

A supplement to *accountingtoday*



THE TOP 100

**THE MOST INFLUENTIAL
PEOPLE IN ACCOUNTING**

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

Making an impact in an exceptional year

By Danielle Lee

Many of the 2020 Top 100 Most Influential People were predicting disruption in the accounting profession — particularly around technology, diversity and business models — long before the events of 2020 accelerated the upheaval.

Now that change has come, amid the coronavirus pandemic, the calls for racial justice, and the other major shifts of the last year, the leaders on this year's T100 list have become even more essential visionaries in their areas of expertise within the profession.

Influencers who 10 years ago were perceived as radical for proselytizing a completely virtual office can offer critical technological and managerial advice to newly remote workforces; those who have long advocat-

ed for stronger inclusion efforts are being called upon to speak about diversity in the workplace in Zoom conferences; and practitioners with successful advisory practices can provide a roadmap for their peers looking to move up the value chain to help clients seeking relief from the economic downturn.

As always, the 100 people selected for this year's list are far from a comprehensive representation of those who have made — and continue to make — a large impact on the profession. The Top 100 are, instead, among the profession's most visible and active allies and champions, whose influence has been particularly felt over the last six months and who are primed to continue having an impact into next year.

Some of this influence is evident in the listings below, which detail each member of the T100's role, along with other biographical information. But still more can be learned in the honorees' thoughtful answers to a series of questions, featured in excerpts throughout this section and in full on AccountingToday.com.

Among other questions, the Top 100 were asked about the source of their influence, the lessons they learned during the pandemic, and, more enduringly, for everyone not only on this year's list but honored over the years, what they hope will be their legacy.

One highlight this year's class can now add to that response: selection as one of the 2020 Top 100 Most Influential People, whom we are honored to present.



Joe Adams
Managing partner and CEO,
RSM US

RSM was named a Best Employer for Diversity by *Forbes* even before this year's protests brought the issue front and center, but Adams has intensified their focus on diversity and inclusion, ushering in new recruiting, mentoring and educational programs, all while looking after his people amid a pandemic, and continuing to move forward with innovation.

Born: Chicago, 1955
College: DePaul University (bachelor's and MBA)
First full-time job: Audit associate, McGladrey & Pullen
Favorite book: "The Speed of Trust" and "How to Be an Antiracist"



Al Anderson
Founder and president,
Accountability Plus

One of the leading faces in creating and evangelizing the technology-driven audit of the 21st century, Anderson is also a strong proponent of auditing's timeless values of integrity, insight and informed skepticism.

Born: Canby, Minnesota, 1955
College: Southwest State University
First full-time job: Staff accountant, McGladrey Hendrickson (now RSM)
Favorite book: "The Future Is Faster than You Think"



Erik Asgeirsson
President and CEO, CPA.com

2020 was supposed to be the year Asgeirsson helped lead the charge in revolutionizing the audit, but the pandemic saw him pivot to add a major role in helping accountants help their clients through the complexities of the Paycheck Protection

Program, hosting a long-running series of popular virtual town halls on the subject and working to build valuable related tools — all while keeping those audit initiatives ticking over, ready for calmer times.

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
Favorite book: "1776"



Kim Austin
Business development manager,
national accounts, Intuit

Austin's influence has always been retail — working with one firm at a time, acting as their trusted advisor while they act as their clients' trusted advisor — and like many other members of our Top 100, she found her influence multiplied by the coronavirus pandemic, as she helped her firms with everything from access to files in practices suddenly working remotely, to getting their clients the PPP loans they desperately needed.

Born: Orange County, California, 1983
College: Chapman University
First full-time job: Inside sales manager, LibertyIMS (now Hyland Software)
Favorite book: "From Cubicle to Cloud"



Ron Baker
Founder, VeraSage Institute

Winning the argument is one thing; getting others to adopt your position afterward is another thing entirely. Few people doubt that the value-pricing philosophy that Baker has championed for years represents the future, but getting firms to adopt it is an ongoing struggle, and he's pursuing it through the popular radio show he co-hosts with Ed Kless, through the many consultants he has

inspired and directly taught through his VeraSage Institute, and through the example of his role as chief value officer at Top 20 Firm Armanino.

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 book: "Wealth and Poverty"



Joanne Barry
Executive director and CEO,
New York State Society of CPAs

As head of one of the country's largest CPA societies in one of its earliest and hottest spots for the coronavirus, Barry is working to prepare her members for a future that is arriving far, far ahead of schedule, and to help them take the "big, bold steps" she thinks they'll need to take to meet it.

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 book: "A Gentleman from Moscow"



Michael Bernard
Chief tax officer, transaction tax,
Vertex

Remember *Wayfair*? Bernard does, and with state and local jurisdictions even more desperate for revenue than usual, e-commerce booming as people stay at home, and 2020 on track to have the second-highest number of sales tax changes in a decade, he's at the forefront of keeping Vertex and its users up to date.

Born: Marysville, Kansas, 1959

College: Creighton University (B.S. business administration, accounting and finance); Creighton University School of Law (J.D.)
First full-time job: State tax analyst, Peter Kiewit and Sons Inc.
Favorite book: "Witness to Hope: The Biography of Pope John Paul II"



Wayne Berson
CEO, BDO USA
Almost without exception, the leaders of the largest firms in the profession

were united in taking this year's protests against racial injustice to heart, and Berson was no exception, committing to expanding BDO's commitments to diversity and inclusion, even as he continues to grow the Top Eight Firm at a double-digit pace.

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 (Cape Town, South Africa)
Favorite book: "Team of Rivals: The Political Genius of Abraham Lincoln"

Chandra and Sharada Bhansali

Co-founders, AccountantsWorld
As early pioneers of the cloud, the Bhansalis were among the first to harness its power for accountants, starting by enabling thousands of them to offer web-based payroll, and more recently by creating accounting systems that put accountants squarely in control of their client relationships.

Chandra Bhansali
Born: Jodhpur, India, 1947
College: University of Buffalo (Ph.D.)
First full-time job: President, MicroVision
Favorite book: "Scaling Up"



Sharada Bhansali
Born: Jodhpur, India, 1951
College: University of Buffalo
First full-time job: Co-founder, MicroVision Software



Joe Biden
U.S. president-elect
 While a divided Congress may limit the president-elect's ability to implement the tax policies he campaigned on, expect Biden to bring a very different approach to both tax legislation and regulation.
Born: Scranton, Pennsylvania, 1942
College: University of Delaware (B.A.); Syracuse University College of Law (J.D.)
First full-time job: Clerk, Wilmington law firm



Ken Bishop
President and CEO, NASBA
 The shuttering of CPA Exam sites early in the pandemic may have hit the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy's cash flow hard, but Bishop bounced back quickly, going virtual and never losing sight of NASBA's mission to serve state boards, or its work with the American Institute of CPAs to revamp the profession through the CPA Evolution project, and to protect the public against a movement to deregulate accounting.
Born: Mexico, Missouri, 1951
College: University of Missouri (B.A. education, M.S. criminal justice); Harvard University (executive management)
First full-time job: Clerk, Kroger Co.
Favorite book: "The Great Bridge"



Joel Black
Chair, GASB
 The new chair of the Governmental Accounting Standards Board brings his experience leading the government practice of a Top 100 Firm to the post, just as the many governments who use its standards are facing a wide array of pandemic-related hurdles that are sure to bring new wrinkles to their financial reporting.
Born: Atlanta, 1970
College: Georgia State University
First full-time job: Staff accountant, KPMG
Favorite book: "Outliers"



Jim Boomer
CEO, Boomer Consulting Inc.
 Boomer has built beyond the technology-based foundations of his consulting business to turn it into a one-stop shop for accounting firms that want to be future-ready, as well as a veritable font of thought leadership on many of the most pressing issues facing the 21st century practice.
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 book: "Crucial Conversations"



L. Gary Boomer
Founder, visionary & strategist, Boomer Consulting Inc.
 One of the preeminent promoters of the value of technology to the profession, Boomer is a major advocate for restructuring the modern practice with technology in a central role, bringing together firm leaders, IT professionals and solution providers to move everyone forward.
Born: Portis, Kansas, 1945
College: Kansas State University (B.S. and MAcc)
First full-time job: Staff accountant, John Strain & Co. CPAs
Favorite book: "The Future Is Faster Than You Think"



Jim Bourke
Managing director of advisory services, WithumSmith+Brown
 After logging 100,000 air miles in just the first three months of 2020 to spread his message that accounting firms need to embrace both the cloud and advisory services, Bourke didn't miss a step in transferring his influence to virtual appearances, where he hopes to continue convincing the profession that the silver lining of the pandemic is the opportunity it brings to accelerate that embrace.
Born: Jersey City, N.J., 1964
College: Kean University (B.S. accounting)
First full-time job: Staff level I accountant, WithumSmith+Brown
Favorite book: "Good to Great"



Rep. Kevin Brady
R-Texas
 As the ranking Republican on the House's Ways & Means Committee, Brady is a regular source of new tax legislation, and will likely play an important role in tax policy in the divided Congress bequeathed us by November's election.
Born: Vermillion, South Dakota, 1955
College: University of South Dakota
First job: Chamber of Commerce, Rapid City



Dawn Brolin
President, Powerful Accounting Inc.
 Brolin has too much energy and enthusiasm to limit herself to running her own cutting-edge practice, so she shares her expertise on everything from forensic accounting to running a virtual firm with her peers in the profession through a host of appearances, articles, webinars, social media and more.
Born: Manchester, Connecticut, 1970
College: Eastern Connecticut State University (bachelor's and master's)
First full-time job: Bookkeeper, Champagne Chevrolet
Favorite book: "Inside Intuit"



Richard Chambers
President and CEO, Institute of Internal Auditors
 When Chambers steps down from his

longtime post as head of the Institute of Internal Auditors in 2021, he'll leave behind an organization greatly expanded and strengthened by his tenure. In the meantime, though, he'll continue reaching hundreds of thousands of readers with his weekly blog, "Chambers on the Profession," as well as the viewers of the video series he started during the pandemic, the readers of his books, and his many followers on social media.
Born: Fort McClellan, Alabama, 1954
College: Georgia State University (BBA and MBA); U.S. Army War College (postgraduate); Salve Regina University (M.A.)
First full-time job: Internal auditor, Trust Company of Georgia
Favorite book: "Good to Great: Why Some Companies Make the Leap ... and Others Don't"



David Cieslak
Executive vice president and chief cloud officer, RKL eSolutions
 Few people live accounting technology quite as deeply and completely as Cieslak, and accountants across the country look forward to his many engaging presentations and courses on how they can leverage the tools that are available now, and what to look out for in the future.

Born: Binghamton, N.Y., 1959
College: UCLA
First full-time job: Staff accountant, Price Waterhouse
Favorite book: "Lone Survivor"



Jay Clayton
Chairman, SEC
 After a relatively quiet first three years in his post, Clayton has been busy in what will be his last year, offering filing relief in response to the coronavirus, but also making sweeping deregulatory changes in many areas, such as reducing many of the disclosure requirements in Regulation S-K, and loosening auditor independence rules.
Born: Newport News, Virginia, 1966
College: University of Pennsylvania (BSE); University of Cambridge King's College (B.A.); University of Pennsylvania Law School (J.D.)
First full-time job: Law clerk, the Eastern District of Pennsylvania



Sue Coffey
EVP, public practice, Association of International Certified Professional Accountants
 Coffey is at the forefront of some of the most forward-looking initiatives in the profession, from the ongoing work on building the Dynamic Audit Solution and improving audit quality, to the institute's partnership with NASBA on reimagining CPA licensure and what it means to be a CPA.
Born: Cedar Grove, N.J., 1964
College: Fairfield University
First full-time job: Intern, Cove Awning and Tent



Erin Collins
National Taxpayer Advocate
 Only the second NTA since the

position was created, Collins jumped in feet first in March — well ahead of her scheduled start date, and just as IRS offices were closing across the country — to keep an eye on the pandemic's impact on taxpayers, including helping many get the Economic Impact Payments to which they were entitled.
College: UC Irvine; Southwestern Law School
First full-time job: Special trial attorney, Office of Chief Counsel



Susan Cosper
Board member, Financial Accounting Standards Board

A PwC partner and then technical director at FASB before she joined the board last year, Cosper's role as liaison to the Private Company Council helps ensure that those companies' views — which represent the vast majority of businesses — are considered in the standard-setting process.
Born: Erie, Pennsylvania, 1969
College: Indiana University of Pennsylvania (B.S.)
First full-time job: Audit associate, Coopers & Lybrand (now PwC)
Favorite book: "The Lord of the Rings"



Gale Crosley
President and founder, Crosely+Co.
 Few people have a clearer conception of what it takes to turbo-charge an accounting firm's growth — whether in the pandemic-hampered short term or the technology-driven long term — and even fewer are as good as Crosley at communicating it.
Born: Cleveland, 1951
College: University of Akron
First full-time job: Staff auditor, Arthur Andersen
Favorite book: "Atlas Shrugged"



Kevin Cumley
Senior director, Sage Intacct Accountants Program, Sage
 Cumley has been a respected figure in accounting technology for some time, but in his role working with Sage Intacct's accounting firm users, he's helping create a vision for how to structure, deliver and manage outsourced accounting services. With CAS transforming countless practices, his influence is only bound to grow.
Born: Alpine, Texas, 1961
College: Eastern Washington University
First full-time job: Staff accountant
Favorite book: "The Old Man and the Sea"



Kevin Dancey
CEO, International Federation of Accountants
 Dancey has been leveraging his key position in international accounting to bring attention to the growing number of critical issues that can't be measured solely in financial terms, from the coronavirus pandemic to climate change and inequality — most recently

Ones to Watch

One hundred is simply not enough: Here are 11 more people who are making a difference in accounting

Not to complain, but picking the Top 100 Most Influential People is really hard. Not so much identifying the cohort of people who are impacting the profession — that's relatively easy. But whittling the initial list of influencers down to exactly 100 means leaving out lots of people who are clearly making a difference.

To make up for that, every year we add a list of candidates that we think are making an impact. Sometimes they're major figures transitioning to a new role, and sometimes they've just emerged into public view, but either way, we expect to hear more from them in the year ahead: They're our Ones to Watch.

The first person we'll mention was also probably the last to come to our attention: **Andreas Barckow**, who will succeed Hans Hoogervorst as chairman of the International Accounting Standards Board next year. The German regulator is highly respected, but Hoogervorst has been the face of international standards for so long that it will be hard to adjust.

A little closer to home, and a lot more familiar, is **Mark Koziel**, who we'll be keeping an eye on as he settles into his new job as president and CEO of accounting firm association Allinial Global this year. Koziel was one of our Top 100 for years in his prior role as a leader at the American Institute of CPAs, where he was nationally known for his deep knowledge of the field and his close relationships with practitioners — qualities we're sure will stand him in good stead at Allinial.

Wes Bricker also went from one role to another, going straight from a stint as chief accountant at the Securities and Exchange Commission to joining Big Four firm PwC as vice chair and assurance leader, where he's been maintaining a high profile.

Next up are two organization leaders. First is **Mark Stewart**, who was

recently installed as president of the National Conference of CPA Practitioners. NCCPAP is a great resource and advocate for small practitioners, particularly in terms of keeping them up to speed on what's going on in Washington in terms of tax legislation and regulation. We look forward to seeing what Stewart does in his two-year term.

Then there's **Becca Davis**, president of the Association of Accounting Marketing, which does great work bringing together firm marketers from across the country to share best practices and up their game all around.

On the regulatory front, we'll be keeping an eye on **Hillary Salo**, who was named technical director of the Financial Accounting Standards Board this summer, as well as chair of its influential Emerging Issues Task Force.

Blockchain unites the next two of our Ones to Watch: **Noah Buxton** is head of the blockchain practice at Armanino, which has created the first (and only, so far as we know) viable attest products using the technology, and **Robert Materazzi** is the co-CEO of Lukka, which bridges the gap between the blockchain and the data and reporting needs of businesses and individuals.

Also on the technology front is **Martin Zych**, the CEO and co-founder of Jirav, a forecasting and planning platform that was gaining a lot of positive attention even before it joined CPA.com's stable of preferred software providers this year.

Finally, we'll note two folks who have lots of good advice for accountants: **Adelaide Ness**, chief learning officer at consultancy The Rainmaker Companies, and **Kyle Walters**, a partner at L&H CPAs, author of "The Personal CFO," and, last but not least, a prolific blogger on practice management and much more.

by calling for the creation of a sustainability standards board.

Born: Oshawa, Ontario, Canada, 1950

College: McMaster University

First full-time job: Economics department, McMaster University

Favorite book: "Pillars of the Earth"



Sarah Dobek

President and founder, Inovautus Consulting

Dobek's influence stems from the many firms and organizations she reaches through her multiple positions, as well as her thought leadership, and this year she's been a critical resource on growth, communication and sales in the midst of a nationwide crisis.

Born: Dallas, 1981

College: Purdue University

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

Favorite book: Anything historical fiction



Matt Dodds

President and CEO, CaseWare International Inc.

After a stint as general manager of CaseWare IDEA, an analytics tool familiar to many auditors, Dodds was recently named CEO of the whole company, which is serving as the technology engine of a partnership with CPA.com and the American Institute of CPAs to build the next generation of tools that will revolutionize the audit.

College: McGill University (B.E.); University of Cambridge Judge Business School (MBA)

First full-time job: Aerospace engineer, CAE Inc.



Phil Drake

Founder and CEO, Drake Software

As the head of the only major independent provider of tax software, Drake is a critical partner for tens of thousands of tax professionals.

College: Davidson College

First full-time job: Teacher



William Duhnke

Chair, PCAOB

While there has been some turmoil at the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board this year, with high-profile departures and disagreements among members, Duhnke has managed its response to the coronavirus, while also revamping its research and standard-setting agendas, and carefully monitoring the early implementation of the new critical audit matters requirements.

Born: Wisconsin, 1963

College: University of Wisconsin at Madison (B.A.); Catholic University Columbus School of Law (J.D.)

First full-time job: U.S. Navy



Kimberly Ellison-Taylor

Executive director — finance thought leadership, cloud business group, Oracle

We have often noted Ellison-Taylor's infectious enthusiasm for the accounting profession, but while she promotes it, she's not blind to the areas where it needs to improve, as she proved by taking a leading role this year in pushing for greater diversity and inclusion in the field.

Born: Baltimore, 1970

College: University of Maryland Baltimore County (IS management); Loyola University (MBA decision science); Community College of Baltimore County (public accounting certificate); Carnegie Mellon University (M.S. IT)

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

Favorite book: "Outliers," "Blink" and "The Tipping Point"



Lisa Fitzpatrick

President, Bloomberg Tax & Accounting

With Fitzpatrick at the helm, Bloomberg Tax is dedicated to two goals: building a vast, accurate and constantly up-to-date repository of critical intelligence and analysis on the world of tax, and leveraging cutting-edge technology to deliver that content to users and practitioners.

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 book: "To Kill a Mockingbird"



Lee Fredericksen

Managing partner, Hinge

Marketing is a mystery to many, and to none more so than to accountants, but Fredericksen is peeling back the veil through systematic, ongoing research with thousands of firms and clients to find out what works best — insights he then shares widely across the profession.

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

Favorite book: "Factfulness"



Herschel Frierson

Chairman of the board of directors, National Association of Black Accountants

In a crucial year for race relations, Frierson is using his position as chair of the National Association of Black Accountants — established to represent the more than 200,000 Black professionals in the fields of finance and accounting — to highlight how much needs to be done, to innovate new ways to accomplish it, and to champion the dream of a more diverse, more inclusive profession.

Born: Louisville, Kentucky, 1974

College: Butler University (B.S. accounting)

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Crowe

Favorite book: "A White-collar Profession: African-American Certified Public Accountants Since 1921"

THE FUTURE IS HERE

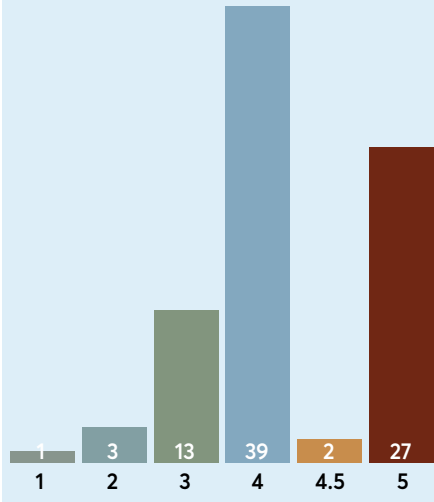
Now is the time for CEOs and firm management teams to take charge and drive transformation. Leading change will require coordinated efforts and perseverance, and Allinial Global is here to help. From game-changing technology to next-gen business models, we look forward to navigating the future with both existing and new members.



To explore Allinial Global membership, visit allinialglobal.com or call 770.279.4560.

Emergency response

Asking the Top 100 People to evaluate their response to the coronavirus pandemic is a tricky proposition. Given a scale (1 — struggling, 2 — struggling a little, 3 — doing fine, 4 —doing better than expected, and 5 — thriving), a few of the 85 respondents divided their answers into the categories of professional and personal, in which case we recorded the professional response (which always ended up being the higher number). Generally, though, the T100 naturally based their number on how they were faring professionally. More than a few even expressed some guilt in admitting they were a 5, or “thriving.” Those in that category also attributed their success to being ahead of the curve in remote-working capabilities. The vast majority of the T100 that fell in the 4 category shared a similar preparedness, but reported challenges like adjusting to their children’s remote learning and setting other work-life boundaries. They also, like those who scored themselves 3 or lower, expressed empathy for those — in some cases loved ones — directly impacted by the virus. The general sentiment from people reporting a rating of 1-3 was uncertainty. And, particularly, for the handful of people in the “struggling” categories, the most cited reason was lack of in-person contact. One person reported it was harder to close deals, while another shared, “I HATE not being able to hug, travel and talk to people face to face,” before concluding, “This too shall pass!”



J. Russell George
Treasury Inspector General
for Tax Administration

It has been a tough time for the independent inspectors general in many government agencies, but under George, the Treasury Inspector General for Tax Administration has continued to pour out its meticulous analyses of every aspect of the performance of the Internal Revenue Service, improving tax administration one meticulous study at a time.
Born: New York City
College: Howard University (B.A.); Harvard University Law School (J.D.)
First full-time job: Assistant district attorney, Queens County District Attorney’s Office



Tracey Golden
Chair, American Institute of CPAs
and Association of International
Certified Professional Accountants

As chair of the institute and the association, Golden is focused on endeavors that will give accountants the agility to adopt new skills and new abilities, like the CPA Evolution initiative, and on getting the profession as a whole to embrace the kind of lifelong learning it will need in a new era of continuous change.
Born: Northampton, Massachusetts, 1962
College: Georgetown University
First full-time job: Staff accountant, Deloitte
Favorite book: Steve Berry and Vince Flynn novels



Julio Gonzalez
CEO, Engineered Tax Services,
The Growth Partnership and ABLE

Gonzalez’s Engineered Tax Services has been working with accountants for years to deliver value-added specialty tax services like cost segregation studies to clients, but he upped his game significantly this year by folding in the Growth Partnership and its annual Rosenberg Survey, positioning the company to offer a whole new level of resources to the practitioners he partners with.
Born: Denver, 1966
College: University of Colorado
First full-time job: Director, First Interstate Bank
Favorite book: “How to Win Friends and Influence People”



Sasan Goodarzi
CEO, Intuit

Like many of the accountants who use its products, Intuit under Goodarzi is dedicated to serving small businesses, and so he is constantly investing in new technologies and tools that will enable accountants to bring more and more value to their clients.
Born: Tehran, Iran, 1968
College: University of Central Florida (bachelor’s); Kellogg School of Management at Northwestern University (master’s)
First full-time job: Technical marketing, Siemens
Favorite book: “Ride of a Lifetime”



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

Audit quality is Grier’s compass, both as head of her Big Four firm and chair of the Governing Board of the Center for Audit Quality, and she views people and culture as key drivers — hence her firm’s investments in its employees’ skills, and her goal of taking meaningful action on diversity and inclusion.
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

Hundreds of firms and thousands of accountants are more successful and better at growing their businesses, communicating with staff and clients, and much more because of Grissom, either through her direct consulting and training work, or through her many speaking engagements, articles, blog posts and more.
Born: Nashville, Tennessee, 1977
College: Middle Tennessee State University
First full-time job: Account manager/sales, Career Ascension
Favorite book: “Sabbath”



Jeffrey Hales
Chair, Sustainability Accounting
Standards Board

Need proof that sustainability reporting is on the rise? Consider this: The number of companies reporting under the standards produced by the Sustainability Accounting Standards Board has increased more than tenfold in the past two years, to close to 500. Besides overseeing the board’s technical staff and setting its agenda, Hales is also busy making the case for the value of these new standards around the world.
Born: Provo, Utah, 1972
College: Brigham Young University (B.S. and M.Acc.); Cornell University (M.S. and Ph.D.)
First full-time job: Instructor, University of Texas at Austin
Favorite book: “East of Eden”



Tom Hood
CEO, Maryland Association of
CPAs & Business Learning Institute

The accounting profession was deemed essential to the economy during the pandemic, and Hood is essential to the profession: as a source of constant inspiration, clear vision, practical paths forward, and unfailing hope for the future.
Born: Baltimore, 1959
College: Loyola University (B.A. accounting); Johns Hopkins University (master’s of finance, real estate)
First full-time job: Security Guard, Abacus Security
Favorite book: “April 1865: The Month That Saved America”



Hans Hoogervorst
Chair, IASB

Hoogervorst’s successor may already be lined up for July 2021, but he’s keeping his plate full in the meantime: managing pandemic-related issues, proposing a major revamp to financial reporting, and considering a new update to IFRS for SMEs, among many other things.
Born: Haarlem, The Netherlands, 1956
College: University of Amsterdam; Johns Hopkins University (M.A. in advanced international relations, master’s in modern history)
First full-time job: International banking officer, National Bank of Washington



Kacee Johnson
Strategic advisor, CPA.com

It’s Johnson’s job to look into the future of accounting, and then develop research and education programs to prepare accountants for the technological innovations that are driving change in the profession, from blockchain and artificial intelligence to the pandemic-started revolution in remote work, and beyond.
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 book: “The Fountainhead”



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

We don’t know where Johnston found the time this year to give over a hundred presentations; write more than 50 articles; consult with dozens of accounting firms; advise dozens of hardware and software vendors, as well as state societies; and offer tech support to hundreds of firms and thousands of accountants through NMGI, but he did — suggesting that while he’s best known for his deep expertise in technology, he’s also a genius at time management.
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 book: “Astrophysics for People in a Hurry” and “Endless Forms Most Beautiful”



Richard Jones
Chair, FASB

Having begun his transition to chairing the Financial Accounting Standards Board just as the pandemic was hitting, Jones has spent much of his first months overseeing the standard-setter’s move to remote work, pushing off the effective date for a number of its standards, and otherwise responding to the coronavirus, but that doesn’t mean he has lost sight of other priorities, like building relationships with stakeholders, conducting post-implementation reviews, and

reducing unnecessary complexity in reporting.
Born: Washingtonville, New York, 1965
College: State University of New York, Binghamton (B.S. accounting)
First full-time job: Staff accountant, Ernst & Whinney
Favorite book: "Band of Brothers"



Edward Karl Vice president, tax policy and advocacy, AICPA

As the "key interface" between the American Institute of CPAs and the Treasury Department, the IRS and Capitol Hill, Karl has always played a central role in making sure that the practitioner's voice is heard in Washington, which was even more important than ever this year, as he influenced major decisions around moving tax filing deadlines, shaping aspects of the stimulus packages and the Paycheck Protection Program, penalty abatement and other tax issues.

Born: Washington, D.C., 1954
College: University of Maryland
First full-time job: Junior accountant, Lewis Kest CPA
Favorite book: "Hannah Senesh: Her Life and Diary"



Roman Kepczyk Director, firm technology strategy, Right Networks

Apart from the hundreds of firms he touches through his role at Right Networks, Kepczyk reaches thousands more accountants through his consulting, the thought leadership he brings to organizations like the CPA Firm Management Association, and his many speaking engagements and articles, offering them all important insights into digital best practices and the technological opportunities that are opening up ahead of them.

Born: Berlin, Germany, 1961
College: Arizona State University (B.S. accounting)
First full-time job: Staff accountant, Wolfswinkel Group Inc.
Favorite book: "Seagull and Gifts From the Sea"



Ed Kless Senior director of partner development and strategy, Sage

As co-host of his radio show with Ron Baker, "The Soul of Enterprise," as host of his own podcast, and as a writer, speaker and all-around thought leader, Kless makes it his job to introduce the profession to new ideas and new ways of thinking about what they do, and why.

Born: Brooklyn, N.Y., 1966
College: Pace University, White Plains
First full-time job: Junior management advisory services consultant, Hoffman Raich Fine CPA Group (now Raich, Ende, Malter and Co.)
Favorite book: "The Answer to How Is Yes!"



Paul Knopp U.S. chair and CEO, KPMG

On his first day at the helm, Knopp

The most important issues in accounting

The 2020 Most Influential share what's top of their mind in an extraordinary year.
(For their full responses, visit AccountingToday.com)

The immediate task is fulfilling our role as trusted advisors to business leaders to help them see a path forward post-COVID. Longer term, the challenge is adapting to exponential change.

—Barry Melancon

I believe the most important issue facing the profession is ensuring the future relevance of the CPA.

—Todd Shapiro

The technological revolution it is currently undergoing, especially related to artificial intelligence and automation. Far from being a "job destroyer," AI can allow finance and accounting professionals to unlock their full potential as strategic business partners within their organizations.

—Jeff Thomson

Now is time for us to move forward and strengthen our position in the area of diversity, inclusion and equality.

—Sandra Wiley

Diversity of thought is non-negotiable and critical to our ability to look around corners and protect the public interest. Together, we absolutely can make a difference.

—Kimberly Ellison-Taylor

The most important issue is remaining relevant. Our profession is ripe for disruption by outsiders.

—Al Anderson

It continues to be relevancy. Excessive regulation remains a close second, since overregulated industries are not hotbeds of innovation, dynamism and risk taking.

—Ron Baker

To embrace the momentum in society for positive change in the area of diversity, equity and inclusion.

—Jim Boomer

Financial information is already being consumed in a very different way and the rapid changes in technology will only continue to evolve that consumption.

—Joel Black

Anticipating emerging risks, even deep into 2021, has never been more critical than it is today.

—Richard Chambers

It is the same issue we've been facing for many decades — creating a more diverse and inclusive profession.

—Herschel Frierson

I believe that, during these unprecedented times, keeping the pipeline full and focused on the future accounting profession is one of the most important issues.

—Carl Peterson

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

—Richard Jones

The digital skills gap is one of the greatest threats to our workforce — both in our profession and corporate America as a whole.

—Tim Ryan

The profession is facing a top talent shortage. There needs to be a concerted effort to brand/market the opportunities in the profession to recruit students.

—Shannon Nash

I worry that it is fatigue. The last three years included federal tax reform, state tax reform, the *Wayfair* decision, and then the pandemic with a recession. Any one of these would stress an industry, and the accounting industry experienced all four.

—Scott Peterson

I am particularly concerned about how the pandemic is affecting students and young professionals — the future of our profession.

—Sue Coffey

It's essential that the profession embraces the opportunity to digitize, innovate, and be agile.

—Joe Ucuzoglu

Hyper-commodification.

—Joe Woodard

The profession is facing competitive pressures from nontraditional sources. New competition from startups, private equity and technology companies ... is radically shaping the industry.

—Bradley Preber

As part of the profession's commitment to serving the public interest, we have a responsibility as independent auditors to perform high-quality audits that promote trust and confidence in the capital markets.

—Kelly Grier

Now is the time to move to be even more indispensable in helping businesses transform and thrive as we navigate to the next normal.

—Tom Hood

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

—Paul Knopp

Many firms will need to make epic changes to the fundamental ways they operate their firms. They will need to develop consulting services to replace declining revenue from compliance services. They will also be challenged to hire staff with non-accounting backgrounds. This is a perfect storm for CPA firm chaos.

—Marc Rosenberg

A supplement to Accounting Today: Top 100 People

launched an initiative to bring in and advance more people from underrepresented groups at KPMG, as a major focus of his goal of creating a “best in class” culture at the Big Four firm, alongside continuing investments in technology and innovation.

Born: Fredericksburg, Texas, 1959
College: University of Texas at Austin (B.B.A. and MBA)
First full-time job: Assistant accountant, KPMG
Favorite book: “Beneath a Scarlet Sky”

**Allan Koltin**
CEO, Koltin Consulting Group Inc.
Koltin may be best known for the many firm mergers that he midwives, but that’s just part of his broader work helping practices across the country address their most pressing challenges and opportunities.
Born: Milwaukee, 1957
College: University of Wisconsin – Madison/
University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee
First full-time job: Director, Nankin, Schnoll (now BDO)
Favorite book: “The BKD Experience: Unmatched Client Service”


**Art Kuesel**
President and founder, Kuesel Consulting Inc.
Even in the midst of a pandemic, Kuesel continues to expand the ways he can teach accountants about succession planning, people development, recruiting and retention, growth, and much more, as well as reaching out beyond his regular audience of current firm leaders to begin teaching the generation that will succeed them.
Born: Milwaukee, 1974
College: University of Wisconsin – Eau Claire
First full-time job: Major accounts manager, Yale Equipment & Services
Favorite book: “The Go Giver”

**René Lacerte**
CEO and founder, Bill.com
The fourth-generation entrepreneur continues to bring Bill.com closer and closer to indispensability, automating more and more processes, leveraging machine learning, and integrating with more systems to make payables and receivables so easy and frictionless that companies — and their accountants — won’t ever want to operate without his systems.
Born: Fairfax, Virginia, 1967
College: Stanford University (M.S. industrial engineering, B.A. economics)
First full-time job: Senior consultant, PwC
Favorite book: “The Art of Racing in the Rain,” “Tao Te Ching” and “Stranger in a Strange Land”

**David Leary**
Director of accounting & bookkeeping evangelism, Melio
Leary and co-host Blake Oliver have made their “Cloud Accounting Podcast” both an important clearinghouse for information about

the profession, and an agenda-setter for what matters (or should matter) to accountants. And in reaction to COVID, he and his partners have taken their small Accounting Salon event online, and expanded its reach to more than 2,000 practitioners.
Born: Buffalo, N.Y., 1974
College: Pima Community College
First full-time job: Store manager, Babbage’s
Favorite book: “The Clue Train Manifesto”


**Bob Lewis**
President, The Visionary Group
Just as many accountants are acting as their clients’ chief financial officer, Lewis is acting as accounting firms’ chief growth officer, giving practices of all sizes professional business development capabilities and the benefit of his decades of consulting experience. With organic growth covered, he also covers the other end of the spectrum by bringing firms together in M&A deals large and small across the country.
Born: Chicago, 1959
College: DePaul University (bachelor’s, master’s)
First full-time job: Internal auditor, DoALL Cos.


**Julie Bell Lindsay**
Executive director, CAQ
With the auditing field already on the brink of major changes — from game-changing technologies to the potential expansion of the auditor’s role beyond just financial statements — Bell Lindsay and the CAQ were already major players, and this year’s rush to remote auditing, required by the social-distancing mandates of the coronavirus pandemic, only reinforced that.
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 book: “Quiet: The Power of Introverts in a World That Can’t Stop Talking”


**Taylor Macdonald**
SVP, channel sales, Sage Intacct
Macdonald brings decades of experience to his role helping large firms build and expand consulting practices built around outsourced accounting, reselling and software implementation — offerings that are some of the profession’s fastest growing.
Born: Dallas, 1955
College: Yale University
First full-time job: GE training program
Favorite book: “Algebra of Happiness”


**Charles Maniace**
Vice president, regulatory analysis & design, Sovos
The average company using one of Sovos’ solutions is obviously concerned about staying compliant with the latest tax laws, and it’s Maniace’s job to make sure that all 8,000 of them, including half the Fortune 500, can do so. Besides overseeing teams of attorneys and tax professionals around the world to stay ahead of

the curve, he also regularly shares his expertise in sales and use tax at industry events and conferences.
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 book: “A Soldier of the Great War”


**Jason Marx**
President & CEO, Tax & Accounting North America, Wolters Kluwer
Under Marx, Wolters Kluwer aims to work closely with its users in accounting firms to deliver tools that help them do more work both better and more efficiently, a goal he significantly furthered with his acquisition of automated workflow pioneer XCM Solutions in September.
Born: Detroit, 1966
College: University of Michigan
First full-time job: Account executive, Household Finance Corp.
Favorite book: “The First Conspiracy: The Secret Plot to Kill George Washington”


**Sen. Mitch McConnell**
R-Kentucky
As master of the Senate, McConnell has played a key role in stimulus legislation this year, and whether or not he keeps control of the upper house, in a narrowly divided legislature, he’ll play a central role in shaping and passing any future tax laws or stimulus packages.
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
Melancon has always known that accountants are essential to the functioning of the economy, and he proved it this year by positioning them as “first responders” to the economic emergency that accompanied the medical emergency of the COVID-19 pandemic, marshaling the significant resources of the institute (and his own enormous influence) to give them the advocacy, intelligence and tools they needed to help their clients make it through.
Born: Houma, Louisiana, 1958
College: Nicholls State University (bachelor’s in accounting, MBA, honorary doctorate)
First full-time job: Accountant, small CPA firm
Favorite book: “American in 2040: Still a Superpower? A Pathway to Success”


**Ed Mendlowitz**
Emeritus partner, WithumSmith+Brown
You know the partner that everyone at the firm goes to for advice — the one whose years of accumulated wisdom mean they can answer just about any question? Mendlowitz is

that, but for the entire profession, and he gives his answers in a flood of columns, blog posts, books, college courses, speaking engagements, trading cards (yes, trading cards), and individual phone calls and email exchanges with the countless accountants from all around the world who reach out to him.
Born: New York City, 1942
College: Baruch College
First full-time job: Junior accountant, J. J. Turner CPA
Favorite book: The Torah

**Steven Mnuchin**
U.S. Secretary of Treasury
Mnuchin may soon be out of a job at the Treasury, but he played a central role in how 2020 rolled out for tax practitioners (and much of the rest of the economy, too, obviously), and will be setting the stage for how the next tax season plays out.
Born: New York City, 1962
College: Yale University
First full-time job: Trainee, Salomon Brothers

**Shannon Nash**
Chair, National Society of Black CPAs
Large firms and membership organizations across the profession have been pursuing diversity for years, yet the number of Black CPAs has remained pretty much unchanged for decades. Against the background of the pandemic and the social justice movement sparked by the killing of George Floyd, Nash decided it was time for Black CPAs themselves to take the lead, and formed the National Society of Black CPAs to connect and mobilize them to that end.
Born: Saginaw, Michigan, 1970
College: University of Virginia, McIntire School of Commerce (B.S.); University of Virginia School of Law (J.D.)
First full-time job: Attorney, Ginsburg, Feldman & Bress
Favorite book: “Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do”

**Rep. Richard Neal**
D-Massachusetts
As head of the House Ways & Means Committee, Neal plays a major role in shaping the tax legislation that keeps accountants and tax preparers busy, and he’s not shy about holding the IRS accountable on a range of issues, including its performance during the pandemic, and its readiness for next tax season.
Born: Worcester, Massachusetts, 1949
College: American International College (B.A.); University of Hartford’s Barney School of Business and Public Administration
First full-time job: History teacher

**Blake Oliver**
Director of marketing, Jirav
Oliver and “Cloud Accounting Podcast” co-host David Leary don’t just round up the latest news — they use it as a

jumping-off point to educate and challenge the profession to adapt to a rapidly changing world.
Born: Long Beach, California, 1983
College: Northwestern University (B.M.); UCLA (accounting certificate)
First full-time job: Manager, Jammin' Kids International Music Academy
Favorite book: "Dangerous Laughter"



Jody Padar
Vice president of strategy, Botkeeper

As "the Radical CPA" with her own practice, Padar has worked for years to convince accounting firms that success in the future requires technology, and in her new role with Botkeeper, she's combining that message with artificial intelligence and other cutting-edge tools to help them ensure that success.
Born: Chicago, 1972
College: Saint Mary's College (B.B.A.); Northern Illinois University (M.S.T.)
First full-time job: Tax technology associate, Price Waterhouse
Favorite book: "The Radical CPA" and "Botkeeper for Dummies"



Hitendra Patil
Director of practice development, AccountantsWorld

Patil works closely with accountants through his position at AccountantsWorld, but his real influence lies in his tireless championing of client accounting services — a cause for which his fervor has only deepened over the course of the pandemic, as he's gone into overdrive to share its benefits as a fantastic way to give businesses the help they need to survive.
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, Mumbai, India
Favorite book: "Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion" and "Getting Everything You Can Out of All You've Got"



Rep. Nancy Pelosi
D-California

Pelosi played a central role in shaping the stimulus packages that kept so many accountants busy this year, and regardless of how control of Congress gets split (and whether she succeeds in her bid for re-election as speaker of the House), she'll undoubtedly continue to influence tax — and recovery-related legislation — in 2021.
Born: Baltimore, 1940
College: Trinity College (B.A.)
First full-time job: California rep., Democratic National Committee



Carl Peterson
VP — small firm interests, AICPA

Peterson has always been a strong voice for small firms both inside the American Institute of CPAs and out, a role that's only become more important as small firms

The only constant is ...

The need for change, in many areas, was a popular T100 response to how accountants should prepare for the future. (For their full responses, visit AccountingToday.com)

Embrace technology, stay on top of trends, and always be recruiting for talent.

—Joel Sinkin

The new remote reality can positively influence everything from recruiting to retention, succession planning, growth and more, if you allow it to!

—Art Kuesel

Embrace and commit to action, those technology enablers to drive demand and deliver services.

—Gale Crosley

Culture is a strategic advantage. A diverse culture that accepts change, learns rapidly, and listens to the clients will thrive.

—Gary Boomer

I would recommend that accountants embrace the idea of change within their practices (i.e., migration to advisory) and not wait for another pandemic to force the issue!

—Jim Bourke

Listen to your people at all levels for ideas so they can be part of the solution.

—Angie Grissom

Revisit everything that they do through the lens of, "Do we really need to do this?" and if yes, "If I was starting to do this now, would I approach it differently?"

—Donny Shimamoto

Think tactically rather than strategically and be prepared to further embrace technology.

—Charles Maniace

Learn as much as you can about automation and evolving your firm's business model.

—Jody Padar

The key is to not just focus on the new technology capability but to focus on how you leverage it to advance your business.

—Erik Asgeirsson

Build your network, leverage mentors, and think globally.

—Lisa Fitzpatrick

Keep learning from the past and current environments. Keep evolving by continuing to invest in your own development.

—Sarah Dobek

Take a class on unconscious bias.

—Jennifer Wilson

Be curious and open-minded about new ways of operating, whether that's changing technology, billing methods, service offerings or staffing models.

—Lisa Simpson

Be agile, ruthlessly agile.

—Rick Telberg

More than ever, all of us in the profession must retool our skills to ensure we are capable to truly bring insight, advice and relevance to businesses.

—Barry Melancon

Learn a new skill. Get more information about emerging technologies and trends. Adapt and be agile and flexible.

—Tracey Golden

It's time to become an impact player and become the client's most valuable advisor.

—Allan Koltin

Incorporating automation and solving challenges for clients is a significant growth opportunity for accountants, especially as we all continue to work remotely.

—René Lacerte

Maintain a flexible, open mindset — one that embraces change as an opportunity to grow and innovate.

—Anthony Pugliese

Find new ways to deploy their skills in areas such as data governance, cybersecurity, change management and sustainability.

—Kevin Dancey

Take fewer clients and have more fun each day.

—Geni Whitehouse

I recommend practitioners and firms of all sizes prioritize strategy sessions at least once or twice a year to align their business, technology, innovation and service lines.

—Kacee Johnson

Learn more about sustainability and what it means for the businesses you are involved with.

—Jeffrey Hales

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

—Michelle Golden River

Develop a solid strategy and a written plan for change that addresses new technology and the next generation of people entering the workforce.

—Kevin Cumley

Move to a proactive model of serving clients.

—Darren Root

Be vigilant about what is going on around you. Pay attention to trends that are likely to impact your practice negatively.

—Chandra Bhansali

Evolve ... A 21st century firm literally cannot afford a 20th century mindset.

—Joanne Barry

Influencing the influencers

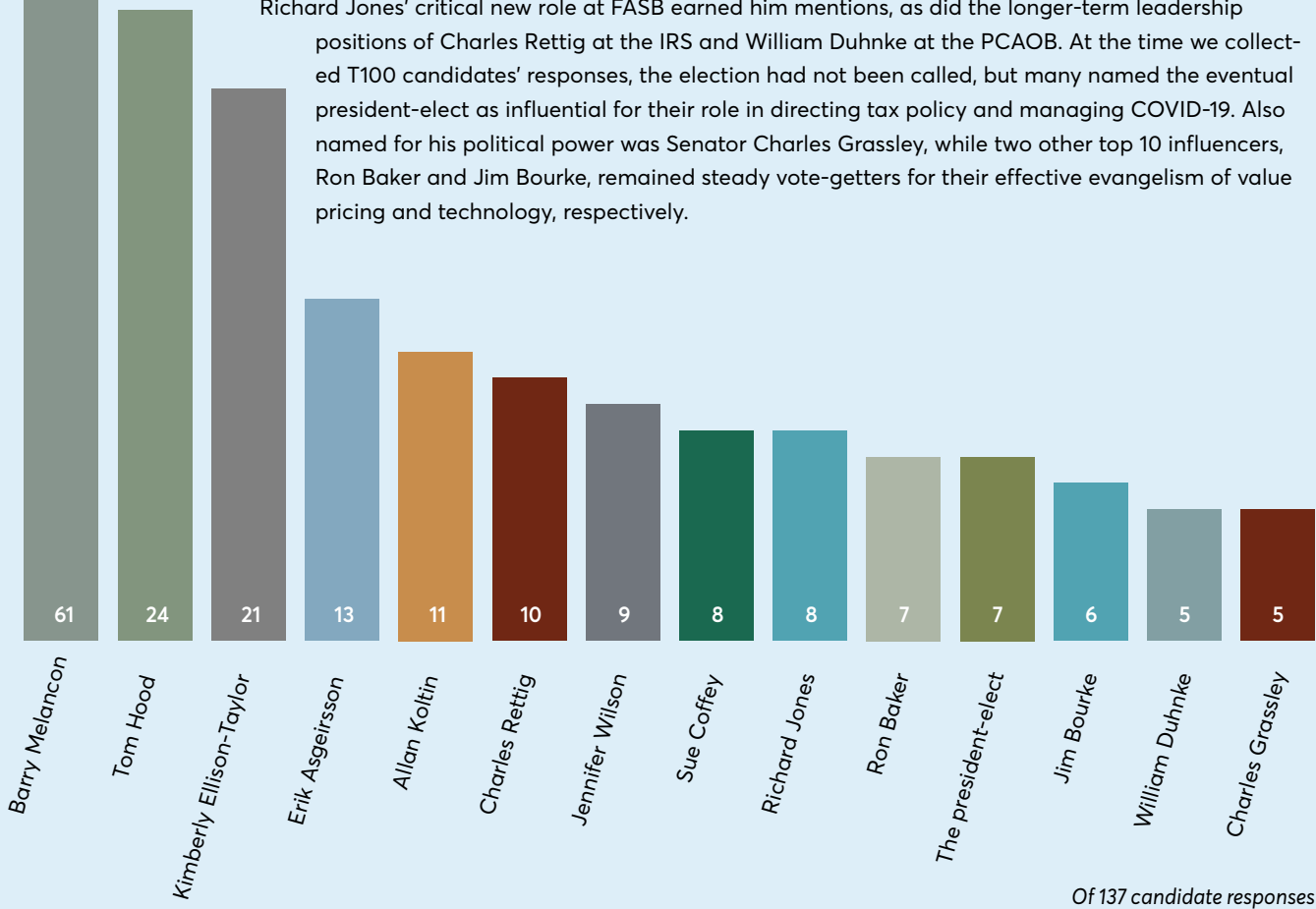
Barry Melancon once again was voted far and away the most influential person in the profession by this year's T100 candidates, and for reasons beyond his 25-year role at the helm of the American Institute of CPAs. Many cited his vision in naming him the person of greatest influence, particularly his eye toward the future for the profession, while many also hailed his pragmatism, advocacy and genuine caring for the community he presides over. His guidance during the pandemic for key issues like Paycheck Protection Program loan forgiveness was also lauded. "When Barry speaks, people listen," as one T100 candidate put it. "They better listen, because almost every time he speaks, it's about a critically important issue that will impact firms' survival." In fact, his warnings of disruption over the years have been so prophetic, especially with the hindsight of 2020, that another candidate suggested, "He should be saying 'I told you so.'"

Another future-minded thought leader, Tom Hood, retained his position of influence, again getting the second-most votes for his role as "the flagbearer of accountants' well-being, success and progress," according to one T100 voter. Innovation was the word most used in describing the MACPA leader's impact on the profession, while one fellow influencer mentioned the fact that Maryland's governor tapped Hood to serve on his COVID-19 task force as yet another reason he is an "unstoppable force."

Rounding out the peer-voted top three most influential is Kimberly Ellison-Taylor, for her work as a "tireless advocate" to promote diversity, inclusion and needed change in the profession, long after her tenure as AICPA chair. Also, as one candidate expressed, she remains an "outstanding representative" for the industry side of the profession.

Among the other top 10 as voted by their peers is another AICPA leader, CPA.com head Erik Asgeirsson, named for not only his wide platform but how he uses it, leading the charge for transformation by embracing technology and his "regular updates during the pandemic." His role in developing the Dynamic Audit Solution platform was also noted, as it was for fellow vote-getter Sue Coffey, along with her global role promoting professional standards and ethics. Allan Koltin and Jennifer Wilson also earned peer praise for their deep expertise in their respective fields. Koltin for doing "more than anyone related to influencing the M&A space" and Wilson for being such a dependable thought leader that firms "expect Jennifer to have answers to today's most pressing concerns" as she helps them "strategically and tactically move to the future."

Richard Jones' critical new role at FASB earned him mentions, as did the longer-term leadership positions of Charles Rettig at the IRS and William Duhnke at the PCAOB. At the time we collected T100 candidates' responses, the election had not been called, but many named the eventual president-elect as influential for their role in directing tax policy and managing COVID-19. Also named for his political power was Senator Charles Grassley, while two other top 10 influencers, Ron Baker and Jim Bourke, remained steady vote-getters for their effective evangelism of value pricing and technology, respectively.



prove essential for helping keep small businesses afloat during the pandemic.
Born: Peoria, Illinois, 1958
College: Kansas State University
First full-time job: Staff accountant, Berc & Fox
Favorite book: "Drive"



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

One of Peterson's primary roles is to support accountants and tax practitioners in their central role in the world of tax compliance, and he does that by sharing his nearly unparalleled knowledge of, and insight into, the field on a regular basis.
Born: Mobridge, South Dakota, 1955
College: Black Hills State University; University of South Dakota
First full-time job: Research analyst, South Dakota Legislative Research Council
Favorite book: "A Tale of Two Cities"



Jeff Phillips
CEO, Padgett Business Services

Already influential from Accountingfly, the job platform he co-founded that is practically singlehandedly awakening the profession to the enormous potential of hiring staff remotely (potential that's only become more enticing during the current pandemic), Phillips this year also signed on as CEO of Padgett Business Services, where he'll have a direct impact on more than 300 practices across North America.
Born: Pensacola, Florida, 1976
College: Baylor University (B.B.A.); Southern Methodist University (MBA)
First full-time job: Campus recruiter, Trilogy Software
Favorite book: "The Lords of Discipline"



Amy Pitter
President & CEO, Massachusetts Society of CPAs

The first state CPA society leader to take the CEO Action for Diversity and Inclusion Pledge, Pitter is paying special attention to filling the pipeline of potential accountants, with a particular focus on recruiting and retaining people from underrepresented committees. She's recruiting firms and other societies to sign up for the pledge as well, and backing all that up with a partnership with Bentley University to offer workshops and resources to help teach firms how to be more inclusive.
Born: New York City, 1954
College: Connecticut College (B.A.); New England School of Law (J.D.); Northeastern University Graduate School of Professional Accounting (M.S.)
First full-time job: Tax specialist, Price Waterhouse
Favorite book: The Inspector Gamache series



Brad Preber
CEO, Grant Thornton
With fraud skyrocketing during the pandemic, Preber's background in

detection and prevention has proved particularly useful as he works to raise awareness about the threat. He has also launched half a dozen new programs around social justice since taking the helm at Grant Thornton, and made a point of promoting the concept of servant leadership both within and without the profession.

Born: Milwaukee, 1959

College: University of New Mexico Anderson School Business College

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

Favorite book: "The Power of Now"



Anthony Pugliese

**President and CEO,
California Society of CPAs**

As head of one of the largest CPA societies in one of the largest states in the country, Pugliese is particularly interested in making sure all voices are heard — whether that's by representing his members' concerns in Sacramento, strengthening relationships among chapters across the state, creating a Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Commission, or launching groundbreaking research studies into underrepresented groups in the profession.

Born: Jacksonville, Florida, 1967

College: University of North Florida

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

Favorite book: "Leadership in Turbulent Times"



Terry Putney

CEO, Transition Advisors

As the baby boomer generation moves into retirement age, more and more of them will be looking to Putney (and his partner at Transition Advisors, Joel Sinkin) for help managing their succession, whether it's internal or built around mergers and acquisitions. They could hardly find a more experienced partner: Putney has been personally involved in over a thousand mergers and internal succession engagements.

Born: Kansas City, Missouri, 1954

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

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

Favorite book: "The Splendid and the Vile: A Saga of Churchill, Family, and Defiance During the Blitz"



Charles Rettig

Commissioner, IRS

Just managing the delayed tax season with most of the service's offices closed by the pandemic would have been challenge enough — but Congress also made the IRS a primary conduit for delivering stimulus payments to taxpayers. And while managing all that, Rettig is also attempting to modernize the service's technology and implement the Taxpayer First Act, which will have a major impact for tax professionals everywhere.

Born: Los Angeles, 1956

College: UCLA (B.A.); Pepperdine University School of Law (J.D.); New York University School of Law (LL.M.)



Ben Richmond

U.S. country manager, Xero

On Richmond's watch, Xero has seen record growth in the Americas, as he works to inspire more and more accountants and their clients to take their accounting to the cloud.

Born: Hawke's Bay, New Zealand, 1987

College: University of Canterbury

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

Favorite book: "The Hard Thing about Things," "Emotional Intelligence 2.0" and "Good Boss, Bad Boss"



Michelle Golden River

President, Fore

The many firms that River has trained on how to move beyond the billable hour have realized that her guidance is about more than just pricing models; instead it's about a new business model based on creating new levels of value for client and accountant alike. And now she's started training other consultants in her methods, to spread the word.

Born: Long Beach, California, 1966

College: Columbia College

First full-time job: Staff accountant, Coopervision

Favorite book: "Why Simple Wins"



Darren Root

GM, Rootworks

He may have sold Rootworks to Right Networks this year, but Root remains a thought leader on building precisely the kind of firm that next-generation accountants want to own and work for; after all, it's the kind of firm he built for himself.

Born: Bedford, Indiana, 1960

College: Indiana University

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

Favorite book: "Chasing Daylight"



Marc Rosenberg

President, The Rosenberg Associates

Rosenberg's 16-volume series of monographs on practice management, offering vast amounts of practical advice on how best to run an accounting firm, would be enough to secure his influence, but he extends that influence through blogging, mentoring accounting majors, and consulting directly with firms.

Born: Chicago, 1948

College: University of Illinois at Chicago

First full-time job: Staff, Ernst & Young

Favorite book: "Exodus"



Charlotte Rushton

President, Tax & Accounting Professionals, Thomson Reuters

In addition to providing the tools used by a significant portion of accountants, Rushton is a major proponent of two important shifts in the profession: the move to advisory services,

and the elevation of women to positions of leadership.

Born: Buxton, England, 1970

College: University of Cambridge

First full-time job: Project manager, M&M Mars

Favorite book: "Middlemarch"



Tim Ryan

Chair and senior partner, PwC US

The CEO Action pledge Ryan founded has been taken by over 1,300 CEOs and other leaders, and put him at the forefront of diversity and inclusion efforts long before this year's protests following the killing of George Floyd, but he's stayed in front in 2020, helping lead the conversation both inside and outside the profession, and publicly pledging his firm to the kind of specific steps that everyone needs to start taking.

Born: Dedham, Massachusetts, 1965

College: Babson College (B.S.)

First full-time job: Grocery store clerk, Roche Brothers Supermarket

Favorite book: "To Kill a Mockingbird"



Gary Shamis

CEO, Winding River Consulting

Many accountants have learned valuable lessons from the success of the firm that Shamis built in the 1990s, but now they can learn directly from the man himself, through his books, articles, webinars, roundtables and intensive bootcamps on practice management. Having been there and done that, Shamis is now showing the rest of the profession how.

Born: Cleveland, 1953

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

First full-time job: Auditor, Touche Ross

Favorite book: "Building Blocks"



Todd Shapiro

**President and CEO,
Illinois CPA Society**

For Shapiro, it's not enough to identify the issues of most importance to his members — though he does that, in part by constantly meeting with firms and practitioners across the state — and it's not enough to identify solutions, either. He is also determined to lead the profession in adopting those solutions, and in moving forward toward its best possible future.

Born: Kankakee, Illinois, 1957

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

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

Favorite book: "Zapp! The Lightning of Empowerment"



Donny Shimamoto

**Managing director,
IntrapriseTechKnowlogies**

Long known across the U.S. for his understanding of how accountants can thrive through technology, Shimamoto is extending his influence internationally, advising the board of the International Federation of Accountants on

the impact on the profession around the world of emerging technologies like AI, blockchain, data analytics and more.

Born: Honolulu, Hawaii, 1975

College: University of Hawaii at Manoa

First full-time job: Associate, Coopers & Lybrand LLP

Favorite book: "Atlas Shrugged"



Lisa Simpson

**Director, firm services, Association
of International Certified
Professional Accountants**

Simpson's role already had her developing useful resources for firms of all sizes, but the chaos of the pandemic and the confusion of the PPP turned up her spotlight, as she worked with CPA.com's Erik Asgeirsson on a series of packed town halls that provided invaluable guidance on stimulus issues to tens of thousands of CPAs, who shared it in turn with hundreds of thousands of small businesses.

Born: Danville, Kentucky, 1964

College: Eastern Kentucky University

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

Favorite book: "Daring Greatly"



Joel Sinkin

President, Transition Advisors

Just because there's a pandemic doesn't mean firm leaders are going to stop getting older, and Sinkin (along with his partner, Terry Putney) remains a much-sought-after advisor in helping hundreds of firms figure out their succession plans and then achieve them, whether through mergers and acquisitions, internal buyouts or whatever form works best for them.

Born: Brooklyn, N.Y., 1958

College: State University of New York at Brockport

First full-time job: Sales representative, Kem Manufacturing

Favorite book: "Good to Great"



Rick Telberg

**CEO and founder,
CPA Trendlines Research**

Telberg's ability to gather actionable intelligence from the vast mass of accounting practitioners and help them share best (and worst) practices has been more important than ever in a year when everyone is entering uncharted territory, and the advice he presents them from a host of thought leaders continues to be an invaluable source of guidance.

Born: New York City, 1956

College: New York University

First full-time job: Carpenter's helper

Favorite book: "Fahrenheit 451"



Sagar Teotia

Chief accountant, SEC


Teotia brought a strong background in public accounting to his role at the Securities and Exchange Commission, so it's perhaps no surprise that he's provided critical support and guidance to accountants facing the

reporting challenges created by the pandemic.
College: University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
First full-time job: Professional accounting fellow, SEC

 **Ralph Thomas**
CEO and executive director,
New Jersey Society of CPAs

Thomas is all about advocacy: making sure his members' and their clients' concerns are heard in the halls of power in

Trenton and beyond, creating ways for underrepresented groups like women and people of color to rise in accounting, and paving a path for the next generation to join the profession.
Born: Washington, D.C., 1954
College: Lehigh University (B.S., MBA)
First full-time job: Staff accountant, Price Waterhouse
Favorite book: "Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do (Issues of Our Time)"

 **Jeffrey Thomson**
President and CEO, Institute of Management Accountants
Not only did Thomson manage his own organization's response to COVID-19 — he worked to bring guidance and advice to his membership worldwide as they managed their own responses. At the same time, he responded to the other major issue of 2020 by partnering with other accounting groups on groundbreaking research into advancing diversity and inclusion in the profession.
Born: Paterson, N.J., 1955
College: Montclair State University
First full-time job: AT&T Analytical Support Center
Favorite book: "The Algorithmic Leader"

 **Jennifer Wilson**
Co-founder and partner,
ConvergenceCoaching
Wilson has been telling accountants to embrace remote work for years, and spent much of 2020 helping firms adjust. Hopefully, it won't take a pandemic to get them to adopt her other "Inspired Ideas" (the very appropriate name of her blog and podcast), but either way, she'll remain a leading source of solutions, consulting, coaching and training for both current and next-gen firm leaders.
Born: Hahn Air Force Base, Germany, 1964
College: University of Nebraska, Omaha
First full-time job: Regional sales manager, Pro Systems Accounting Software
Favorite book: "The Celestine Prophecy"


If they could turn back time ...

What skill do the T100 wish they developed earlier in their career? (For full responses visit AccountingToday.com)

There were several common answers for what proficiencies respondents would remedy in retrospect — the most popular being computer coding and data analytics, communication and listening skills, and competency in a foreign language. A few also lamented their golf technique. Some more responses:

Artificial intelligence.	This one's easy — psychology skills.
—Jim Bourke	—Marc Rosenberg
I wish that I had learned the importance of self-care earlier on.	Marketing — it's so critical in getting people to understand what we do and how we can help them.
—Angie Grissom	—Donny Shimamoto
Collaboration.	A deeper understanding of cybersecurity.
—Sandra Wiley	—Tracey Golden
Soft leadership skills like learning how to stand my ground, but also get buy-in from the greater group.	Networking.
—Jody Padar	—Herschel Frierson
Live streaming/video skills.	Branding and marketing my business.
—Jennifer Wilson	—Darren Root
Knowing and articulating my expectations.	Debate skills.
—Sarah Dobek	—Susan Cosper
Greater technology awareness from a futurist perspective.	I wish I'd learned to be a better typist.
—Jeff Thomson	—Richard Jones
I wish I had learned how to fire bad clients and bad partners earlier in my career.	Empathy, adaptability and agility of thought.
—Jeff Phillips	—Charles Maniace
	Pivot tables.
	—Rick Telberg
	Graphic arts and writing.
	—Randy Johnston
	Emotional intelligence.
	—Ben Richmond
	To be an accountant.
	—David Leary

 **Joe Ucuzoglu**
CEO, Deloitte US
In the pursuit of ever-higher standards of work, Ucuzoglu is investing in transforming the skills of Deloitte's 110,000 professionals, and in remaining at the forefront of the wave of digital transformation and innovation sweeping over the profession.
Born: Los Angeles
College: University of Southern California
First full-time job: Audit Intern, Deloitte & Touche
Favorite book: "Range: Why Generalists Triumph in a Specialized World"

 **Geni Whitehouse**
Countess of Communication,
Brotemarkle Davis & Co.;
Solve Services; Even A Nerd Can Be Heard
Conservative by nature, the accounting profession is cautious and slow to adopt new ideas, but if anyone can make them comfortable with the need to move up to advisory services, it's Whitehouse, whose personal story and presentation style (and basset hounds) are helping lead accountants to get more out of their work for their clients, and themselves.
Born: Atlanta, 1959
College: University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill
First full-time job: Staff accountant, Deloitte, Haskins & Sells
Favorite book: Louise Penny books

 **Joe Woodard**
CEO, Woodard
Woodard is most closely associated with his mammoth annual conference, Scaling New Heights, long a must-attend gathering for learning about the intersection of accounting and technology, but the prominence of virtual events this year only served to highlight how much education, training and consulting he does throughout the year, and how important his voice is to thousands of accountants beyond the show floor — on podcasts and webinars, in articles and coaching sessions, and through courses and professional communities all year round.
Born: Savannah, Georgia, 1967
College: Mercer University (B.A.); University of New Orleans (postgraduate)
First full-time job: Staff accountant, Allen & Baxter
Favorite book: "The Lord of the Rings"

 **Candace Wright**
Chair, Private Company Council
Private companies are an enormous part of the economy, and Wright elevates their voices so they're heard in the rarefied air where accounting standards are set, to make sure FASB takes account of their concerns and challenges.
Born: Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 1962
College: McNeese State University
First full-time job: Accountant, pharmaceutical sales company

 **Diane Yetter**
President and founder,
Yetter Consulting Services and the Sales Tax Institute
Yetter faces an uphill battle in her attempts to make it cool to be passionate about sales tax, but she's definitely building a broad community of sales tax pros, and is a leading source of guidance in the post-Wayfair world.
Born: Chicago, 1963
College: University of Kansas (B.S.); DePaul University (M.S.)
First full-time job: Sales tax auditor, Kansas Department of Revenue
Favorite book: "Lean In: Women, Work, and the Will to Lead"