

Member Firm Success Story

Katie Eyre, CPA

Fordham & Co. LLP
(Portland) – USA

“We didn’t recruit for it, but we are among the most diverse public accounting firms in the Portland metro area. The feedback we’ve gotten is that people feel like family, and they believe that the partners consider everybody on the team as critical and important. That tells us we’re on the right track.”



— Katie Eyre, CPA, Tax Partner (Portland)

The Pacific Northwest draws people from all walks of life to the fresh fjord coastlines and stunningly gorgeous volcanic ranges carpeted with cedar, pine and hemlock. The people here are often transplants. They come from farther down the coast, the east coast or perhaps the Midwest, but also from many other countries. At Fordham & Co. LLP, you will find top talent hailing from California and New Jersey as well as China, Cambodia and the Philippines.

In addition to Les Fordham, Jr., whose father and uncle went into the accounting business together more than 60 years ago, Partner Katie Eyre leads the firm with Partner Blair Walker. Walker is a graduate of BKR’s Leadership Institute. Fordham is a former chair of BKR’s Americas Region. Eyre is a former chair of BKR’s Real Estate Practice Group, and she now chairs the US Tax Practice Group.

Acknowledging the contributions of their partners’ emeritus, these three leaders have maintained a tradition of serving closely held businesses. Many of these clients have built wealth in real estate, agriculture and manufacturing, which has led to complex individual accounting and tax needs. More recently, the firm has grown a niche with franchisors.

Sustainable Business Model

Several of the firm’s clients have experienced complexities that involve tax issues in other states as well as asset management and transactions in other countries. Eyre recalls instances when she has reached out to other BKR members to support these client issues seamlessly. The resources help Fordham & Co. compete with much larger firms in the area.

"We have a client whose family had a long-term company in Central America, and the company was purchased by an international company. Suddenly my client had international tax issues, but we were able to handle the tax issues seamlessly through our BKR counterpart," Eyre says.

On another occasion, a client branching into Europe required an audit of its European operations to include in its financial reporting. The firm connected with a BKR member that knew the local audit standards and could perform the audit, saving their client substantial time and money.

Eyre and her partners also collect insights from BKR meetings to manage the firm's operations, including marketing ideas, new accounting standards and the rapid changes in US tax law. She emphasizes these educational opportunities through BKR resources. Team members regularly attend telemeetings, for example, and pick up new ideas from listening to more experienced professionals, she says.

Valued Friends and Colleagues

Eyre and Walker are already working on their own succession plans by developing the next generation of leaders. They often run ideas by their peers in other BKR firms. Eyre has her go-to firms in Omaha, Louisiana and Birmingham while Walker often reaches out to Seattle or Vancouver. All of their relationships grew from attendance at BKR events. They've talked about strategies for bringing employees back to the office after the pandemic, and also remote work options and more casual attire. They also invite BKR firms to join them on client webinars.

In between serving for several years with big four firms, in private industry and as a state legislator, Eyre worked her way up in Fordham & Co. from a senior position to partner. She doesn't anticipate slowing down soon, but she appreciates the balance of work and home life provided through her team and BKR International.

"Instead of shouting down the hallway with a question, I'm sometimes shouting across the ocean, and that exponentially broadens my knowledge," she says. "We may be one of the smaller firms in BKR, but we have firms of varying sizes to rely on. And they're our friends."



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