided us with a livelihood.

Going through the rigorous prerequisites, educational courses and finally the Case Study tested my abilities to their fullest. It gave me the opportunity to demonstrate I had the "right stuff" to be elite.

**T. PETER KRISTIAN, CMCA, LSM, PCAM #629** (earned October 1994), general manager, Hilton Head Plantation Property Owners Association, Hilton Head Island, S.C.

## PROFESSIONAL RECOGNITION

I was motivated by the education, and I wanted to be the first community association manager in Fresno to receive the PCAM.

The designation is extremely important to our industry. We constantly strive to achieve more professional recognition. The only way we will get that is through good education and great customer service. CAI's Professional Management Development Program (PMDP) courses help us achieve both.

The number of PCAMs on our staff has been instrumental in obtaining new clients. We don't keep the PCAM, the Association Management Specialist (AMS) designation or the Certified Manager of Community Associations (CMCA) certification secret. I believe our managers are more competent and able to better serve our clients. The designations also are instrumental in client retention. It is not just the designations' letters, but the quality of service provided by individuals with the designations.

I strongly believe that my service perspective changed when I started earning my PCAM.

**MARGE IMFELD, PCAM #688** (earned May 1995), partner, I & I Property Management, Fresno, Calif.

## LEVEL OF CREDIBILITY

Earning the PCAM was important to me for several reasons. Professional accomplishment was first and foremost. I looked at the PCAM as I did earning my college degree, almost more important. Second, the PCAM was a launch pad for other industry goals I had, such as becoming national faculty. It takes a lot to be considered an expert, but earning the highest designation provides a level of credibility. Lastly, it gives me a competitive advantage.

I can't begin to describe how much the PCAM has impacted my career. I would not be where I am today without it or CAI. I've worn several hats in the industry, including co-founder of a management company, business partner and consultant. The PCAM designation has

Our clients can be confident that CCMC employs experienced, qualified managers who understand the dynamics of managing a community association, including the ability to support and guide boards through their fiduciary responsibilities. PCAMs are committed to upholding the highest ethical standards with their clients, homeowners and team members.

**DELORES FERGUSON, CMCA, AMS, PCAM #1784** (earned June 2009), division president, Capital Consultants Management Corp., Scottsdale, Ariz.

## DEEPEN KNOWLEDGE

Having worked in this industry for seven years, I have observed how highly the PCAM is viewed and that has contributed to my desire to pursue it. More importantly, however, it offers an opportunity to deepen my industry knowledge and to improve my professionalism.

The PCAM Case Study seems daunting because I will have to absorb a tremendous amount of information about an

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**"The number of PCAMs on our staff has been instrumental in obtaining new clients."**

been very beneficial when marketing the companies I represent and has opened the door to many opportunities.

Our industry is in a dynamic stage for many reasons. It's growing, property values have increased, and assets and overall volume are much higher than in past years. The bar has risen. Designations help provide educated, qualified managers who can keep up with the changes.

**BRUCE R. GRAN, CMCA, AMS, PCAM #1292** (earned August 2003), national director of sales, HomeWiseDocs.com, Scottsdale, Ariz.

## CAREER COMMITMENT

Earning the PCAM reflects a commitment to my career, employer and clients. It demonstrates and provides credibility and exhibits dedication and knowledge for what we do.

unknown property in two days. I'll have to think on my feet, listen carefully and ask incisive questions; I also must be disciplined and use my time effectively in the month that follows. It will be a challenge to apply all I have learned to analyze issues accurately and to formulate viable solutions. My logic will have to be on target, my research appropriate and my writing clear. But I can only benefit from this exercise, and the process will be exciting because it will lead me to a higher level. I can't wait!

**JILL SILVERMAN, CMCA, AMS**, aspiring PCAM (enrolled in June Case Study), manager, Vinoy Place Condominium Association, Saint Petersburg, Fla.