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New Fellow Spotlight

Virginia Fellow [Jennifer E. Shirkey](#) is in *The Spotlight!* Jennifer was elected to [The American College of Trust and Estate Counsel](#) in 2018 and serves on ACTEC's Employee Benefits Committee and Fiduciary Income Tax Committee.

How did you first learn about ACTEC and decide you wanted to become qualified to be a Fellow?

I first became aware of ACTEC being a "gold star" recognition for trust and estate lawyers during my earliest years of practice. However, as I interacted with more Fellows over time, I began to appreciate ACTEC as a working organization, not just an honorary one. I can't thank Virginia Fellows [Farhad Aghdami](#) and [Lee Osborne](#) enough for approaching and supporting me through the nomination process. Being part of ACTEC has been a singularly meaningful professional activity for me.



What is the thing you value the most about being a Fellow?

The collegiality and generously shared wealth of expertise and, most especially, the relationships I've gained and deepened from attending ACTEC's national and regional meetings and serving on ACTEC committees are most valuable to me. Beyond just being fun, having a network of trusted peers from across the country and around the globe helps me to serve my clients better. Examples are when a client's needs span state or international borders; require an area of particularly special experience; or even within my own state, when I need assistance in other local jurisdictions or in collaborating to resolve issues among mutual clients. I also deeply value ACTEC's commitment to developing the next generation of trust and estate professionals and improving the law for everyone.

What do you want ACTEC Fellows to know about you that they might not know?

My happy place is a lush, colorful garden. My biggest weaknesses are desserts and anything pretty or shiny. If you gave me an extra hour of downtime, I'd spend it reading, cooking, or doing yoga. If you gave me more, I'd enjoy a good meal or show with family and friends.