

Betsey L. Brewer

Principal, Integro Insurance Brokers

Years in Present Position: 16

Current role at CPCU Society: Member

Alma Mater: University of Southern California

Degrees and Certifications: CPCU



A & B: How did you come to work in the insurance industry? I took a temp job at a car dealership in the insurance office as an accounts receivable clerk. My job was to use the pro-rata wheel and set follow-ups for the receipt of the next payment for each customer that had purchased physical damage coverage at the time they bought their car. If the payment wasn't received I would initiate cancellation of the policy. This was in the early 70s so no computers and everything was by letter and phone. Another fellow and I had the opportunity to take over the renewal business but had to get our licenses which we did. I doubled my monthly income with the renewal commission. I thought this could be a good career.

A & B: What is the most challenging aspect of your job? It is challenging to have patience with people who have chosen not to learn anything about the technical side of the business. I do not mind taking time to teach or train, but I don't like answering the same question over and over.

A & B: What aspect of your work as a broker do you find the most rewarding? I love finding solutions to client problems. Sometimes that involves a better understanding of their issues or operations. Sometimes that means creating new coverages or alternate financing tools and sometimes it is finding the carrier who will work with the client and me toward a successful conclusion. You end up educating your client and yourself which helps create a long-lasting relationship for you. It is the risk management component that we brokers do.

A & B: What emerging commercial risk most concerns you as a broker? The IoT, privacy, cyber coverage both first-party and third-party, cryptocurrency, blockchain, FinTech, InsurTech and anything else that just got invented while I was writing this answer. The world is moving in ways that insurers and brokers never dreamed of 40 years ago. Our job is to learn quickly what the risk is and how it will affect our clients and then who and how to handle the risk.

A & B: What do you consider the most important short- and/or long-term issues facing the agent/broker community? Finding someone to replace me – investing in new talent to enter the industry. Personally, when talking about what I do with young people, I say risk management rather than insurance. Then I have their ear and can discuss the interesting things I do. This is both the short-term and the long-term issue. An additional long-term issue which could be shorter-term is Artificial Intelligence and the industry. I don't believe it will take over everything immediately as there are a lot of things that I know that lead me to ask additional questions. But I am sure AI will catch up and we need to know and understand more so we can work with AI and not feel lost to it.

A & B: When & why did you become a volunteer leader at the CPCU Society? I had my first committee position as a new designee as the Los Angeles Chapter made it a point to involve new designees ASAP. I was a greeter, so I got to meet Chapter members. Eventually I was Chapter President, the National Director/Governor and Society President/Chairman. I have served as a Board member on the European Chapter and recently retired from the Los Angeles Chapter Board as I have moved out of state. As to why become a volunteer leader, what better way to learn leadership skills, meet great peers and meet industry leaders from all over the world. Time well spent!

A & B: Has your involvement in the CPCU Society helped your career? If yes, explain. As you can see from my answer above, I consider my Society involvement a tremendous help to my career. I have been privileged to work with some terrific people and we have stayed friends over the years. When I changed jobs 16 years ago, my new employer had issues with claims in Texas and had been unable to get answers. I was able to contact a CPCU friend via email on a Friday and had the needed information the following week. I looked like a star and it was all due to being active in The Society. That is just one example and there are plenty more.

A & B: Who are your top 3 mentors? Why? I have been blessed with several – the first being Steve Dach who I worked for in my first real insurance job. He tutored me and made sure I understood by example the need to give back to our industry. He took me to my first All Industry Day luncheon even though he was not a CPCU. He encouraged me to obtain my designation. My husband, Don, is a great mentor. He encourages, challenges and enjoys himself at CPCU events. The third mentors are really all the people I have met along the way. Each in his or her own way has given me something to make me better.

A & B: What is your greatest accomplishment so far? At this point in my career I have a lot to reflect on and first and foremost are the people who I have mentored who are working in our industry. There is nothing more rewarding than having someone come up to you or email you or send you a note telling you how you have helped or inspired them in their career.

At present, my newest best thing is working with others creating a Risk Management & Insurance Minor at the University of Southern California, Marshall School. We held our first class this spring and it was a hit. In the fall, we will repeat it and add a second class with a fellow CPCU as the instructor. The program has been 3 years in the making. I was delighted to be asked to serve as part of the inaugural leadership. We have 45 members of our advisory council representing carriers, brokers, risk managers, wholesalers and re-insurers including CPCUs. We have donated and raised \$1.5 million so far.

A & B: What is your favorite book and/or movie? After I finish reading the trades and the Wall Street Journal, my fun-reading are books by David Baldacci, murder mysteries and historical novels. No favorite book or movie although I have re-read some and certainly will re-watch movies.

A & B: What is the most unusual/interesting place you have ever visited? I have loved our trips to Hong Kong and Tokyo as both were fascinating and fun. Trips all over the USA as Society President included the Corn Palace in South Dakota, John Wayne's Birthplace Museum, Winterset, Iowa & Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Troy, New York. These were some out of the way spots that Chapter and Governor positions took me along the way.

A & B: How do you balance the responsibilities of yourself, family, work and CPCU? Now it is easy, but when we had kids at home it was work. It also was pre-cellphone days, so we had to plan and promise and really schedule well. Many times, we didn't succeed as well as we would have liked but everyone survived. The most important thing was to make sure everyone knew that they had to give a little to get what they wanted. No one person got it all. Family discussions happened regularly.

A & B: What advice do you have for agents/brokers considering earning the CPCU Designation? As many others have said, just get started. We all procrastinate. I hear people say I can't do X as I have no time and then I hear them talk about the concert, golf game, etc. they managed to "squeeze" into that no-time schedule. So, it is all about priorities. If your career is important and you want to become the best in your field, then consider setting up your time so you can start and complete the CPCU program. The foundation you get will allow you to grow and develop and if you are as good as I know you are you can still squeeze in the concert and golf game, too.