

The top people in public accounting — 2023

By Danielle Lee December 5, 2023 3:00 PM

As part of our annual Top 100 Most Influential People in Accounting list, *Accounting Today* asks candidates to name who they think are the most influential people in the field, and here they are, ranked by the number of votes they received from the 147 candidates.

The top eight are listed below, and you can see *Accounting Today's* for the full list of the Top 100.

No. 8: Gary Gensler



Andrew Harrer/Bloomberg

SEC chair Gary Gensler was oft mentioned by this year's Top 100 People candidates for his regulatory power, covering everything from financial concerns like audit quality to more expansive — and increasingly pressing — issues like cybersecurity regulation, the risk of AI implementation, and sustainability.

No. 7: Erik Asgeirsson



Erik Asgeirsson was heralded by his peers for his work on various CPA.com initiatives like the Dynamic Audit Solution and Startup Accelerator, along with facilitating the AICPA's highly attended Town Halls.

No. 6: Sue Coffey



SUEBARR

Asgeirsson's DAS co-leader and AICPA colleague Sue Coffey was praised by T100 candidates for her high level of activity on that project and in leading other institute initiatives like the National Pipeline Advisory Group and CPA Evolution.

No. 5: Erica Williams



PCAOB

Erica Williams received accolades for her ambitious standard-setting agenda when she assumed her role as head of the PCAOB, along with her swift enforcement efforts and commitment to high audit quality.

No. 3: Tom Hood (tie)



A repeat favorite among his peers, the AICPA's Tom Hood was especially lauded for his future-minded advocacy in global accounting and finance.

No. 3: Kimberly Ellison-Taylor (tie)



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Another perennial influencer, Kimberly Ellison-Taylor, a past AICPA chair who has retained leadership roles in the institute, was hailed as a "powerhouse" in advancing business model transformation and diversity and inclusion within the profession.

No. 2: Allan Koltin



M&A maestro and Koltin Consulting Group CEO Allan Koltin was the second-highest vote getter by the T100 candidates, with the consensus valuing how he is "leading the charge for changing how CPA firms are being acquired," as one candidate said, and his role as a changemaker: "Mergers and acquisitions along with private equity are disrupting the profession as a whole. The man at the center of it all is Allan."

No. 1: Barry Melancon



For yet another year, Barry Melancon remained the most influential person to the Top 100 Most Influential People candidates, with many referencing the AICPA president and CEO's deep knowledge, commanding leadership and global perspective. Called a visionary and pragmatic by many of the T100, he was also anointed a "marvelous representative of the CPA profession" and a "once in a generational leader."