

## 2

### *FIRST THERE WERE SIX*

Dr. Solomon S. Huebner, as Chairman of the Committee on Professional Standards in Property and Casualty Insurance of the American Association of University Teachers of Insurance, in his *Report on The First Year of Operations of the American Institute for Property and Liability Underwriters, Inc.*, dated March, 1944, announced the formation of The Society of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters this way:

Early in January of 1944 those who received the C.P.C.U. designation in 1943 completed the organization of a Society of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters, with its principal office in Room 404, 133 South Thirty-Sixth Street, Philadelphia 4, Pennsylvania. The new Society is national in scope and plans have been made to create local chapters as soon as the size of the membership warrants. Only those who hold the C.P.C.U. designation are eligible for membership.

The objectives of the Society indicate that it should be a potent factor in helping to raise the educational and professional standards of the property and casualty insurance business. Specifically, these objectives are:

1. To advance in every legitimate way the higher education of those engaged in the profession of property and casualty insurance, and students who contemplate entering the professional career of property or casualty insurance.
2. To promote and maintain at all times the high moral and professional standards that properly attach to the Chartered Property Casualty Underwriter designation.
3. To cooperate with the American Institute for Property and Liability Underwriters, Inc. in extending its influences and educational program among the universities and colleges of the United States of America.
4. To bring into business and friendly relations those engaged in the profession of property and casualty insurance who have acquired the C.P.C.U. designation.

Official announcements, such as this one, necessarily screen from view the human effort which is at work behind the words of the announcement. Those who received the CPCU designation in 1943 are credited with the formation of the Society, but neither their names nor number are given.

The first six CPCUs were:

Robert M. Babbitt, Jr., of Chicago  
F. Harman Chegwiddden, of Camden, New Jersey  
Frederick D. Leete, Jr., of Indianapolis  
Robert F. Sommer, of Chicago  
E. Adrian Teaf, of Philadelphia  
Abraham F. Wohlrreich, of Newark

Of these, it was clearly Robert M. Babbitt, Jr., the first president of the Society, who was the dominant driving force behind the formation of the Society. This is made most clear not from any official announcement or document, but rather from personal letters which circulated among those first six CPCUs. At Robert Babbitt's instigation, the first designees formed a kind of committee of correspondence, a network of pen pals with a purpose.

Grade reports on the first series of CPCU examinations ever offered went out from the American Institute in late July of 1943. In that same month, the Board of the Institute conferred the CPCU designation on six of the fifteen candidates who had sat for all five examinations in the CPCU program. Those six not only passed the examinations but also met the experience requirement which had been established by the Institute.

On September 2, Robert Babbitt, of Joyce & Co., wrote letters to his fellow designees, polling them on their interest in forming an organization which would "foster the aims of the Institute and to aid and encourage others to prepare for the Institute's examinations." On September 8, E. Adrian Teaf responded to Babbitt as follows:

I am glad you have taken the initiative of writing the lucky few who passed CPCU requirements.

I am interested in helping in the formation of an American Society of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters, provided it does not take the form that so many million round tables do of life insurance. I am interested in furthering the missionary work of the Institute and I feel that at the present time it should take the form of sponsoring study groups and advising such groups as to the best methods of study which would include the sequence of materials to be studied as well as a program and division of study material. These could be somewhat standardized through the aid of Dr. Loman.

I have discussed this with Dr. Loman and he tells me that he would be willing to do anything he can to help such an organization.

With a speed which shows determination and dedication as well as better mail service than we enjoy today, Robert Babbitt replied to Adrian

Teaf with a brief note and a copy of a letter he had addressed to F. Harman Chegwiddden, the man who early took on the secretarial chores involved in establishing a constitution and by-laws for the infant Society and the first election of officers thus early adopting a practice which remained with the Society, the practice of circulating copies of letters in order to keep interested parties informed of matters discussed and actions taken. That letter shows Mr. Babbitt's willingness to yield the leadership role in the formation of the Society to those CPCUs clustered in the Philadelphia area:

Since writing you yesterday I have heard from Mr. Teaf who advises that he is not only interested in our proposed organization but has already discussed the situation with Dr. Loman. As long as you three gentlemen are all in the same area I would like to suggest that you try to get together for some preliminary discussion, and possibly when I am East later in the fall we could all meet together in New York with Mr. Wohlreich and perfect some plans.

As Mr. Sommer is associated with my office and is conversant with the developments to date, we could at such a meeting have the views of five of the six C.P.C.U.'s. The only person who would not be represented would be Mr. Leete of Indianapolis who states that he is only "mildly interested." This should give us a sufficiently substantial majority to proceed, and with your permission I am going to pass the ball to you gentlemen in the area of Philadelphia to try to formulate some tentative plans.

This exchange of letters deserves some comment.

First, it is clear that the initiative in the formation of the Society was taken by a designee who was not in close contact with the American Institute and Dr. Loman. Second, it should be noted that Robert Babbitt refrained from referring to the proposed organization by name, while Adrian Teaf, a former student of Dr. Loman's at the Wharton School and, for years, a kind of "guinea pig" for the American Institute's examinations, immediately applied a name to the infant organization which indicates he had a model for it clearly in mind—the American Society of Chartered Life Underwriters. What is perhaps most striking in this exchange is the immediate agreement on the fundamental purpose of the Society—to aid in the professional and educational efforts of the American Institute—and also the strong signs of a high degree of familiarity with the administration of successful enterprises on the part of the Society's originators.

No doubt part of the reason for this high level of administrative ability among the Society's founders derives from the environmental circumstances in force when they earned the designation. World War II had siphoned off from the potential candidate population the most youthful, the least educated, and the least experienced insurance personnel in the country. In addition, the self-confidence and ambition demonstrated by

the original CPCUs through their willingness to attempt all five CPCU examinations at one time suggest prior academic achievements and business accomplishments. Dr. Huebner, in his report which announced the formation of the Society, noted that the designees for 1943 were atypical—that is, they were older, more experienced, and better educated than the bulk of the candidates the American Institute hoped to reach. In fact, much of the American Institute's first catalog is devoted to explaining various ways potential candidates could demonstrate that they had achieved the equivalent of a high school diploma. All of the original designees had had at least some college education and some were business school graduates, lawyers, and Chartered Life Underwriters. In one of his early letters, Robert Babbitt described the first six CPCUs as "among the best brains in the insurance business" and it is remarkable that he pointed to their collegiate achievements and their success in business, rather than to the rapidity with which they had earned the CPCU designation, as proof of his opinion.

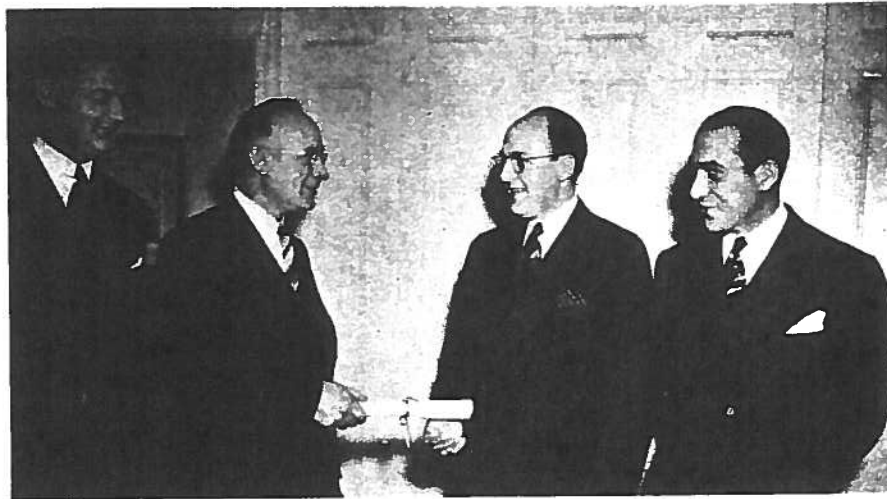
It was, to a large degree, these characteristics which gave the Society, from its conception, its individual tone, almost a personality: a serious, almost religious, devotion to insurance education, combined with an organizational structure determined by men familiar with law and the efficient administration of a business enterprise, and the social life which is one with successful business life in America.

Abraham Wohlreich, in a light-hearted and fun-loving voice, recalled the formation of the Society this way: "Maybe Dr. Loman knew what he was after, but we were just a bunch of guys in the same business who, when we met, discovered that we liked each other." Mr. Wohlreich is unduly modest. His own legal knowledge and business success probably contributed to the writing of the Society's constitution and by-laws and certainly aided in the early promotion of the CPCU designation, especially among agents in New Jersey and New York. In addition, he, like Robert Sommer of Chicago, immediately arranged for and taught CPCU classes, thus performing what Mr. Teaf described as the "missionary" work of the American Institute and laying the foundation for two of the Society's earliest chapters. But there is, nonetheless, a fundamental truth in Mr. Wohlreich's recollection which should be neither denigrated nor ignored: the social aspects of the Society, the fellowship it promotes, has been the adhesive which binds its disparate members. Many CPCUs, from past presidents to rank-and-file members, state that the greatest benefit they have derived from Society membership has been the life-long friendships they have developed through the Society.

There is no record showing whether or not the original CPCUs in the East ever met with Dr. Loman as Bob Babbitt suggested, though Adrian Teaf recalls that they did. In any case, it was Mr. Babbitt who prepared a draft of a constitution and by-laws and who called an organizational meeting. That meeting was held in New York, in the conference room of

the Accident & Casualty Company on November 1, 1943—before the designation was publicly and officially awarded to the three first designees from the East, Adrian Teaf, F. Harman Chegwiddden, and Abraham Wohlreich. At that meeting, Dean Harry Loman joined with all of the original designees except Frederick D. Leete and they there decided that the new organization's name would be The Society of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters. The draft of a constitution and by-laws presented at the meeting was discussed, changed, and extended. It should be noted that Robert Babbitt's enthusiasm was contagious and when it came time to sign the Constitution and By-laws, Frederick D. Leete, who had originally expressed only "mild interest" in the newly conceived organization, signed the document. In this way, Robert Babbitt established another Society tradition, the tradition of enrolling an exceptionally high percentage of new designees as members in the Society of CPCU.

The original constitution and by-laws of the Society was signed by all six of the original CPCUs and Drs. Solomon S. Huebner and Harry Loman. Included in the wording in that original constitution was the statement that: "The principal office for the transaction of the business of The Society of Chartered Property and Casualty Underwriters shall be located in the office of the Dean of the American Institute for Property and Liability Underwriters, Inc."



Three of original six CPCUs receive their diplomas from Dean Harry J. Loman at first conferment in New York on November 16, 1943. Left to right, E. Adrian Teaf, Dean Loman, F. Harman Chegwiddden, and Abraham J. Wohlreich.