

1960

# Open door

Henry E. Mendes

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## Recommended Citation

Quarterly, Vol. 06, no. 2 (1960, June), p. 01-02

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HENRY E. MENDES  
*Advisory Partner*

A NATIVE NEW YORKER, Henry Mendes joined Touche-Niven in February, 1910 after having completed the course in accountancy and business administration at Pace Institute the previous month. He helped open the St. Louis Office in 1915 and managed it until 1919 when he moved to Cleveland to open and manage the office in that city. Admitted to partnership in January 1919, he returned to the New York Office in the fall of 1920.

During his active years, Mr. Mendes held office and served on many committees of The New York State Society of CPAs and the American Institute of Accountants, including the Institute's Board of Examiners for the past ten years 1936-1946, the last four as chairman. He was president of the New York State CPA Board of Examiners from 1925 to 1930.

Mr. Mendes has always been keenly interested in civic affairs. He was chairman of the town of Mamaroneck (N.Y.) War Council during World War II; treasurer, then president, of the Larchmont Community Chest for several terms. He has also served as the chairman of the accountants' division for many fund-raising activities in New York City including Catholic Charities, National War Fund, American Red Cross and National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis.

Since his retirement to advisory partner status in 1952, Henry Mendes makes his home in Larchmont, New York where he and his family have lived for the past thirty-two years.



## THE OPEN DOOR

**E**VER since the first issue of *The Quarterly* came off the press I have been reading *The Open Door* with more than casual interest. Now that I am asked to contribute something myself, it is perhaps fitting for me to jot down some of my impressions covering a span of 50 years with our firm. What follows is intended primarily for young men aspiring to make their mark as professional accountants, or for those who have the matter under consideration.

In reviewing previous issues of *The Quarterly*, I find the following ideas have not been stressed if, indeed, mentioned at all; yet I feel they are very important.

*Adaptability*—To qualify as a public accountant, one must be a rather unusual personality with several more or less conflicting characteristics. He should be an independent thinker, imaginative, inquiring, analytical, alert, at least skeptical if not downright suspicious. He should have diplomacy coupled with a bulldog determination, be a better-than-average salesman (in disguise), should have an aptitude for figures and a well-developed ability to resolve conclusions to understandable, succinct language. And of course be a gentleman, courteous and ethical at all times!

*Availability*—The best advice that can be given to a young public

accountant is to make it clear at the outset that this profession is no sinecure. One must be prepared to respond willingly to inordinate demands—long hours of work for days if not weeks on end; prolonged traveling about the country if he is proficient in a special area; the necessity of moving his family on short notice, etc. These inconveniences are, however, generally rewarding, since willingness to be available may determine whether or not one advances.

As a young man I always tried to hold myself ready to gain experience in many important businesses throughout the country during my first five years on the staff. Others had the same opportunities but either turned them down or did not take advantage of all offers because they did not care to leave town or were prevented by some adverse situation at home. This inevitably worked against their progress.

*Stability*—Perhaps it is natural for most young men to feel that they are not progressing quickly enough in the first two or three years. Some even accept the flattering offers of industry and leave their chosen profession. In a word, they lack *patience*—refuse to *stay put!* Personally, I have turned down many fine offers through my long career and today I am happy that I did. After all, there is an independence and prestige in being a public accountant that cannot usually be found in business or industry.

Through the years I have observed that the great majority of men who left the profession prematurely to accept what appeared to be lucrative and important executive positions were sorry later. Not a few have drifted back to the ranks of independent accountants after having lost, in some cases, years of valuable experience.

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Henry E. Mendon". The signature is written in dark ink and features a long, sweeping horizontal flourish at the bottom.