

## CHAPTER THREE



# The Glamorous World of Tax Accounting

*Who is the figure behind every great man, the individual who knows his ultimate secrets? A father confessor? Hell no. The tax expert!*

—Louis Auchincloss, *The Partners*

About a month after leaving Arthur Young, I received a phone call from a recruiter offering me a position as multistate tax accountant for a major oil company, at more than double the salary I had earned at AY. Multistate taxation is one of my areas of expertise. But I had already made up my mind to start my own accounting practice, and had I investigated the position and been hired, I might never have gone out on my own. Looking back, it seems reckless to have started on my own because I barely knew 100 people in Atlanta.

Upon embarking on a solo tax practice, a friend gave me some advice, “Two things in life are highly overrated: home cooking and having your own business.” My father, a sole proprietor, was more encouraging. “Being your own boss is better than working for someone else, even if you earn less, because your time is your own.” That’s true. As an accountant, being my own boss allows me the freedom to work any fourteen hours of the day I prefer.

My mother-in-law didn’t think I could make it on my own. She felt I was too honest. She was a New Yorker. A client who married