

Ken Yee, CFA, CPA Named June Volunteer of the Month



As a volunteer-run organization, CFA Society Los Angeles (CFALA) relies on dedicated volunteers to further its mission and provide valuable benefits to its over 2,200 members. Our June 2016 Volunteer of the Month, Ken Yee, CFA, CPA, has been among the most active volunteers at CFALA since 1998 and continues to offer his time and effort to both CFALA and CFA Institute.

Shortly after receiving his charter in 1998, Yee began to volunteer for the USC/CFALA CFA® Review Program as a Level I Coordinator. In 2001, he began to teach the Ethics portion of the curriculum, which he continues to lecture today. Since being a volunteer in the USC/CFALA CFA® Review Program, Yee has taught Alternative Investments, Financial Statement Analysis, Corporate Governance, Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS), and Test Taking/Study Tips. As an instructor, he has assisted many aspiring CFA charterholders in their growth as financial professionals.

“Volunteering is a way of giving back to the CFA Charter and helping to develop the profession,” Yee said.

In 2003, he joined the Board of Governors and eventually served CFALA as its Secretary, Treasurer, Vice President, President, and Past President. Yee was CFALA’s President during the 2009-2010 year. During his tenure, he brought CFALA’s administration in-house and helped navigate CFALA through the aftermath of the Financial Crisis.

“If you’re thinking personally and from a career standpoint, you gain a lot of skills volunteering that you wouldn’t get in the office,” Yee explained. “How often are people given a project with very little supervision and everything hangs on what they do? You develop public speaking abilities very fast and you secure more of a presence early in your career. Even if you’re thinking selfishly, you develop leadership and career skills by volunteering. If you’re leading a project, they let you run with it. The culture of CFALA has always been to let people run with a project if they’ve shown the knack to know how to do it.”

He has not only shown to be a leader within the CFALA community, but he has contributed to CFA Institute as well. In 2007, Yee participated in the Standards Setting Process for Level III of the CFA Exam. After his tenure on CFALA’s Board of Governors, Yee was elected as one of CFA Institute’s Presidents Council Representatives (PCRs) by the Western U.S. region in 2012 and was re-elected for a second 2-year term in 2014. He currently serves on its Brand Council, Audit and Risk Committee and PCR Nominating Committee. As a PCR, he also was the lead architect in coordinating the first ever Western Region Meeting, which has been a huge success in advancing relationships and collaboration between the 15 CFA Societies in the Western U.S. Region.

“Where else can you develop real relationships like you can while working at CFALA,” Yee asked rhetorically. “If you don’t volunteer, then you don’t make as many relationships within the

field. Volunteering helps with your relationship building. You create friendships where people will actually take your calls because they know you personally. Volunteering is essential to personal development and creating business relationships while using the Charter to help you. You have to work for these relationships because the three letters behind your name won't do as much without the references or experience you bring to the table."

Yee is currently the President at Ridgecrest Capital, Inc., a real estate investment banking company he started in 1992. Previously, he was the Vice President/Principal at Secured Capital Corp and has also worked at Drexel Burnham Lambert and Kenneth Leventhal & Co. Yee graduated Magna Cum Laude in receiving his Bachelor of Business Administration (BBA) in Accounting and Finance at the Marshall School of Business at the University of Southern California (USC). He earned his Master of Business Administration (MBA) in Corporate and Real Estate Finance at the Marshall School of Business at USC. Yee was also awarded his Master of Business Taxation (MBT) at USC and Master of Science (M.S.) in Real Estate Development at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT). Finally, Yee received his Juris Doctor (J.D.) degree at the University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) School of Law in 2003.