



CFA Society South Africa

Caroline Cremen, CFA

Portfolio Manager at Adviceworx and CFA Society South Africa Board Member

1. How did you become involved in financial services – was this something you always wanted to do?

A career in financial services was never presented to me as a career option. I was economically literate, but investment illiterate. I ended up by a chain of circumstances working in a linked products company which had hired me for my mathematical ability!

2. What obstacles did you face on your career journey?

I began my career in the era when women were not considered for client facing roles unless they were administrators. It was difficult to be taken seriously. I recall that in one of my early performance appraisals I was penalized for “having ambition”.

3. Who or what inspired you?

There were many strong and capable women who were working for the Johannesburg Stock Exchange. I came into frequent contact with them when we were training or had operational queries.

4. When were you introduced to the CFA Charterholder qualification and what made you decide to become a CFA candidate and pursue becoming a Charterholder?

As my initial field of study had not been investment related, I needed a qualification which would fill in my knowledge gaps. I was introduced to the CFA program quite early in my career, but I knew that the pass rate was low I was a too intimidated to pursue becoming a Charterholder for a while. Eventually I realized that due to the increasing complexity of financial markets, that the qualification was a necessity and not a luxury if I wanted to maintain a sufficient level of competency in my career.

5. What advice or words of learning would you impart to younger women at the early stages in the career in the investment industry?

Don't take no for an answer, despite the barriers that have been broken by the people who went before you, there is still work to be done. Use your skills and position to encourage and mentor young women who are pursuing a career in the industry.

Board members of CFA Society South Africa: N Visser, CFA, CFA, M du Plessis, CFA, Dr D Morkel, CFA, R Howarth, CFA, J Henry, CFA, D Semwayo, CFA, T Mashigo, CFA, C Cremen, CFA, R Ganie, CFA, L Luvuno, CFA, JD van Wyk, CFA, D Govender, CFA

Executive Officer: L Hawkins