



TOP 100
MOST
INFLUENTIAL
PEOPLE IN
ACCOUNTING

The thought leaders and change-makers
who are shaping the profession

Harnessing the waves of unprecedented change

By Danielle Lee

As the continuing effects of the COVID-19 pandemic crystalize into the “next normal,” the 2021 Top 100 Most Influential People are sharpening their focus on the most urgent of these major economic shifts.

Last year’s influencers encouraged accounting firms to make remote and flexible work a permanent policy for the droves of accounting professionals who proved they were not only capable of finding work-life balance, but were capitalizing on it. This year, their attention turns to keeping those professionals, regardless of work environment, as the Great Resignation threatens to

deplete a profession that was already facing a branding problem, a diversity deficit, and questions about the long-term value of the CPA license.

Those are among the many issues cited by the Top 100 as requiring urgent attention, though this year’s class has been pushing for progress on many of these fronts for years. (More directly pandemic-related, it’s worth noting that all of the Top 100 who answered our survey and disclosed their status have been vaccinated, except for one medical exemption.)

This year’s Top 100 People, as with past years, are all

honored for their high-profile roles in advancing the profession, but are far from a comprehensive listing of accounting’s biggest difference-makers. Instead, they have made an exceptional impact over the past year and are primed to exert that influence in the year ahead.

The Top 100 People’s thoughts on the profession, their careers, and advice to the next generation of influencers can be found throughout this section, with answers to even more questions available on AccountingToday.com.

Offering wise words at a time of great uncertainty, we present the 2021 Top 100 Most Influential People. **AT**



Joe Adams

**Managing partner and CEO,
RSM US**

As the need to find and retain staff grows more critical, Adams has continued to prioritize diversifying his team and the profession as a whole, hiring executives with DE&I expertise, establishing task forces, and joining industry programs committed to improving these efforts.

Born: Chicago, 1955

College: DePaul University (bachelor’s and MBA)

First full-time job: Audit associate, McGladrey & Pullen

Favorite recent binge watch: “Ted Lasso”



Alan Anderson

**Founder and president,
Accountability Plus**

Anderson’s push for auditors to quite literally leave the past behind and move into real-time, transaction-based auditing is paying dividends for a profession in need of innovation.

Born: Canby, Minnesota, 1955

College: Southwest State University

First full-time job: Staff accountant, McGladrey Hendrickson (now RSM)

Favorite recent binge watch: “NCIS”



Erik Asgeirsson

President and CEO, CPA.com

From the very start of the pandemic, Asgeirsson dedicated himself and his team to giving accountants the support they needed in terms of up-to-

the-minute information and guidance to support their clients, a role he continues to play even as CPA.com begins to dial up the initiatives it plans to resume in the “new normal,” particularly around revolutionizing the audit.

Born: Falmouth, Massachusetts, 1968

College: George Washington University (B.S.); New York University Stern School of Business (MBA)

First full-time job: Manager, AT&T



Ron Baker

Founder, VeraSage Institute

More and more accountants are subscribing to Baker’s decades-long cause of shifting the profession to value pricing — as well as subscribing to the podcast he co-hosts to address this and other professionwide innovations, judging by its 1.7 million downloads in over 40 countries.

Born: Santa Rosa, California, 1962

College: San Francisco State University; Cato and Disney University (postgraduate)

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Peat, Marwick, Mitchell

Favorite recent binge watch: “The Man in the High Castle”



Andreas Barckow

**Chair, International Accounting
Standards Board**

Having helped shape IFRS for years, the German standard-setter and accounting professor took over at the IASB from long-time chief Hans Hoogervorst in July, and is aiming to make the board more

agile, to keep up with a rapidly changing environment, and to help it tackle the enormous impact of digitization.

Born: 1966, Oldenburg, Germany

College: Paderborn University (undergrad and Ph.D.)

First full-time job: Project lead, DG Bank

Favorite recent binge watch: “Picard”



Joanne Barry

**Executive director and CEO,
New York State Society of CPAs**

As the head of one of the largest state CPA societies, Barry has embraced the responsibility of leading change not just for her members but for a profession that is passing the baton to the next generation, which she will be doing next year as she retires from an organization radically transformed by her 12 years of service.

Born: Jersey City, N.J.

College: Montclair State University (B.A. English/journalism); The New School for Social Research (M.S. urban policy and not-for-profit management)

First full-time job: Public relations assistant, New York City School Volunteer Program Inc.

Favorite recent binge watch: “Resistance”



Michael Bernard

VP, tax content strategy/operations & chief tax officer, Vertex

As the repercussions from the Wayfair decision and the market shifts brought by the pandemic continue to ripple through the economy, Bernard plays an important

role in keeping his company’s users — including the many CPAs they reach through their partnership with CPA.com — up to date on the ever-changing state of play in sales tax compliance.

Born: Marysville, Kansas, 1959

College: Creighton University (B.S. BA, accounting and finance); Creighton University School of Law (J.D.)

First full-time job: State tax analyst, Peter Kiewit and Sons Inc.

Favorite recent binge watch: “Foyle’s War”



Wayne Berson

CEO, BDO USA

Berson operates by the standard that “doing good is not good enough,” meaning his Top Eight Firm’s great strides in the areas of diversity and inclusion, ESG and flexible work are designed to be sustainable efforts contributing to the firm’s long-term, purpose-driven growth.

Born: Cape Town, South Africa, 1961

College: University of Cape Town (bachelor’s); University of South Africa (graduate)

First full-time job: Audit staff, Mazars

Favorite recent binge watch: “Billions”

Chandra and Sharada Bhansali

Co-founders, AccountantsWorld

Though the Bhansalis’ long-term mission of putting cloud-based technology at the service of accountants might seem simple, reaching that goal requires them to constantly keep ahead of firms’ rapidly changing processes, tasks and service

lines to fully equip the modern accountant.



Chandra Bhansali

Born: Jodhpur, India, 1947

College: University of Buffalo

(Ph.D.); Indian Institute of Science (M.S., engineering); University of Jodhpur (B.E., engineering)

First full-time job: Engineer, METCO

Favorite recent binge watch: "Human"



Sharada Bhansali

Born: Jodhpur, India, 1951

College: University of Buffalo

First full-time job: Co-founder, MicroVision Software



Joe Biden

U.S. president

Whatever the results of the major legislative push around the Build Back Better Act, it's Biden's administration's agenda that's driving the conversation on everything from giving the IRS more resources and placing more of a tax burden on the rich, to achieving a global corporate minimum tax.

Born: Scranton, Pennsylvania, 1942

College: University of Delaware (B.A.); Syracuse University College of Law (J.D.)

First full-time job: Clerk, law firm



Ken Bishop

President and CEO, NASBA

There are few ways to more radically transform the profession for generations than reimagining the CPA licensure model, which Bishop is leading for NASBA in partnership with the AICPA, investing into the CPA Evolution initiative to strengthen the future relevancy of the accountant.

Born: Mexico, Missouri, 1951

College: University of Missouri (B.A. education, M.S. criminal justice); Harvard University (executive management)

First full-time job: Staff, Kroger Co.

Favorite recent binge watch: "Manifest"



Joel Black

Chair, GASB

The pandemic has been just as tumultuous for Black's state and local government constituents as it has been for everyone else, and he's been working to help them manage the financial and accounting issues that came along with COVID while continuing to pursue GASB's long-term standards-setting mission.

Born: Atlanta, 1970

College: Georgia State University

First full-time job: Staff accountant, KPMG

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"



Jim Boomer

CEO, Boomer Consulting Inc.

For all the outside calls for change, real action comes from accountants exchanging best practices with other accountants, which Boomer and his team have long recognized in their peer-networking circles that have spurred innovation across many firms.

Born: Manhattan, Kansas, 1976

College: Kansas State University (B.S. accounting/MIS); University of Texas at Austin (MBA marketing/entrepreneurship)

First full-time job: Senior consultant, Arthur Andersen Business Consulting

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"



L. Gary Boomer

Founder, visionary & strategist, Boomer Consulting Inc.

Boomer is always stressing a shift in mindset in his training seminars, columns and consulting work on change leadership, and who better to teach adopting a future-minded perspective than the visionary behind the consultancy that has accelerated the progress of so many accountants and firms?

Born: Portis, Kansas, 1945

College: Kansas State University (B.S. and MAcc)

First full-time job: Staff accountant, John Strain & Co. CPAs

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"



James Bourke

Managing director of advisory services, WithumSmith+Brown

While the in-person channels for industry experts to spread their knowledge noticeably slowed over the past year-plus, tech evangelist Bourke presented at more conferences than ever, mastering the technology required in this new era of virtual events with the same skill and enthusiasm he always brings to educating his peers on how to build the best technology arsenal for their firms — and all that while continuing to provide innovative advisory services to Withum's clients.

Born: Jersey City, N.J., 1964

College: Kean University (B.S. accounting)

First full-time job: Staff level I accountant, WithumSmith+Brown

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"



Wes Bricker

Vice chair, U.S. trust solutions co-leader, PwC US

First as chief accountant at the SEC and chair of XBRL International, and now as a Big Four audit leader, Bricker's driving mission has been enhancing public trust and the quality of financial and nonfinancial information, a passion he brought this year to helping specifically reconfigure PwC around trust.

Born: Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, 1978

College: Elizabethtown College (B.S. accounting); American University (J.D.)

First full-time job: Associate, PwC

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso" and "Billions"



Dawn Brolin

CEO, Powerful Accounting Inc.

A self-described "designated motivator" for the profession, Brolin aims to inspire the same kind of passion in her peers that she brings to her own innovative practice.

Born: Manchester, Connecticut, 1970

College: Eastern Connecticut State University

First full-time job: High school and collegiate-level basketball coach

Favorite recent binge watch: "Clickbait"



Jennifer Burns

Chief auditor, AICPA

As auditing faces once-in-a-generation changes, Burns is responsible for establishing the direction of the AICPA's standard-setting, and is dedicated to pursuing high-quality standards in audit, quality control and more.

Born: Alameda, California, 1970

College: Claremont McKenna College

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Deloitte & Touche

Favorite recent binge watch: "Bluey"



David Cieslak

EVP, chief cloud officer, RKL eSolutions

Besides modeling a 21st century technology practice through his day job at RKL, Cieslak continues his "Inspector Gadget" presentations, highlighting a broad range

of practical tools to help professionals optimize their businesses.

Born: Binghamton, N.Y., 1959

College: UCLA

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Price Waterhouse

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso," "Peaky Blinders," "Yellowstone" and "The Mandalorian"



Sue Coffey

CEO, public accounting, AICPA

The Dynamic Audit Solution that Coffey is helping create has been described as a game-changer for leveraging artificial intelligence to improve audit quality, but the same could be said of Coffey's impact within the AICPA and across the many U.S. and international regulatory bodies she works with, along with her commitment to revolutionizing the CPA exam.

Born: Cedar Grove, N.J., 1964

College: Fairfield University

First full-time job: Intern, Cove Awning and Tent Co.

Favorite recent binge watch: "Billions"



Erin Collins

National Taxpayer Advocate

With the IRS swamped by stimulus responsibilities, hampered by a legacy of budget and staff cuts, and struggling under an enormous backlog of returns and correspondence, Collins has walked a fine line between calling the service out for its failings and explaining why many of those failings are structural and, to some degree, beyond its control, all while doing her best to help taxpayers in their hour of extraordinary need.

College: UC Irvine; Southwestern Law School

First full-time job: Special trial attorney, Office of Chief Counsel



Gale Crosley

President and founder, Crosley+Co.

Crosley was advising firms to look beyond their four walls long before those walls started to disappear, by explaining that the biggest growth opportunities can be found in unexpected new markets and even in adopting the proven strategies of other industries; now, as more business borders are dissolving, those firms that

The 2021 Ones to Watch

Because 100 isn't enough, here are a score more people who are helping shape accounting

Influence is rarely immediate; it is more often cumulative, as a person reaches an expanding group of people, and gains a voice at higher and higher levels. Judging the moment at which someone becomes one of the 100 people who wield the most current influence in accounting is more art than science; that said, each year our editors identify anywhere from a dozen to 20 or so people they think may be approaching that threshold — our annual Ones to Watch.

Ordinarily, the head of the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board would be a shoo-in for the Top 100, but this year saw a major shakeup at the board with the firing of past chair William Duhnke; **Duane DesParte** stepped in as acting chair, and just as we went to press the SEC appointed **Erica Williams** to fill the role full-time — we'll be keeping an eye on both.

Other people who are relatively new to their roles, but who we expect to wield significant influence going forward, include **Elizabeth Beastrom**, who became president of Thomson Reuters Tax & Accounting earlier this year, and **Denise LeDuc Froemming**, who was recently installed as president and CEO of the California CPA Society. And as 2022 unfolds, two new names to keep an eye out for are **Seth Siegel** and **Brian Becker**, who will be taking the reins at Grant Thornton and RSM US, respectively.

On the firm front, we'll call out **Avani Desai** of Schellman & Co. and **Charles Weinstein** of the Eisner Advisory Group, both of whom led their respective Top 100 Firms in exploring deals with private equity firms — a strategy we expect more firms to be adopting going forward.

Another sector of the profession seeing major changes is the burgeoning field of ESG and sustainability standard-setting, where every week seems to bring a new combination

among different organizations. We don't know who will emerge as the major players in the end, but for now we recommend these three leaders to your attention: **Jeffrey Hales**, chair of the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board; **Janine Guillot**, CEO of the Value Reporting Foundation; and EY partner **Marc Siegel**, an active board member at SASB.

Also making names for themselves by focusing on topical subjects are **Jamie Yesnowitz**, principal for SALT services at Grant Thornton, whose annual predictions around state and local taxes are highly anticipated, and **Shehan Chandrasekera**, a CPA and head of tax strategy at CoinTracker, and one of the foremost subject matter experts on cryptocurrency taxation — a subject of keen interest to accountants and their clients.

Communication is a key vector of influence, and on that front, we expect to hear more from **Randy Crabtree**, the host of the popular biweekly podcast "The Unique CPA" (and co-founder of Tri-Merit Specialty Tax Professionals), and CPA **Jason Staats**, who's using Twitter, video and his Realize community to reach his fellow accountants. Also getting the word out — about growth in general, CAS in particular, and a number of other important topics — is consultant **Carrie Steffen**, president of the Whetstone Group.

Finally, we could fill the pages of this report just with the senators, congressmen and -women, and Biden administration officials who are having an impact on the tax environment either in the short term or the long, but that would leave no room for anyone else; instead, we'll just add these names as ones worth paying attention to: Sens. **Joe Manchin**, **Kyrsten Sinema**, **Elizabeth Warren** and **Bernie Sanders**, and Rep. **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez**.

subscribe to her philosophy are even better positioned to capitalize on her growth mindset — and the rest would be wise to start listening up.

Born: Cleveland, 1951

College: University of Akron

First full-time job: Staff auditor, Arthur Andersen

Favorite recent binge watch: "Outlander"



Kevin Cumley

Senior director, Sage Intacct Accountants Program, Sage

Behind the statistics of accounting firms achieving significant growth by implementing client accounting services are facilitators like Cumley, who partners with these practices not only by providing the cloud-based tools but by guiding them through planning and executing a detailed CAS strategy.

Born: Alpine, Texas, 1961

College: Eastern Washington University

First full-time job: Staff accountant

Favorite recent binge watch: "House of Cards"



Kevin Dancy

CEO, IFAC

Dancy has made climate change a central issue for IFAC, supporting the creation of the International Sustainability Standards Board, while also offering practical advice for accountants on financial reporting around climate issues.

Born: Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, 1950

College: McMaster University

First full-time job: Economics department, McMaster University

Favorite recent binge watch: "Money Heist" and "Borgen"



Sarah Dobek

President and founder, Inovautus Consulting

Inovautus' new micro-learning sales training program is just one of the many projects in one of the many organizations that Dobek has her hand in, as she continues to serve as a leader of the CPA Consultants' Alliance, the Association for Accounting Marketing and CPAsNET.

Born: Dallas, 1981

College: Purdue University

First full-time job: Marketing coordinator, John R. Waters & Co.

Favorite recent binge watch: Anything historical fiction



Kimberly Ellison-Taylor

CEO, KET Solutions

It is impossible to overstate the importance of Ellison-Taylor's positivity, enthusiasm, insight and wisdom, as she brings them to bear more and more on some of the profession's most intractable problems, particularly those around DE&I.

Born: Baltimore, 1970

College: University of Maryland Baltimore County; Loyola University (MBA, decision science concentration); Community College of Baltimore County; Carnegie Mellon University (information technology management)

First full-time job: Procurement specialist, NASA Goddard Space Flight Center

Favorite recent binge watch: "Criminal Minds"



Lisa Fitzpatrick

President, Bloomberg Tax & Accounting

While Fitzpatrick works to more fully integrate Bloomberg's powerful software and research arms to simplify accountants' workflows, she uses those same capabilities to conduct forecasting and measure progress for the Bloomberg DE&I action plan she designed to improve its pipeline of future leaders.

Born: Bethesda, Maryland, 1967

College: UMBC (B.A. mathematics); University of Maryland Smith School of Business (MBA)

First full-time job: Circulation manager, Hobby House Press

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Crown"



Lee Fredericksen

Managing partner, Hinge

Fredericksen applies a scientific lens to the art of marketing, to the relief of accountants everywhere who are still trying to crack the code on promoting their services and themselves, and need the help of Fredericksen's arsenal of data-based strategies and results.

Born: Sleepy Eye, Minnesota, 1949

College: Augustana College (B.A. psychology); Ohio University (Ph.D. clinical psychology)

First full-time job: Assistant professor, University of Mississippi Medical School

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Favorite recent binge watch: "The Restaurant"



Gary Gensler **SEC chairman**

Gensler's commission is making plenty of influential moves — not least on climate disclosures and crypto enforcement — but his impact on the accounting profession may be felt most directly in the sweeping leadership overhaul he instituted at the PCAOB, defenestrating the chair and replacing most board members.

Born: Baltimore, 1957

College: University of Pennsylvania

First full-time job: Goldman Sachs



J. Russell George **Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration**

While George has had a lower personal profile of late, the inspectorate general that he leads continues to produce countless reports that point directly to improvements both incremental and

essential at the IRS, while also offering a scorecard for how well the tax service is doing in implementing the many stimulus programs it has been charged with spearheading over the past 18 months.

Born: New York City

College: Howard University (B.A.); Harvard University Law School (J.D.)

First full-time job: Assistant district attorney, Queens County



Julio Gonzalez **CEO, Engineered Tax Services Inc.**

Gonzalez continues to expand the range of ways he can help accountants help their clients — this year, that included launching a company to help them get employer tax credits — all while working with insiders inside the Beltway to influence this year's tax legislation.

Born: Denver, 1966

College: University of Colorado

First full-time job: Accountant, Arthur Anderson

Favorite recent binge watch: "Squid Game"



Kelly Grier **U.S. chair and managing partner & Americas MP, EY**

In addition to leading EY at a time of rapid transition, Grier has worked to improve audit quality both at the Big Four firm and professionwide as chair of the Center for Audit Quality, where she collaborates with the standard-setters and investors critical to achieving this mission.

Born: Avon, Minnesota, 1969

College: Saint Mary's College

First full-time job: Controller, Triple A South Bend White Sox



Angie Grissom **Owner, chief relationship officer, The Rainmaker Companies**

As firms evolve into unexplored niches and new business models, more and more are turning to Grissom and Rainmaker for leadership and business development training and consulting to help them excel.

Born: Nashville, Tennessee, 1977

College: Middle Tennessee State University (undergraduate and postgraduate)

First full-time job: Business development associate, Career Ascension

Favorite recent binge watch: "This is Life with Lisa Ling"



Roger Harris **President, Padgett Business Services**

Besides helping set the future direction for Padgett's hundreds of offices across the U.S., Harris is also deeply involved in representing them and their small-business clients to the IRS and Congress.

Born: Athens, Georgia, 1950

College: University of Georgia

First full-time job: Usher, movie theater
Favorite recent binge watch: "Counting Cars" and "Duck Dynasty"



Will Hill **Customer proposition strategy lead, Thomson Reuters**

Hill not only helps drive the product strategy for Thomson Reuters according to the needs of the many accounting firms he consults with on a day-to-day basis, he also delivers professionwide insights via his weekly podcast and regular blog posts.

Born: London, Ontario, 1979

College: Alma College (B.A. business administration and economics); Baker College (MBA, leadership studies)

First full-time job: Product support representative, Creative Solutions (now Thomson Reuters)

Favorite recent binge watch: Crime dramas or anything sports-related



Tom Hood **EVP business engagement and growth, AICPA-CIMA**

While Hood's influence always far surpassed the regional scope of his previous role as head of MACPA, his recent transition into a leadership position with the AICPA has expanded that reach globally, where he continues to teach leadership and future-readiness while promoting the latest AICPA credentials and programs to an even larger audience.

Born: Baltimore, 1959

College: Loyola University (B.A. accounting); Johns Hopkins University (master's)

First full-time job: Junior accountant, Finance Company of America
Favorite recent binge watch: "What We Do in the Shadows"



Darryl Jackson **Director of diversity, equity and inclusion, IMA**

The Institute of Management Accountants

recently co-sponsored a groundbreaking study on the abysmal state of diversity in accounting, and it's Jackson's job to find ways to fix that, starting with establishing deeper relationships with historically Black colleges and universities.

Born: Brooklyn, N.Y., 1977

College: Virginia State University (bachelor's); University of Maryland (MBA)

First full-time job: Loan officer, U.S. Department of Agriculture

Favorite recent binge watch: "Chicago Med/Chicago PD"



Kacee Johnson **Senior director, strategy & innovation, CPA.com**

As the leader of CPA.com's many research and innovation initiatives, Johnson educates the profession about the emerging technologies that will be driving their practices in the years ahead.

Born: Las Vegas, 1980

College: University of Arizona (B.A. English literature and political science); University of Phoenix (MBA)

First full-time job: Director of operations, Rialto Theatre

Favorite recent binge watch: "Billions" and "The Queen's Gambit"



Randy Johnston **CEO and founder, EVP, NMGI and K2 Enterprises**

To the many who look forward to Johnston's presentations on technology trends, his expert forecasting is less about abstract ideas and more about actionable insights that help arm them with the tools and processes they need to succeed.

Born: Hutchinson, Kansas, 1955

College: Hutchinson Community College; Kansas State University; Wichita State University (postgraduate)

First full-time job: Programmer and system designer, Farmland Industries

Favorite recent binge watch: "Signed, Sealed, Delivered"

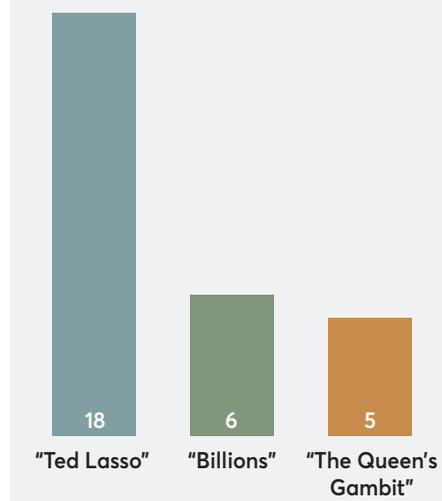


Richard Jones **Chair, FASB**

Taking charge in the midst of a once-in-a-century pandemic can't have been easy, but Jones has successfully managed the Financial Accounting Standards Board's COVID response, and moved forward on his goals of bringing in

Streaming favorites

In past years, we've polled the Top 100 Most Influential People on their favorite books, but this year, given the unsurprising spike in streaming viewership, we asked which series everyone is enjoying binge-watching. Turns out many of our Top 100 have an affinity for Jason Sudeikis — and an Apple TV+ subscription — as "Ted Lasso" was the clear favorite. "Billions" tales of wealth and corruption also resonated with this year's Top 100, as did competitive chess drama "The Queen's Gambit."



a range of stakeholder voices to improve financial reporting and build a better standard-setting agenda.

Born: Washingtonville, New York, 1965

College: State University of New York, Binghamton (B.S. accounting)

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Ernst & Whinney

Favorite recent binge watch: "Formula 1: Drive to Survive"



Edward Karl

Vice president, tax policy and advocacy, AICPA

The AICPA's point man on tax issues in Washington, Karl continues to work to improve the federal tax process — particularly around the responsiveness and effectiveness of the IRS.

Born: Washington, D.C., 1954

College: University of Maryland

First full-time job: Junior accountant, Lewis Kest CPA

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"



Roman Kepczyk

Director, firm technology strategy, Right Networks

Having partnered with more than 425 firms in his mission to optimize their practices with the best technology and processes, Kepczyk still manages to find time to sit on a number of industry boards and councils, and speak at numerous events, to spread this knowledge.

Born: Berlin, Germany, 1961

College: Arizona State University (B.S. accounting)

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Wolfswinkel Group Inc.

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Queen's Gambit"



Ed Kless

Senior director of partner development and strategy, Sage

Accountants think differently because of Kless, thanks to the ideas he and co-host Ron Baker introduce them to on their radio show, as well as on his Sage podcast and in his conference presentations.

Born: Brooklyn, N.Y., 1966

College: Pace University, White Plains

First full-time job: Junior management advisory services consultant, Hoffman Raich Fine CPA Group

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"

Keeping the best and brightest

The war for talent was the Top 100's most commonly cited issue facing the profession, with several ancillary issues also top of mind. (*Find full responses at AccountingToday.com*)

Two top issues that remain consistent in their impact on the accounting profession are the ability to attract and retain talent — especially diverse talent — and the ability to innovate and adapt in a changing environment.

— **Joe Adams**

The Great Resignation! I don't believe most firm leaders are really worried about it, but they should be.

— **Sandra Wiley**

Finding and retaining talent is without a doubt the most important issue.

— **Tom Hood**

The profession — along with regulators and policymakers — is being tasked with determining how to best disclose material nonfinancial information, such as ESG data on climate change, human capital management and more.

— **Wes Bricker**

Finding the balance between the financial statement user's desire for more granular information with the costs of providing it.

— **Richard Jones**

The biggest issue facing us is the attractiveness of the profession as compared to other career options.

— **Jennifer Wilson**

The pending tax reform.

— **Julio Gonzalez**

We recently polled 600 accountants and bookkeepers on that exact question, and there was a very clear answer: keeping up with demand.

— **René Lacerte**

As the world becomes smaller, those who work in the profession must reflect the communities they serve and be inclusive and equitable in opportunity.

— **Darryl Jackson**

The profession's mental health and business model. People are leaving in droves.

— **Sarah Dobek**

Companies are struggling to build a pipeline of qualified diverse talent due to biased recruiting processes and a decline in interest in the accounting field among high school and college students.

— **Guylaine Saint Juste**

Relevancy. Excessive regulation remains a close second.

— **Ron Baker**

To retain the best and the brightest team members, and to ensure that audit remains relevant, we need to shift to a model that empowers team members to think innovatively about using technology in the audit.

— **Alan Anderson**

We risk losing the local/small firm if we don't create more of a supply of small-firm entrepreneurs.

— **Jeff Phillips**

Firm leaders must adapt to a client base that is changing as rapidly as the global economy itself.

— **Joanne Barry**

Competition from VC-funded "accounting" companies and private equity purchasing traditional firms.

— **Jody Padar**

We must focus on how we can help make the accounting profession an attractive destination for college students — and do what we can to remove barriers to entering it.

— **Kelly Grier**

I think the mindset and mental health issues are the biggest ones.

— **Dawn Brolin**

The profession is still struggling to create and deliver advisory services and client accounting services.

— **Randy Johnston**

The volume, quality and diversity of our CPA talent and pipeline.

— **Sue Coffey**

Everyone knows staffing is the most critical current issue. But the bigger issue is lack of strategic future-think, due to lack of bandwidth.

— **Gale Crosley**

Keeping up with what federal tax changes might be enacted is critical and complicated.

— **Scott Peterson**

Capacity. We hear it time and again, and yet firms have been slow to adopt new technologies that automate repetitive tasks.

— **Kacee Johnson**

Continuing to instill trust with stakeholders by demonstrating extraordinary integrity, professionalism and quality.

— **Paul Knopp**

Ensuring that the information provided to financial statements users is relevant and useful in making investment and capital allocation decisions.

— **Hillary Salo**

The advancement of diversity, equity and inclusion, and strengthening the pool of diverse talent.

— **Joe Ucuzoglu**

Most urgent: Burnout and morale.

— **Michelle Golden River**

Our biggest challenge right now is a societal one — and that's a labor shortage and a hypercompetitive market for talent in the U.S.

— **Tim Ryan**

A supplement to *Accounting Today*: **Top 100 People**



Paul Knopp

U.S. chair and CEO, KPMG

Knopp is leading KPMG forward on a number of fronts, from exploring new practice areas by investing \$1.5 billion in ESG training and solutions, to major commitments around DE&I with its Accelerate 2025 initiative, which includes audacious goals like doubling Black representation at the partner and managing director level within five years. **Born:** Fredericksburg, Texas, 1959 **College:** University of Texas at Austin (B.B.A. and MBA) **First full-time job:** Assistant accountant, KPMG



Allan Koltin

CEO, Koltin Consulting Group

Many, many of the steadily increasing number of mergers and acquisitions in the profession are driven by Koltin's guidance, but beyond facilitating these sometimes blockbuster transactions, he also provides the kind of strategic advice that keeps these practices humming along organically. **Born:** Milwaukee, 1957 **College:** University of Wisconsin – Madison/University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee **First full-time job:** Director, Nankin, Schnoll (now BDO) **Favorite recent binge watch:** "Ted Lasso" and "The Morning Show"



Rene Lacerte

CEO and founder, Bill.com

In the competitive software landscape, Lacerte's Bill.com is consistently referenced as a standout part of the technology stack for the many accountants and businesses who rely on its ability to streamline their payments processes. **Born:** Fairfax, Virginia, 1967 **College:** Stanford University (M.S. industrial engineering, B.A. economics) **First full-time job:** Senior consultant, PwC **Favorite recent binge watch:** "Ted Lasso"



Bob Lewis

President, The Visionary Group

Value comes in many forms, and Lewis aims to help accountants find it however he can, whether it's helping them grow their firms organically, advising on a growing number of M&A deals, or sharing his insights into the core drivers of value.

Born: Chicago, 1959

College: DePaul University (B.S., MBA)

First full-time job: Internal auditor, DoALL

Favorite recent binge watch: "Kim's Convenience"



Julie Bell Lindsay

CEO, Center for Audit Quality

Auditing and the audit are rapidly changing, and it's part of Lindsay's job as head of the Center for Audit Quality to chart those changes and communicate them to clients, regulators, and the profession itself, in areas ranging from new areas of disclosure like climate change and new fields for auditors to explore, like ESG, to the opportunities technology offers for improving quality. **Born:** Sidney, Ohio, 1970 **College:** Ohio State University (B.A.); Vanderbilt University Law School (J.D.) **First full-time job:** Associate, Wilson Sonsini Goodrich & Rosati **Favorite recent binge watch:** "Ted Lasso"



Charles Maniace

VP, regulatory analysis & design, Sovos

Sovos has been on something of an acquisition tear this year, both in the U.S. and abroad — growth that's making Maniace even more influential as he works to keep the company's customers compliant, and keep the profession up to date on rapidly changing sales tax regimes. **Born:** North Andover, Massachusetts, 1968 **College:** Bentley College (B.S.); Boston University School of Law (J.D. and L.L.M.) **First full-time job:** New business representative, Keyport Life Insurance Co. **Favorite recent binge watch:** "American Horror Story: 1984"



Stephen Mankowski

Co-chair, National Tax Policy Committee, NCCPAP

Through his frequent interactions with and deep understanding of the IRS and the tax pro community, Mankowski is an important go-between to help them better serve their mutual client, the taxpayer. **Born:** Philadelphia, 1965 **College:** La Salle University **First full-time job:** Staff auditor, Coopers & Lybrand **Favorite recent binge watch:** "The Queen's Gambit"



Gene Marks

President, The Marks Group

A prolific author and speaker, Marks offers accountants his own unique take, as well as invaluable advice, on the business, financial and economic trends and challenges that they and their clients face on a daily basis.

Born: Philadelphia, 1965

College: Lehigh University

First full-time job: Audit staff, KPMG

Favorite recent binge watch: "What We Do In The Shadows" and "Ted Lasso"



Jason Marx

President & CEO, Tax & Accounting North America, Wolters Kluwer

With tens of thousands of accountants relying on his company's platforms and solutions, Marx is committed to continuously improving them — but also to helping chart out the future his users will be operating in.

Born: Detroit, 1966

College: University of Michigan; DePaul University (MBA)

First full-time job: Account executive, Household Finance Corp.

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Queen's Gambit"



Robert Materazzi

CEO, Lukka

As accounting firms ramp up their services around cryptocurrencies and cryptoassets, reporting and compliance tools like those created by Lukka are essential, as CPA.com recognized when it partnered with Materazzi's company to bring cryptotax solutions to the profession.

Born: Virginia, 1981

College: Florida State University

First full-time job: Officer and pilot, U.S. Marine Corps



Mitch McConnell

Senate minority leader, R-Kentucky

With the Senate so narrowly divided, McConnell has almost as much power as when he was majority leader, and will be using it both to influence the current mammoth legislation working its way through Congress, and shape the environment for the midterm elections in 2022.

Born: Sheffield, Alabama, 1942

College: University of Louisville; University

of Kentucky College of Law

First full-time job: Senator's aide



Barry Melancon

President and CEO, AICPA; CEO, Association of International Certified Professional Accountants

Often called the voice of the profession, Melancon's words were never more essential than over the past 20-plus months, as he continued to oversee the AICPA's multiple bodies and initiatives to promote and protect the role of the CPA, and advise accountants on how to lead change into the "next normal."

Born: Houma, Louisiana, 1958

College: Nicholls State University (bachelor's, MBA, honorary doctorate)

First full-time job: Accountant, small firm



Ed Mendlowitz

Emeritus partner, WithumSmith+Brown

Combining the wise counsel of an experienced practitioner with the zeal usually only found in a newly minted CPA, Mendlowitz packs an enormous amount of actionable advice in an impressive flood of columns, blogs, lectures, books and online resources.

Born: New York City, 1942

College: Baruch College

First full-time job: Junior accountant, J. J. Turner CPA



Ariege Misherghi

VP expert segment leader, small business self-employed, Intuit

Few relationships in the profession are more valuable than the one between accountants and small businesses, and Misherghi is firmly planted at that intersection, ensuring that Intuit's accountant and bookkeeping users get the support and training they need to better serve, and grow, their clientele.

Born: San Jose, California

College: Stanford University

First full-time job: Customer service specialist, PayCycle

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"



Rep. Richard Neal

D-Massachusetts

While names like Sinema and Manchin may be grabbing headlines, the Ways & Means chair has played a major

role in moving tax legislation through the House, and in crafting proposals on everything from new Child Tax Credit provisions to plans to require banks to report account information to the IRS.

Born: Worcester, Massachusetts, 1949

College: American International College (B.A.); University of Hartford

First full-time job: History teacher



Jody Padar

VP, partner development & strategy, Botkeeper

Padar is probably due for a very satisfying “I told you so” as the changes she’s been warning her fellow accountants about and the adaptations that she’s been promoting for years under her “Radical CPA” brand are all coming to seem much less radical.

Born: Chicago, 1972

College: Saint Mary’s College (B.B.A.); Northern Illinois University (M.S.T.)

First full-time job: Tax associate, Price Waterhouse



Hitendra Patil

Head of customer success, AccountantsWorld

Patil wrote the book on client accounting services — literally: His 2021 guide is a must-read on this hot practice area, but it’s only one of the many avenues he’s taking to explain why CAS is central to the future of accounting firms.

Born: Mumbai, India, 1967

College: Sathaye College (B.S.); University of Mumbai (M.S.); Symbiosis Institute of Management Studies (M.D.B.A.)

First full-time job: Senior officer, Reliance Consultancy Services Ltd.

Favorite recent binge watch: “Star Wars”



Rep. Nancy Pelosi

Speaker, U.S. House of Representatives; D-California

Whatever deal finally comes out of the wrangling in Congress this year, Pelosi’s fingerprints will be all over the tax changes that will, in the short term, determine how much of a nightmare next tax season is for practitioners, and, in the longer term, how much planning they’ll have to help their clients do.

Born: Baltimore, 1940

College: Trinity College (B.A.)

First full-time job: California rep., Democratic National Committee

Words from the wise

We asked the T100 what guidance they would give future influencers of the profession. (To see their full responses, visit AccountingToday.com)

Be bold. Say the quiet stuff out loud. Rattle the cages of the powerful, the entrenched, the institutional.

— Rick Telberg

Embrace a proactive business model and continue to educate the profession on why it’s critical to long-term success.

— Darren Root

Accountants have to be critical thinkers as well as accomplished technicians.

— Andreas Barckow

Never stop listening and learning. We have much to learn from others, especially those who have different backgrounds, experiences and skills.

— Lisa Fitzpatrick

Look outside the accounting profession for inspiration, trends, ideas and role models.

— Michelle Golden River

Be open-minded. Listen. Weigh all factors. Keep in mind the critical role small firms play in the health and success of the profession’s ecosystem.

— Carl Peterson

Think not in terms of what the profession expects of you, but what you expect of the profession.

— Joanne Barry

Work hard, be a lifelong learner, and always take time to enjoy your personal life and interests.

— Michael Bernard

Embrace change, challenge everything, and get comfortable with risk.

— William Pirolli

Build a new generation of partners who are passionate about empowering entrepreneurs to become more successful.

— Chandra Bhansali

Be willing to challenge the status quo and find ways to communicate your message in an impactful way.

— Angie Grissom

Figure out what you’re passionate about and then figure out where there is a blue ocean for you to lead and define that area for the profession.

— Donny Shimamoto

Stay connected to the front lines — to the practical issues and challenges facing the accounting profession.

— Joe Woodard

The speed of change and the importance of reacting quickly and positively is paramount.

— Ken Bishop

It’s your responsibility to deliver the hard truths.

— Jim Boomer

Look around corners to anticipate evolving client requirements and leverage technology where feasible, but please don’t forget the most important part of the people, process, technology equation — people.

— Kimberly Ellison-Taylor

Pursue new opportunities and experiences whenever you get the chance.

— Jennifer Burns

Be courageous and bold, and hold true to your values.

— Sue Coffey

Get to know all your peers and adjacent competitors so you can provide value beyond your box.

— Gale Crosley

To listen and empathize with other people’s points of view no matter how much they may differ from your own.

— Gene Marks

Be open to change and curious about the future.

— Erik Asgeirsson

The profession needs to reconsider the norms that have defined our business model for over a century.

— Terrence Putney

Be strategic but nimble.

— Edward Karl

Strive to be the best at what you do to serve your clients, but be cognizant of what is happening outside of our profession that could change it.

— Roman Kepczyk

Always focus on people. Always.

— Marc Rosenberg

The guidance that I would give future influencers of the profession is that we all have an inherent responsibility to leave the profession in a better position than when we joined it.

— Stephen Mankowski

Don’t doubt yourself or what you contribute to the world. We need to hear everyone’s voice, no matter how different it might be.

— Geni Whitehouse

Despite the changes we deal with in the profession every day, this is and always will be a people business.

— Mark Stewart

Teach yourself to stay curious.

— Julie Bell Lindsay

Get involved early, whether through your state society or the AICPA.

— Lisa Simpson

My advice would be to prioritize genuine relationships with your peers, beyond a LinkedIn connection.

— Candace Wright

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Carl Peterson

VP, small firm interests, AICPA

Peterson provides what he calls “360 degrees of advocacy” — ensuring that the voices of small firms are heard at the highest levels, but also making sure that developments at the highest levels are reported back to small firms.

Born: Peoria, Illinois, 1958

College: Kansas State University

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Berc & Fox

Favorite recent binge watch: “The Flight Attendant”



Scott Peterson

VP, U.S. tax policy and government relations, Avalara

With sales taxes on everyone’s minds, Peterson is a ubiquitous and invaluable source of information (and reassurance!) on changing state tax regimes, new nexus rules, and all the other complex elements of the post-Wayfair world.

Born: Mobridge, South Dakota, 1955

College: Black Hills State University (B.S.); University of South Dakota (M.S.)

First full-time job: Research analyst, South Dakota Legislative Research Council



Jeff Phillips

CEO, Padgett Business Services

As the war for talent hits a crisis point, Phillips continues to preach the benefits of fully remote employees, the principle behind the recruiting platform he founded, Accountingfly, and a central tenet of the guidance he now provides in leading Padgett and his role as president of the CPA Consultants Alliance.

Born: Pensacola, Florida, 1976

College: Baylor University (B.B.A.);

Southern Methodist University (MBA)

First full-time job: Campus recruiter, Trilogy Software

Favorite recent binge watch: “Succession”



William Pirolli

Chair, AICPA; co-chair, Association of International Certified Professional Accountants

Pirolli has been on the front lines for the profession throughout the pandemic, but he’s also focusing on longer-term issues during his tenure, from the problems with the CPA pipeline to the ongoing struggle

to diversify accounting.

Born: Rhode Island, 1958

College: Rhode Island Junior College (A.S.); Bryant College (B.A.)

First full-time job: Working in his father’s floor-covering business

Favorite recent binge watch: “Dopesick”



Brad Preber

CEO, Grant Thornton

Preber is due to step down in August 2022, but he can pride himself on having successfully steered Grant Thornton through the pandemic (and grown its revenue to close to \$2 billion at the same time), while also setting it up for the future with initiatives like introducing training programs around racial issues and committing it to zero emissions.

Born: Milwaukee, 1959

College: University of New Mexico

First full-time job: Professional staff, Touche Ross & Co.

Favorite recent binge watch: “Ted Lasso”



Anthony Pugliese

President and CEO, IIA

Though he only took the helm at the Institute of Internal Auditors this March, Pugliese brought a vast depth of experience from other accounting membership organizations, so he was able to hit the ground running in terms of both preparing his members for the many business transformations coming their way, and reimagining the institute itself to be more nimble and agile.

Born: Jacksonville, Florida, 1967

College: University of North Florida

First full-time job: Audit associate, Deloitte & Touche

Favorite recent binge watch: “Ted Lasso”



Terry Putney

CEO, Transition Advisors

Along with his partner, Joel Sinkin, Putney is one of the leading advisors on firm succession and ownership transitions in accounting, bringing the wisdom of hundreds and hundreds of transactions and engagements to his clients and to the profession as a whole.

Born: Kansas City, Missouri, 1954

College: University of Kansas (B.S.B.)

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Donnelly Meiners & Jordan CPAs

Favorite recent binge watch: “Ted Lasso”



Charles Rettig

Commissioner, IRS

Rettig is an unabashed cheerleader for the IRS, fully acknowledging the difficulties and service delays it has faced during the pandemic, but also trumpeting the tremendous job it has done in delivering round after round of stimulus funds and Advanced Child Tax Credits with historically low staff numbers and serious budget constraints.

Born: Los Angeles, 1956

College: University of California, Los Angeles (B.A.); Pepperdine University School of Law (J.D.); New York University School of Law (LL.M.)



Ben Richmond

U.S. country manager, Xero

Richmond draws on his background in public accounting to achieve Xero’s goal of empowering U.S. accounting firms of various sizes to enhance their advisory work through the cloud.

Born: Hawke’s Bay, New Zealand, 1987

College: University of Canterbury

First full-time job: Accountant, Brown Webb Richardson Chartered Accountants



Michelle Golden River

Owner/president, Fore

In teaching the pricing methodology she developed to steer firms away from hourly billing and into a value-based revenue model, River brings a holistic perspective on the profession based on her past and present roles as a business owner, consultant and firm partner.

Born: Long Beach, California, 1966

College: Columbia College

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Coopervision

Favorite recent binge watch: “Bosch”



Darren Root

GM, Rootworks

Root’s efforts at helping firms modernize their practices have gone through their own modernization over the years, as podcasts and virtual events join his hands-on training sessions in educating future-minded accountants.

Born: Bedford, Indiana, 1960

College: Indiana University

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Deloitte Haskins and Sells

Favorite recent binge watch: “Billions”



Ric Rosario

President and CEO, CAMICO

As chief of one of the major liability insurers for the profession, Rosario is all about getting ahead of trouble — helping accountants identify risks and manage them through proactive solutions long before they lead to claims.

Born: Bitburg, Germany, 1958

College: Saint Mary’s College

First full-time job: Auditor, John F. Forbes & Co.

Favorite recent binge watch: “CSI”



Marc Rosenberg

President, The Rosenberg Associates

If he had done nothing other than author his ongoing monograph series on managing accounting firms (16 volumes and counting), Rosenberg’s status as an influencer would have been assured — but he’s also a prolific blogger, consultant and mentor to accounting students.

Born: Chicago, 1948

College: University of Illinois at Chicago

First full-time job: Staff, Ernst & Young

Favorite recent binge watch: “Breaking Bad” and “Designated Survivor”



Timothy Ryan

Chair and senior partner, PwC US

In a profession that prides itself on the trust placed in it by clients and markets, Ryan and PwC are taking trust to a whole new level — literally reorganizing the firm around the idea, launching the PwC Trust Leadership Institute to help business leaders build trust, and continuing to lead by example on issues of racial justice and uneven opportunity.

Born: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1965

College: Babson College (B.S. accounting and communications)

First full-time job: Grocery store clerk

Favorite recent binge watch: “Modern Family”



Guylaine Saint Juste

President and CEO, NABA

As head of the National Association of Black Accountants, Saint Juste is uniquely positioned to help the profession make good on the unfulfilled commitments to diversity and racial equity that it has made not just over the past two turbulent years, but the past two decades.

Born: Haiti, 1969
College: George Mason (undergraduate); University of Virginia (graduate)
First full-time job: Expeditor, Hecht's



Hillary Salo

Technical director, FASB; chair, Emerging Issues Task Force

Salo plays a central role in managing the Financial Accounting Standards Board's technical accounting and research activities and staff, determining what accounting issues the standard-setter will be focusing on, and on communication and outreach to its many different stakeholders.

Born: Chicago, 1979

College: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (BSBA and master's)

First full-time job: Postgraduate technical assistant, FASB

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"



Gary Shamis

CEO, Winding River Consulting

Having built his own tremendously successful accounting firm, Shamis brings firsthand experience — and a sharp eye for important new trends — to his work consulting with and educating the next generation of firm leaders.

Born: Cleveland Heights, Ohio, 1953

College: Tulane University (B.S.); Ohio State University (master's, accounting)

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Touche & Ross

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Queen's Gambit"



Todd Shapiro

President and CEO, Illinois CPA Society

Whether it's by partnering with diverse groups to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the first Black CPA, or producing an incisive report identifying the serious blockages in the pipeline of new CPA candidates, Shapiro has a keen eye for the issues that matter most to the profession, and a passion for engaging with them.

Born: Kankakee, Illinois, 1957

College: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (B.S. finance); DePaul University (MBA)

First full-time job: Auditor, Continental Illinois National Bank

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"



Donny Shimamoto

Managing director, IntrapriseTechKnowlogies

A frequent speaker and writer on everything accountants need to know about how technology is impacting them, Shimamoto is a reliable guide to accounting's emerging trends.

Born: Honolulu, Hawaii, 1975

College: University of Hawaii at Manoa

First full-time job: Associate, Coopers & Lybrand

Favorite recent binge watch: "How to Get Away With Murder" and "Glee"



Lisa Simpson

VP, firm services, AICPA

Over the course of the pandemic, Simpson has become familiar to countless accountants through her role in the AICPA's town halls, dispensing invaluable guidance and clarity at a time when they are sorely needed; she's also deeply involved in the association's DE&I efforts.

Born: Danville, Kentucky, 1964

College: Eastern Kentucky University

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Ernst & Whinney

Favorite recent binge watch: "Ted Lasso"



Joel Sinkin

President, Transition Advisors

With partner Terry Putney, Sinkin is one of the preeminent advisors to accounting firms on M&A, ownership transitions and retirements, backing up his keen sense of the market with his deep knowledge of what makes a firm valuable.

Born: Brooklyn, N.Y., 1958

College: State University of New York at Brockport

First full-time job: Sales representative, Kem Manufacturing

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Mandalorian"

Alex and Ed Solomon

Co-presidents and co-founders, Net at Work

Net at Work has been a pioneering accounting software reseller and tech consultancy for decades, but the Solomons have gone beyond that with their Partner Alliance Program, which lets member firms leverage Net at Work's deep tech expertise to deliver the solutions clients need quickly.



Alexander Solomon

Born: Ukraine, 1973

College: NYU Stern School of Business

First full-time job: Co-founder, Net at Work

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Last Kingdom"



Edward Solomon

Born: Ukraine, 1970

College: Baruch Business School (MBA, finance)

First full-time job: Real estate analyst, Republic National Bank

Favorite recent binge watch: Rewatching "Game of Thrones"



Stan Sterna

Vice president, Aon

Every time you look, it seems like some new risk has popped up to bedevil public accountants, and Sterna is often the person they turn to first for advice and guidance on how to understand the threat and then start managing it, whether in his work directly with firms, or in his many speaking engagements and articles.

Born: Chicago, 1965

College: DePaul University (undergraduate); University of Illinois-Chicago School of Law

First full-time job: Associate attorney, Baker & Martier



Mark Stewart

President, NCCPAP

Stewart's National Conference of CPA Practitioners is not just a voice for its tens of thousands of members at small accounting firms — it's also a voice for the millions of small businesses they serve, a role that has been crucial as they all try to face the challenges of the pandemic.

Born: Brooklyn, N.Y., 1979

College: State University of New York at New Paltz

First full-time job: Junior accountant, Vanacore, DeBenedictus, DiGiovanni & Weddell

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Americans"



Rick Telberg

CEO and founder, CPA Trendlines Research

Even as Telberg's CPA Trendlines charts where accountants are — through the

many surveys and in-depth research it conducts with its large audience — it's also mapping out a path to where they should be going, with a host of books, articles and other resources.

Born: New York City, 1956

College: New York University

First full-time job: Police reporter, Beaumont Enterprise

Favorite recent binge watch: Rewatched "The Wire"



Ralph Thomas

CEO and executive director, New Jersey Society of CPAs

Thomas' society is a model for both actively shaping the economic and tax environment of their state, and keeping members abreast of developments at the state level and beyond, while also working hard on the front lines of making the profession more diverse and inclusive.

Born: Washington, D.C., 1954

College: Lehigh University, (B.S. business & economics, MBA)

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Price Waterhouse

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Oval"



Jeffrey Thomson

President and CEO, Institute of Management Accountants

With 140,000 members in over 150 countries, Thomson's influence is clearly broad, but it's also deep, offering them resources, guidance and leadership on everything from strategic planning and technology to diversity and ethics.

Born: Paterson, N.J., 1955

College: Montclair State University

First full-time job: AT&T Analytical Support Center

Favorite recent binge watch: "Dancing with the Stars"



Joe Ucuzoglu

CEO, Deloitte US

Under Ucuzoglu, Deloitte is literally putting its money where its mouth is when it comes to diversifying, upskilling and otherwise supporting staff, investing \$75 million in a major DE&I initiative and \$30 million in helping young staff get their CPA license, and launching two major training programs in future skills.

Born: Los Angeles

College: University of Southern California

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First full-time job: Audit intern, Deloitte & Touche

Favorite recent binge watch: "Billions"



Geni Whitehouse

Countess of communication, Even a Nerd Can be Heard

Whitehouse is a pathfinder for firms looking to make the move to advisory services, with hands-on experience of the mindset and procedural changes they need to make, as well as unique insights into the communications skills they'll need to succeed.

Born: Atlanta, 1959

College: University of North Carolina

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Deloitte, Haskins & Sells

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Voice" and "The Great British Baking Show"



Sandra Wiley

President, Boomer Consulting

Wiley is one of the profession's primary resources for best practices and strong strategies for facing enormous

issues like the Great Resignation, the war for talent, and DE&I.

Born: Stafford, Kansas, 1960

College: Friends University

First full-time job: Working at the local grain elevator

Favorite recent binge watch: "Yellowstone," "Ted Lasso" and "Ozark"



Jennifer Wilson

Co-founder and partner, ConvergenceCoaching

When it comes to helping firms attract the next-gen talent they so desperately need, Wilson tirelessly spreads the gospel on key aspects of the 21st century workplace like remote work through countless public appearances, articles, livestreams, surveys and consulting gigs.

Born: Hahn Air Force Base, Germany, 1964

College: University of Nebraska Omaha (B.S. marketing)

First full-time job: Regional sales manager, Pro Systems

Favorite recent binge watch: "Harrow" and "Clickbait"



Joe Woodard

CEO, Woodard Events

With his Scaling New Heights conference, Woodard has almost single-handedly kept live accounting conferences going through the pandemic, all the while also coaching, guiding and preparing tens of thousands of accountants for the technology-dominated future.

Born: Savannah, Georgia, 1967

College: Mercer University

First full-time job: Associate, Allen & Baxter

Favorite recent binge watch: "Foundation"



Candace Wright

Chair, Private Company Council

Recently appointed for a third term, Wright makes sure the voices of private business and small companies are heard in the standard-setting process; she's also involved in several audit-related initiatives with the AICPA.

Born: Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1962

College: McNeese State University

First full-time job: Accountant, pharmaceutical sales company



Ron Wyden

D-Oregon

Wyden remains one of the leading voices in the Democratic party on taxes and the IRS, and one of the most prolific generators of new ideas and legislation in the area.

Born: Wichita, Kansas, 1949

College: UC Santa Barbara; Stanford University; University of Oregon



Janet Yellen

U.S. Secretary of Treasury

Yellen has been at the forefront of the Biden administration's support for international negotiations to overhaul the global corporate tax regime and create a global minimum tax for companies, as well as finding new ways to bring in more revenue, whether through empowering the IRS or going after the wealthy.

Born: Brooklyn, N.Y., 1946

College: Pembroke College in Brown University; Yale University

First full-time job: Assistant professor of economics, Harvard University



Diane Yetter

President and founder, Yetter Consulting Services & Sales Tax Institute

Yetter is more than just one of the preeminent experts in the field of sales tax — she's also working to raise the profile of sales tax professionals, so they get the respect they deserve for the crucial role they play in an increasingly complex field.

Born: Chicago, 1963

College: University of Kansas (B.S.); DePaul University (M.S. taxation)

First full-time job: Sales tax auditor, Kansas Department of Revenue

Favorite recent binge watch: "The Crown"



Martin Zych

CEO, Jirav

Zych's budgeting, forecasting and analytics platform Jirav is emblematic of the kind of tools that are empowering accountants to offer forward-looking advisory services, and as a preferred CPA.com provider, he's in a great position to partner with firms across the profession.

College: University of Washington

First full-time job: Associate director, GMI

Favorite recent binge watch: "Wu-tang: An American Saga"

The influencers

Barry Melancon was once again voted the profession's most influential person by his Top 100 peers, with candidates crediting his AICPA leadership and stewardship of the accounting community during the pandemic as major sources of his continued impact. Beyond his high-profile position, his fellow influencers praised how he wields that power, with one noting: "Barry is driving a significant shift toward business transformation as the primary role of the CPA." Also working to help accountants future-proof their advisory roles is second-highest vote-getter Tom Hood, whose transition into a new role at the AICPA only strengthened his prominence in the profession.

Rounding out the top three influencers, according to their fellow influencers, is Kimberly Ellison-Taylor, who was commended by many for leading the charge on diversity and inclusion and even applauded for her welcome ubiquity, with one candidate proclaiming, "She's everywhere!"

Erik Asgeirsson and Sue Coffey garnered the same number of votes for their respective CPA.com and AICPA work, tying with M&A maestro Allan Koltin, while government officials Charles Rettig, Gary Gensler and President Joe Biden received mentions for the massive U.S. legislative changes they have on deck.

Unsurprisingly, the consulting work and expertise of value pricing guru Ron Baker, tech-minded advisory services practitioner Jim Bourke, technology expert Randy Johnston and next-gen thought leader Jennifer Wilson helped them retain positions of great influence for their Top 100 peers for another year.

