

Professor Patricia Barker

SUMMARY BIOPIC

Patricia Barker is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland, having qualified in 1973 – the twentieth woman to qualify since the inception of the Institute in 1888. She completed an MPhil in Gender Studies in Trinity College. Her PhD developed a paradigm of disclosure of financial information to employees in organisations.

She served her articles with Stokes Bros. & Pim in Dublin and worked in Peat, Marwick Mitchell in Manchester. She then became a partner in an accounting practice in Manchester for six years and worked in Manchester University as a principal lecturer. She was appointed lecturer in DCU in 1980 and progressed through senior lecturer, Associate Dean (Business School) and Vice-President (Academic) of DCU.

She has worked as a visiting professor in universities in New York, Boston, Angers, Malawi, Dar es Salaam, Sydney and Cape Town and has been an external examiner for universities and professional bodies.

She served as Chairman of the Institute's Accounting Committee for eight years and on the Council of the Institute of Chartered Accountants for four years. She was a member of the Urgent Issues Task Force in London for nine years. She had several tours of duty as Election Supervisor for the OSCE in Bosnia-Herzegovina, Republica Serpska, South Africa, Kosovo and Belarus. She chaired the expert group reporting to the European Union on the role, structure and functions of the European Court of Auditors.

She has been a member of the Boards of Women's Aid, Sonas Housing Association, the National Chamber Choir and was the Chairman of the IBTS for three years. She was a member of the Higher Education Authority and chaired its Audit Committee. She is currently a counsellor for the Dublin Rape Crisis Centre.

She is married to Robert Barker, retired partner in KPMG and they have two grown-up children. Her interests are sailing, walking, reading and theatre.

SUMMARY OF BOOK

In 1918, there were no women Chartered Accountants. By 1980, women represented 1.5% of the total membership of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland; and in 2009, the figure had increased dramatically to 30%. This book tells the story of the struggle to gain access to the profession in the early years of the twentieth century.

In spite of the fact that women have now achieved equal access and represent 50% of the student intake, they are very poorly represented at the top of the profession. Whilst other studies have told of the difficulties and obstacles women have experienced in breaching the glass ceiling, this book, having looked at the campaign for admission, focuses on success stories. It reports the results of a study conducted with women who have succeeded in attaining partnership in Big Four firms and draws lessons from their stories.

The book will be of interest to women who are considering a career in accountancy, their advisors, parents and mentors. It is also essential reading for women and men already in the profession and for the firms who employ them and hope to retain them.