

CUSTOM CONTENT

JULY 31, 2023

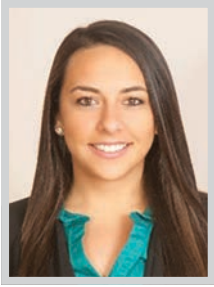
WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING



WELCOME TO THE 2023 EDITION OF THE LOS ANGELES BUSINESS JOURNAL'S SPECIAL SECTION HONORING THE LA region's most influential women financial services professionals, **Women of Influence: Accounting.**

Methodology: The professionals featured in these pages did not pay to be included. Their profiles were drawn from nomination materials submitted to the Los Angeles Business Journal. Those selected for inclusion were reviewed by the editorial department and chosen based on a demonstration of impact made on the profession and on the Los Angeles community.

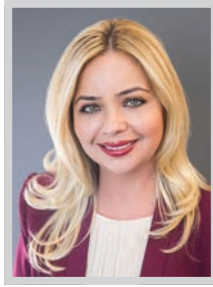
WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING

**VELIDA ALEMIC-IQBAL**

Director
RSM US LLP

Velida Alemlc-Iqbal is a transaction advisory services director at RSM US LLP's Los Angeles office where she has over eleven years of accounting and finance experience. Before joining the firm's Transaction Advisory Services practice, she spent three years in the firm's audit practice during which she served clients in the consumer products, manufacturing, distribution and retail industries. She currently provides buy-side and sell-side due diligence services to both private equity and corporate clients in transactions varying from \$10 million to \$1.3 billion. She primarily focuses on deals within the consumer products, industrial products and business services industries.

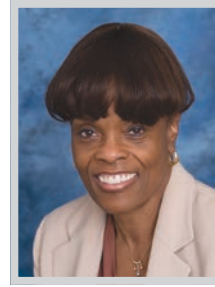
Alemlc-Iqbal exudes a vibrant energy and engaging manner which immediately puts people at ease, enabling her to forge connections and build good relationships with her clients and engagement teams. She enjoys the challenge of uncovering pitfalls, advising on key business decisions and laying out options for the best course of action.

**SASHA BALUKA**

Partner
Bessolo Haworth CPAs LLP

Sasha Baluka moved to the United States at 17 years of age with no English skills and with limited personal contacts outside of her family. As she was learning English and acclimating to life in a new country, she was promoted to a bookkeeper and ultimately was promoted to lead the company's accounting department. She had started attending community college and eventually transferred to the accounting and finance programs at California State University, Northridge.

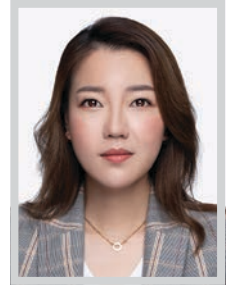
Baluka landed a position at a mid-size regional accounting firm but realized her own entrepreneurial spirit and started her own firm which she led for 10 years. She came to Bessolo Haworth with the desire to manage complex client engagements and is currently leading the audit of a client with more than \$1 billion in annual revenue. Since her arrival at Bessolo Haworth, Baluka has successfully started a new international tax practice at the firm.

**CHERYL CALHOUN**

Managing Director
CBIZ & MHM

A managing director at CBIZ MHM Los Angeles, Cheryl Calhoun brings more than 30 years of experience and expertise to all facets of the entertainment industry. She represents talent, production companies, entertainment service companies, media service companies, publishing companies and executives in varied tax and business matters.

Calhoun is also a co-leader of CBIZ's Multi-Family Office and Virtual Family Office Practices. In addition, she specializes in assisting not-for-profit organizations – combining her talent for business and tax issues with her desire to contribute and support causes in the community. Some of her most successful career accomplishments have come to fruition in the last few years. She is actively involved as a coach in CBIZ's Emerging Managing Director Academy and is working hard to shape the future of the company through its up-and-coming leaders.

**EVONNE CHEN**

Partner, Tax
Mazars LLP

Evonne Chen has more than ten years of experience in public accounting delivering corporate tax compliance and consulting services to a wide range of industries including manufacturing and distribution, technology, media and telecommunication. Prior to joining Mazars as a tax partner, Chen led the Corporate Tax Practice of a regional accounting firm in California. In this role, she led the growth of the practice and collaborate with other practice leaders to identify and cross-sell value-added services to existing clients as well as new market opportunities. She also handled all aspects of corporate tax work, including assisting large multi-national corporations with international, US domestic and multi-state tax filings.

Chen's expertise has added depth to Mazars tax capabilities in the Los Angeles market. She actively contributes to the firm's "Let's Talk Tax" webcast series and she's passionate about mentoring junior professionals on how to provide superior services to clients.



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At KPMG, we never underestimate the power of dedicated people. That's why we want to recognize Mary Tripp for her outstanding contribution to the accounting profession. You've exceeded expectations. And made a positive impact in the lives of so many.

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At CalCPA, we believe in the immense potential of women professionals, their unparalleled dedication, and their unwavering commitment to excellence.

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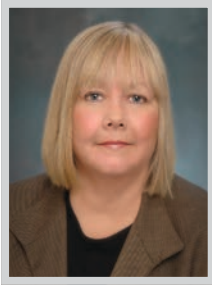
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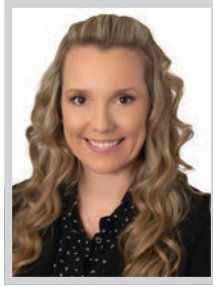
WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING

**PEGGY CLARK***Partner*

Bessolo Haworth CPAs LLP

Peggy Clark has more than 30-years of experience as a public accountant. She is a founding partner of Sherman Oaks-based CPA firm, Bessolo Haworth LLP, which formed in 2007. Prior to forming Bessolo Haworth in 2007, Clark, John Bessolo and Larry Haworth were first colleagues in a local accounting firm and then worked together in a large regional firm. As a partner with Bessolo Haworth, Clark is responsible for leading the firm's operations, administration, staff recruitment, firm growth and is also responsible for managing her own audit and tax clients.

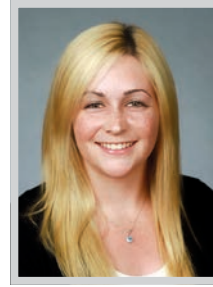
Clark has numerous unique qualities. She has a passion for the profession and is client-centric. Her banking experience proved invaluable as Bessolo Haworth planned the start-up of the firm and the many operational considerations. While still managing her own client base, she was instrumental in setting up the firm's administration and operational functions.

**KERRA DIENER***Senior Manager*

Withum

Kerra Diener is a senior manager in our tax department with over 17 years of accounting experience. She serves corporate clients with accounting for income taxes, tax planning and tax compliance, and assists multi-national and multi-state business entities including distributors, retailers and wholesalers.

Diener is an exceptional certified public accountant with far-reaching experience. She manages and consults on various tax topics for businesses and individuals including state income tax nexus, research and expenditures, 704(b) capital account maintenance, federal and state tax credits, and like-kind exchanges. She also has expertise in federal and state tax examinations, insolvency tax and planning for debt restructuring, reorganizations and liquidations. Diener is the firm's local 'go-to' expert in many of these areas. Over the last fiscal year, Withum has recognized Diener with multiple awards for moving mountains to complete client projects and deliver exceptional client service.

**MICHELLE ERBLAND***Partner*

LA Business Management, LLP

Michelle Erbland (nee Germain) is a partner at LA Business Management, LLP, a boutique tax and business management firm located in Woodland Hills. Erbland provides tax, business management, advisory and bookkeeping services to a diverse list of high-net-worth individuals and small businesses.

Erbland specializes in representing entertainment and real estate clients and focuses on family and estate transition planning. She also provides extensive consulting services concerning the tax implications of significant mergers and acquisitions transactions. Erbland graduated from the University of Southern California's Master of Business Taxation program in 2015. She is also an alumnus of Tulane University, where she graduated summa cum laude with Honors in Business. She received her CPA license from the state of California in 2016. Erbland joined LA Business Management in 2018 after working at PwC in its Los Angeles office. She maintains an active CPA license and is a member of the AICPA.

**VEDRANA FALCONE***Tax Senior Manager*

Ernst & Young LLP (EY)

Vedrana Falcone manages an extensive client portfolio for EY's Global Compliance and Reporting Practice with an emphasis on media and entertainment, technology, and private equity companies ranging from start-ups to mature operating companies in both the public and private sectors. As an established leader, mentor and tax specialist in EY's Los Angeles office, she supervises dozens of accounting staff across the United States and Asia. Her technical skills, management style, mentorship, sales strategy and industry involvement led her to an early promotion to tax senior manager.

Falcone identified an opportunity to provide additional value by selling EY's new depreciation and asset tracking services to a large private equity client that comprises a significant portion of the revenue for LA's tax practice. She spearheaded this effort by initiating a meeting with the client, preparing a proposal and selling services to meet the client's needs.

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**Congratulations
Cheryl Calhoun & Betty Liu**

on being recognized as two of the
**2023 Women of Influence:
Accountants**

Your CBIZ & MHM team provides guidance on complex new accounting standards, assists with tax plays, and delivers advisory services to help you make the most of your unique environment.

Cheryl Calhoun, *Managing Director* & Betty Liu, *Director* CBIZ.COM/LOSANGELES | MHMCPA.COM/LOSANGELES

MHM (Mayer Hoffman McCann P.C.) is an independent CPA firm that provides audit, review and attests services, and works closely with CBIZ, a business consulting, tax and financial services provider.

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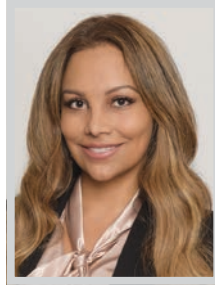


HEIDI FENG

*Deals Partner, Capital Markets & Accounting Advisory
PwC*

Heidi Feng is a partner in the PwC deals practice providing technical accounting advice and assistance to companies who are pursuing or seeking to pursue a capital raising transaction or significant M&A activity. For over 20 years, she has advised public and private companies primarily in the technology and media sector. She has provided advice to large multinational clients and smaller clients on the new revenue recognition standard, SEC technical accounting topics, IFRS accounting conversions, divestitures and acquisitions, as well as providing training to registrants and preparers on financial reporting matters.

Feng’s clients rely on her ability to evaluate and provide advice on finance and complex accounting matters including: revenue recognition, capitalization, mergers and acquisitions, equity and debt financing arrangements, consolidation and internal control. In addition to providing advice on technical accounting ramifications, she also highlights impacts to the business and provides a broader focus beyond financial reporting.

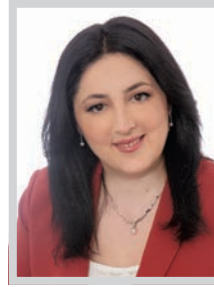


JOHANA FLORES

*Assurance Senior Manager
Moss Adams*

Johana Flores was born and raised in South America. She studied Financial Engineering in Colombia and received her BS in Accountancy and Finance from California State University, Northridge. She has practiced public accounting since 2010 and serves a wide variety of not-for-profit, manufacturing consumer products and professional services clients. Before working for Moss Adams, she worked three years with a Big Four firm which allowed her to grow and develop in her assurance expertise.

Flores provides assurance services to both middle-market companies and multinational clients. She is highly skilled in implementing processes to improve organizational efficiencies while exceeding her responsibilities for the firm. She is known for being a well-rounded individual, due to her exceptional interpersonal skills, impressive technical knowledge and her perseverance which have all contributed to making her a successful professional in this industry.



AZA GHAZARYAN

*Tax Partner
Withum*

Aza Ghazaryan is an entrepreneur, a business leader and an exceptional CPA. She started as a junior accountant, then morphed into the tax partner role, heading up Withum’s Merger and Acquisition Tax practice, before starting to develop into a business development partner.

Ghazaryan has taken responsibility for leading the team through the implications of tax regulation changes. Over the last few years, she has guided Withum’s accountants through numerous complex transformations, including the Tax Cuts & Jobs Act and several COVID-19 relief programs. As a result of her research, training and determination, all of the firm’s clients were consulted about the wide variety of implications and, where applicable, received the maximum level of relief from schemes such as the Paycheck Protection Program and the Main Street Lending Program. Ghazaryan cares deeply about her clients and strives for optimal outcomes when providing tax compliance and consulting services.



CHRISTIE GOOD

*Trust Solutions Partner
PwC*

Christie Good is a Trust Solutions partner based in Los Angeles with over 25 years of professional experience providing accounting and auditing services to innovative Southern California consumer products and technology companies, including large multi-national public and high-growth private companies. Good’s focus in the technology sector includes licensed software, SaaS, digital media, platforms and interactive entertainment.

Good has significant experience working with companies navigating transformational changes to their business, including complex transactions – initial public offerings, secondary offerings, debt offerings, mergers and acquisitions, dispositions and restructurings, and advising companies as they address complex accounting, financial reporting, SEC reporting and Sarbanes-Oxley compliance matters. Good has an outstanding reputation for her collaborative, pragmatic approach to solving problems and driving continuous improvement in dynamic environments.



Congratulations Jennifer Richards and Lily Rumyan

for being named to the Los Angeles Business Journal’s 2023 “Women of Influence: Accounting” list.

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WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING

**KIM HARRINGTON**

*Tax Partner, West Region Business Tax and
Private Tax Leader
Ernst & Young LLP (EY)*

One of Kim Harrington's most significant career accomplishments is her leadership in transforming the West Region Private Tax practice into one of the leading Private Tax practices for EY across the United States. As the firm refocused its efforts in private tax, she played a key role overseeing strategic transactions that integrated three culturally aligned firms and market-leading talent into the West Region, enhancing its capabilities and market position.

Harrington brings such an entrepreneurial mindset to all her work. She is always engaging peers and those who work with and for her to understand their strengths and any barriers that may exist in their efforts to serve their clients. Her entrepreneurial approach continues through her work on the firm's Partner Advisory Forum. A small number of partners are selected to serve on this panel, representing their peers and bringing forward issues that challenge firm leadership to think differently.

**CATHY HYODO**

*Market Managing Partner and
Partnership Board Member
Grant Thornton LLP*

Over the course of her 30-year accounting career, Cathy Hyodo's prescient skill for navigating current and future business challenges has helped tech start-ups and Fortune 100 companies achieve widespread success. This LA native is also laser-focused on helping the next generation of accountants grow their careers. Her dual focus on empowering people and providing personalized client service has led to consistent growth for both Grant Thornton and the LA office she leads.

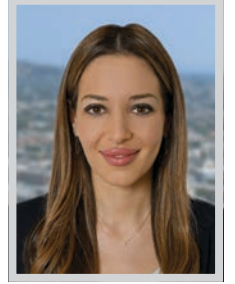
More specifically, the veteran accountant has played a significant role in growing Grant Thornton's technology sector from the dot-com era through the age of AI. Long before the current craze of special acquisition companies (SPACs), Hyodo predicted that SPACs would gain traction in the marketplace. She created a SPAC alliance that brought ample new business to Grant Thornton and provided SPAC targets with the in-depth knowledge they needed.

**FRANCES KALLMAN**

*Managing Partner
Kallman+Logan & Company, LLP*

Frances Kallman is the managing partner of Kallman + Logan & Company LLP (KLCO), a mid-sized Los Angeles CPA firm with offices in Brentwood and Sherman Oaks. Kallman successfully led the firm through the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic, including a merger with Cooper Moss Resnick Klein & Company in the midst of the global crisis. Through Kallman's thought and change leadership, KLCO was able to continuously service its clients with the priority of employees' safety top of mind.

Under Kallman's leadership and that of her late husband Andrew, the firm has grown from a few people in 1997 to almost 50 today. KLCO provides services to clients primarily in the real estate, entertainment, manufacturing and distribution industries, with emphasis on tax compliance, sophisticated tax planning and tax controversy matters, including significant experience in foreign tax disclosure matters.

**MIRIAM KAPLAN**

*Partner, Client Accounting Services
Windes*

In 2022, Miriam Kaplan joined Windes as the director of client accounting services (CAS). Her extensive experience and visionary approach have been instrumental in expanding the firm's CAS practice. Demonstrating her exceptional business development skills, Kaplan secured an impressive \$700,000 in new client business within her first six months at the firm. She excels in managing, coaching and mentoring her team of accountants, fostering their professional growth and propelling the department's success. Her remarkable performance and contributions at Windes have put her on a fast-track trajectory, leading to her upcoming promotion as a partner in July.

Kaplan's passion for helping clients achieve their financial goals shines through in her meticulous analysis of financial statements. She identifies areas for cost savings and growth, empowering clients with the insights needed to make informed decisions. Her expertise has proven to be particularly valuable during M&A transactions.

Congratulations Lori A. Roth!

We are so proud of your
Los Angeles Business Journal
2023 Leaders of Influence:
Women in Accounting
Spotlight!



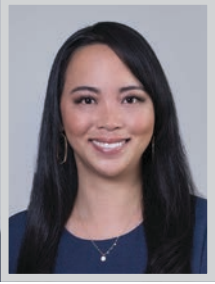
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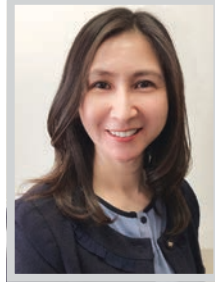
WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING



IRENE KLING
Partner, Tax Services
Moss Adams

Practicing public accounting since 2004, Irene Kling is known for her ability to connect with people and skillfully handle client relationships. She obtained her BA in Finance and her Master of Science in Taxation at the College of Business and Economics at California State University, Fullerton. Within the public accounting industry, she specializes in partnership taxation issues with an emphasis on tiered structures, special allocations and partner transactions. She is focused on providing tax advisory and compliance services to a variety of different industries, which allows her to stay on top of industry trends.

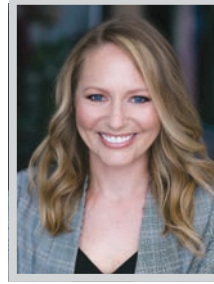
With Kling’s robust knowledge in the public accounting space and her unmatched skills, this has allowed her to be admitted as a partner at Moss Adams after only three years with the firm. She has been a key player in the growth of the Moss Adams real estate practice.



BETTY LIU
Director
CBIZ & MHM

Betty Liu, CPA is a director at CBIZ & MHM (a national accounting and financial services provider) and a key member of the Los Angeles tax department. With over two decades of experience, she brings a wealth of expertise in delivering tax and consulting services to both private and public companies. She specializes in tax minimization, planning and compliance for companies in a variety of industries, including real estate, manufacturing, construction, retail and professional services. Her contributions have been instrumental in helping her clients navigate complex tax landscapes and achieve financial success.

In January 2022, Liu was promoted to director, injecting a fresh perspective into our tax unit. Her open mindedness and eagerness to embrace challenges have been invaluable in driving innovation and fostering a collaborative environment. She also actively participates in community and networking events, engaging with fellow leaders to exchange experiences and broaden her horizons.



REBECCA LOHREY
Audit & Assurance Partner
Deloitte

Rebecca Lohrey has over 16 years of audit and accounting advisory experience serving clients in various sectors of the consumer industry, including retail/e-commerce, consumer products, food & beverage, agriculture and manufacturing industries, as well as emerging industries in blockchain and digital assets (primarily web3 and NFT). She serves a wide range of companies in the Los Angeles area, from fast-growing startups to private-equity-backed companies, to public multi-national companies, as well as IPO and de-SPAC transactions. She is also active in advising companies in preparation for new ESG reporting standards.

Lohrey served as part of Deloitte’s National Retail Fellows, as cross-functional network of professionals performing research on market trends relevant to the retail industry. She is a spokesperson for Deloitte’s annual Back-to-School and Holiday Retail Survey results for the Los Angeles market. She also leads Deloitte’s Finance Leadership Program for the next-generation of CFOs in the Los Angeles market.



PAM MALEK
Managing Director
The Colony Group

Pam Malek is the first female managing director in The Colony Group’s California offices, which are nationally recognized specializing in business management, tour accounting and royalty and publishing services for musicians, actors, writers, TV personalities, studio executives, digital influencers and high-net-worth individuals. Prior to joining The Colony Group through a strategic decision, she was a managing director at her previous firm. Malek and her team’s expertise have contributed to the deep relationships they have established in the entertainment industry and also with entrepreneurs and other successful individuals and families.

Malek spends her day-to-day providing domestic and international tax advisory and accounting services to clients in the entertainment industry with an emphasis on worldwide tours and tour budgeting. She also represents clients in evaluating their publishing and master recording catalogues to help maximize their value in a sales transaction.

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Congratulations to our Co-Managing Partner

Wendy On

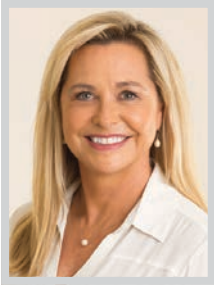
for being recognized by the
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WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING

**JENN McCABE**

Partner
Armanino LLP

Jenn McCabe founded Team Jenn Corp, which, after more than 25 years, merged into leading firm Armanino LLP. In McCabe's career, she has helped start – and take to exit – hundreds of small and middle market companies. At Armanino, she is a leader of a fast-growing outsourced accounting, finance and HR service team. For the past three years, she has led COVID relief efforts for the firm. She is also a Board of Partners member at a top 20 accounting industry firm.

Since 2017, at Armanino, McCabe participated in many women's advancement initiatives and helped create an executive sponsorship program for the firm's high-potential females. Armanino is a certified B Corp, and McCabe is a sponsoring partner for the firm's B Certification Team.

**YULIA MURZAEVA**

Managing Director
GHJ

Yulia Murzaeva, CPA, CIA, is a managing director at GHJ, providing audit and consulting services to a wide range of nonprofit clients. In addition to her audit work, Murzaeva is recognized across the industry for her leadership as a technical expert and an advocate for others. She exclusively serves nonprofit clients with an emphasis on arts and culture, clinics and healthcare and social services, with deep knowledge of the healthcare industry. She oversees the implementation of new accounting and auditing standards at GHJ and previously served as AICPA's subject matter expert on governmental and single audit accounting and auditing matters, leading the industry in technical knowledge.

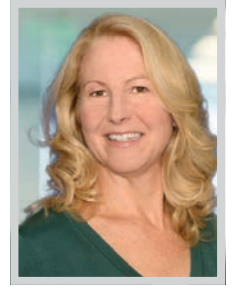
Murzaeva leads GHJ's Learning and Performance Programs for its Nonprofit and Single Audit Groups and feels passionate about mentoring. Her proudest professional moment was supporting a mentee through his multiple attempts to pass the CPA exam and watching him succeed in the end.

**JOYCE NELSON**

Senior Manager
CohnReznick LLP

Joyce Nelson, CPA, is a senior manager in CohnReznick's Los Angeles Assurance practice. She has more than 12 years of diversified public accounting experience in a multitude of industries. Nelson has become a trusted advisor to her clients within the consumer, retail, manufacturing and hospitality industries. Nelson is a known leader among her peers and manages her teams with passion and purpose. She enjoys being hands-on with her teams and clients and working to build strong relationships with new and existing clients.

Nelson has taken a leadership role in various firm committees and focuses on elevating her teams. Additionally, as a woman in the public accounting sector, Nelson is passionate at vocalizing the importance of work-life-balance while achieving both career and personal goals. She is a member of the California Society of Certified Public Accountants and AICPA.

**PATRICIA J. O'CONNELL**

Chief Operating Officer
Holthouse Carlin & Van Trigt LLP

As COO of Holthouse Carlin & Van Trigt LLP, Patricia O'Connell leads many of the firm's strategic and operational initiatives, including those that are transformational to the organization. In leading these projects, she welcomes ideas and solutions from team members regardless of tenure. She is a collaborative, pragmatic and approachable leader. She is employee #10, and for over 30 years, she has helped define the firm's culture, respond to the changes and challenges of public accounting, and has been a role model for the women of the firm.

As a member of the firm's executive committee, O'Connell helps to shape the future of HCVT by addressing technology; virtual/remote work arrangements; security and privacy; attracting, developing, and retaining talent; continuing to provide value to clients; and working tirelessly to ensure HCVT maintains a culture where all can thrive.



Move forward
with Mazars

Congratulations to Mazars Partner Evonne Chen on being named one of the Los Angeles Business Journal's 2023 Women of Influence in Accounting.

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WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING



WENDY ON

Co-Managing Partner
Fineman West & Company

Wendy On has more than 20 years of experience serving clients in the manufacturing, real estate, hospitality, technology, non-profit and entertainment industries. She helps clients with achieving their financial and exit goals, including comprehensive tax planning, business formation and structuring, M&A due diligence, expanding businesses with operations in multistate as well as foreign jurisdictions, and estate and trust planning.

On is the co-managing partner at the firm. She also sits on the Advisory Board of the TAG Alliances, which is one of the largest multi-disciplinary alliances in the world. On is also committed to giving back to the community. She currently serves as the chairwoman of the Asian Pacific Community Fund Advisory Board and is also actively involved in the California Hospital Medical Center Foundation Board.

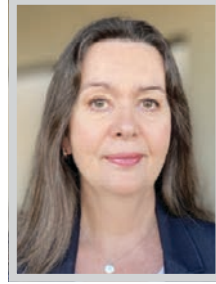


PARNIA PANDKHOU

Partner
Armanino LLP

Parnia Pandkhou has over 15 years of public and private accounting experience. She has helped numerous companies from start-up to successful exits in technology, real estate, manufacturing and cannabis industries. At Armanino, she launched the cannabis and real estate industry practices. When the opportunity arose for her to become involved in this area, she not only raised her hand with interest, but she also stepped up to become a leader within the firm and quickly established her presence in the marketplace as a client-focused expert who understands nuances of two very different industries and their requirements for success.

Pandkhou has quickly established herself as one of the leading experts in the accounting world when it comes to cannabis enterprises. She is an expert in all that takes place within the world of cannabis as it relates to filing requirements, industry-specific accounting requirements, deductions and other requirements.



YELENA PAPIRYAN

Partner
Duffy Kruspodin, LLP

Yelena Papiryan grew up in the Soviet Union and graduated from the National Research University of Electronic Technology in Moscow. After dramatic events forced her to leave her home country, she immigrated to the United States in 2000 seeking a better future for her family and with hope to make good use of her education and skills. Papiryan joined Duffy Kruspodin (DK) in 2005, became licensed as a CPA in 2006 and was promoted to partner in 2020.

Papiryan has been very successful during her DK tenure and has become a key member of the leadership team. Some of her accomplishments include leading the International Tax Specialization team; actively participating in many of the firm's acquisitions and helping transition clients from Seller Partners; creating, developing and expanding the firm's CAS (Client Advisory Services) department; and providing committed mentorship to tax staff through counseling, training and encouragement.



MARIA PEARMAN

Principal
GHJ

Maria Pearman, CPA, CGMA, serves as GHJ's Beverage Practice leader. She is a food and beverage industry leader, shown leadership in the growing client accounting services space and has written two books on essential business principles for entrepreneurs in food and beverage.

Pearman's accounting career started in an unexpected place — beginning with a career in arts management and radio before she realized her interests would be applicable to public accounting. After preparing tax returns for several breweries, she realized her clients spent more money getting their books clean at the end of the year than they spent on tax returns. Inspired by this need in the marketplace, she founded an accounting firm offering a wide range of outsourced accounting services for the beverage alcohol industry and expanded her expertise to comprise the larger food and beverage market. She has even authored two books on the subject.

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Congratulations to Withum leaders, Aza Ghazaryan, CPA, Partner, and Kerra Diener, CPA, Senior Manager, who are among the Los Angeles Business Journal's Women of Influence honorees in the Accounting category. Withum celebrates all women leaders driving innovation and breaking barriers, while paving the way for future generations of female professionals.

withum.com/women-of-withum



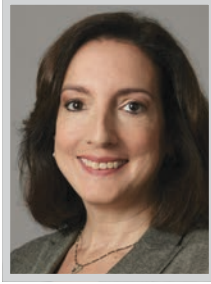
WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING

**JENNIFER RICHARDS**

Partner
Crowe LLP

Based in Los Angeles, Jennifer Richards leads Crowe LLP's Not-for-Profit and Higher Education audit practice in the West region. Richards joined Crowe LLP as an intern nearly 20 years ago and relocated to Los Angeles from her hometown of Chicago nearly six years ago to dedicate her time to building Crowe's not-for-profit practice in greater Los Angeles and Southern California. She also leads Crowe's Private Foundation audit practice nationally across Crowe's more than 40 offices.

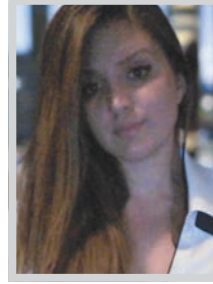
As part of her leadership roles and client service, Richards regularly educates her clients, their boards and her peers in the profession on best practices and emerging accounting and governance matters at national industry conferences, including the American Institute of Public Accountants (AICPA) Not-for-Profit and Government Conference, the AICPA national Not-for-Profit conference and other local and regional events. She also serves as a technical expert on a variety of accounting topics in the not-for-profit space.

**LORI ROTH**

Global Managing Partner
Prager Metis

Lori A. Roth is the global managing partner of Prager Metis, a member of Prager Metis International Group. Additionally, she is a partner in the Audit & Accounting and Advisory Services departments of the firm. She has been in the accounting industry since 1984. Roth specializes in audit and assurance services, litigation support and business valuations. She works with clients in a variety of industries including, closely-held businesses, real estate and the US subsidiaries of foreign banks and corporations.

Roth has strong international expertise that also includes working as a neutral accountant (either court-appointed or hired as a joint expert). She works as a business valuator and also as an impartial financial consultant when issues pertain to support and equitable distribution. She has been involved in matrimonial cases, as a certified divorce mediator, as well as shareholder disputes, corporate dissolutions, estate situations and business acquisitions.

**LILY RUMYAN**

Tax Manager
Crowe LLP

Lily Rumyan has achieved remarkable success in her career, marked by several notable accomplishments. First and foremost, she obtained her CPA license while working full-time—an impressive feat that showcases her dedication and commitment to professional growth. Her ability to balance work responsibilities with the demands of studying and passing the CPA exam demonstrates her strong work ethic and determination.

In addition to her academic achievement, Rumyan's exceptional client service has resulted in a high level of client trust and retention. Her clients rely on her expertise and frequently seek her advice and consulting services. By building strong relationships with her clients, Rumyan has become a go-to professional for their various needs. She has also consistently invested time and effort into training and mentoring individuals under her guidance. By continuously providing advice and support, she has helped these individuals grow both personally and professionally.

**JACKIE SAWIRIS**

Principal Partner
Duffy Kruspodin, LLP

After 13 years working in a pharmacy, Jackie Sawiris quit her job and decided that she wanted to pursue a career in accounting. At the time, she had been going to a community college intermittently and decided to transfer to a university. While at university, she became a mom and the dean of her school referred her for an accounting job.

She started off as a bookkeeper and moved her way up to tax. While working full-time, she continued to attend school and eventually graduated with a bachelors, masters and MBA. In 2013, she started working at Duffy Kruspodin (DK) as a tax supervisor, became an enrolled agent in 2015 and recently celebrated her 10th anniversary at DK with her promotion to partner. She is an integral part of the firm's leadership team, serving on the Family Office, International Tax and High Net Worth Individuals practice groups.

Bessolo Haworth is honored and proud to congratulate our partners,

Peggy Clark & Sasha Baluka

On being named among the Los Angeles Business Journal's Influential Women in Accounting of 2023.



PEGGY CLARK



SASHA BALUKA

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WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING



CYNTHIA SCHOELEN
Partner
BPM LLP

A BPM partner, Cindy Schoelen is a game-changing advisor to her clients – often nonprofit organizations and federally-qualified healthcare clinics. They turn to her for their accounting, compilations, review and audit needs – all critical financial controls that help maintain their nonprofit status or government funding. She currently supervises a team of 30 CPAs and professionals in BPM’s Long Beach office, analyzing clients’ financial statements to help them better understand and manage their operations.

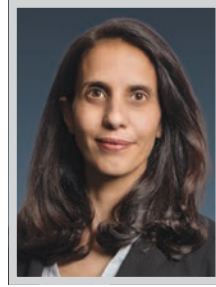
Schoelen’s career as a business leader is filled with numerous examples of professional mentoring and advocacy. In one instance, Schoelen recruited a young female accountant fresh out of college, “raising” her through an ascending series of roles for 13 years. She supports each individual’s focus on learning the role above them and driving the progression of their own careers. The young woman rose to a CFO position with a former client and is currently thriving.



MARYELLEN SEBOLD
Partner, Financial Advisory Services
RSM US LLP

Maryellen Sebold is a partner in RSM’s Financial Investigations and Dispute Advisory Services practice. She is a CPA, a certified insolvency and restructuring advisor, and is certified in financial forensics. She has over 30 years of experience in the areas of forensic accounting and fraud investigations, litigation consulting, bankruptcy and corporate restructuring. She has been designated as an expert witness and has testified in numerous trials, depositions and arbitrations. In the bankruptcy arena, Sebold has worked with trustees and creditors’ committees as a financial advisor in Chapter 7 and 11 matters. In addition, she has worked with bank syndications in efforts to restructure multimillion-dollar loans made to failing companies.

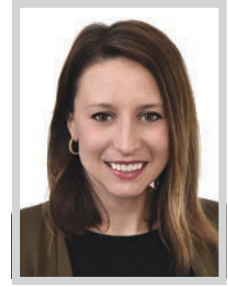
Sebold has led teams in the development of strategies specific to complex financial fraud matters and internal investigations of public and private companies. She has also performed investigations into allegations of fraud and mismanagement.



SHLOMIT TAYARI
Senior Manager
CohnReznick LLP

Shlomit Tayari, CPA, is a senior manager in assurance at CohnReznick LLP and has been with the firm since November 2008. She specializes in the Consumer, Hospitality and Manufacturing & Distribution industry practices. Her greatest achievements and strengths are providing excellent service to her clients while being a mentor and a leader to her team.

After completing her mandatory army service with the IDF in Israel, Tayari moved to the US and attended California State University, Northridge, as a foreign student. She graduated with a BS degree in accounting and started her career with CohnReznick. She is timely in her response to questions from her clients and provides guidance on complex transactions. Her passion for excellence is why she has continued to further her career and become the go-to-person for CohnReznick’s manufacturing and distribution industries in the Los Angeles office.



MARY TRIPP
Audit Partner
KPMG LLP

Mary Tripp is an audit partner in KPMG’s Los Angeles office with over 13 years of experience serving a wide array of clients from large multi-national to growth phase, start-up clients. She has a proven track record of winning in the marketplace as a result of an innovative one firm approach to market development and an ability to develop meaningful relationships. Tripp serves as the partner for several large retail clients, a large multinational public real estate services company, multiple digital media growth phase companies and several mid-market consumer and agriculture product companies.

Tripp has extensive experience working on first year audit engagements and client transitions and has developed a unique approach to ensuring their success. She coordinates with up to 20 international KPMG offices simultaneously to ensure her multinational clients are best served. She is also a leader in her business unit on ESG topics.



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Congratulations to Moss Adams Partner Irene Kling and Senior Manager Johana Flores on being named among the Los Angeles Business Journal’s 2023 Women of Influence in Accounting—recognizing their impact on diversity, equity, and inclusion in the accounting and finance professions.

WOMEN OF INFLUENCE: ACCOUNTING

Study Finds Wealth Taxes Associated With Higher Dividends, Less Long-Term Investment

A recent study finds wealth taxes in Europe are having an unexpected consequence: driving up dividend payouts in order to help executives with large stock holdings pay their taxes. What's more, these increased dividend payments are associated with declines in investments that focus on long-term profitability.

"Our study presents a new consideration in the debate over wealth taxes," said Gaizka Ormazabal, corresponding author of a paper on the work and a professor in the IESE Business School at the University of Navarre. "Specifically, we find that wealth taxes can have a questionable effect on corporate decision making."

While this research focused on wealth taxes in Europe, these findings may also inform efforts in other countries – including the United States – to implement similar taxes.

Wealth taxes are levied as a percentage of an individual's total net wealth, which is commonly computed as the sum of the individual's taxable assets – such as investments – minus the value of the individual's debts. For many corporate executives, much of their wealth is in the form of stock in their company. When those stocks increase in value, so does the executive's wealth tax.

This can pose a challenge because while the executive's wealth may consist largely of stocks, taxes need to be paid in cash. One way



to resolve this problem is for the executive's company to increase dividend payouts.

To see if this was taking place, and how it affected relevant companies, the researchers evaluated publicly available data on 4,381 companies based in European countries that have, or had, wealth taxes between 2000 and 2017.

The researchers found that closely held companies, particularly family firms, are more likely to increase dividends when majority stockholders are facing a sharp increase in wealth taxes. The researchers also found that these higher payouts were associated with declines in subsequent investment – and elicited lower stock returns.

"Tax-driven dividend increases may be useful for majority shareholders, but may not be in the best interest of the company – which could have used those funds to finance profitable projects," Ormazabal said. "In other words, increasing dividends to help an executive meet tax obligations can hurt the company and, ultimately, other shareholders."

"Wealth taxes can also help reduce social inequality, which is valuable in itself," Ormazabal said. "However, we think it is important to better understand the varied – and unanticipated – consequences that may be associated with implementing wealth taxes."

The paper, "Individual Wealth Taxes and Corporate Payouts," is published in *The Accounting Review*. The paper was co-authored by Raúl Barroso of the Université de Lille and Donald N'Gatta of Côte d'Ivoire's MDE Business School.

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Accounting’s First Crowd-Sourced Study Tackles ChatGPT in Education

A new study to be published in the Issues in Accounting Education pits the ChatGPT AI chatbot against the performance of human accounting students on accounting exam questions.

Organized by David A. Wood, a professor of accounting at Brigham Young University, 327 authors from 186 institutions in 14 countries contributed to the crowd-sourced research effort, believed to be the first of its kind in the accounting field. Professors submitted their own assessment questions and data on their own students’ performance, then ChatGPT was asked to respond to the same questions.

The collection of such a large data set was possible because the topic resonated with so many active educators. Accounting faculty across the globe are aware of the ramifications of ChatGPT and other AI technologies; they’re interested in understanding how these tools will impact their classrooms, and how they should be teaching with these technologies in mind.

On average, across more than 28,000 assessment questions, human students generally outperformed the chatbot. Topic area and type of question greatly influenced ChatGPT’s performance: the chatbot was better at questions related to accounting information systems, analytics/technology and audits, but worse at financial, managerial and tax questions. Likewise, multiple choice and true/false ques-



tions proved easier for the AI than workout or short-answer questions. The bot also benefited when partial credit was awarded and when questions from a textbook test question bank were used. However, in no scenario did the AI beat human student averages more than 28 percent of the time.

Taken together, the results highlight important implications for accounting education. While faculty must prepare students for

careers where they will use AI, they must be on guard that the same technology may be used to cheat on assessments or coursework. Students and professionals using AI must also be wary of chatbots’ tendency to confidently deliver incorrect information. In the study, ChatGPT frequently gave descriptive explanations for wrong answers, made up facts and sources, and made nonsensical errors when performing math.

On average, across more than 28,000 assessment questions, human students generally outperformed the chatbot.

Wood discussed the implications of the study for accounting education: “The fundamental question now is, for accounting and beyond, how should education be different as we enter the AI era? Our students’ jobs are going to be completely different from when we were in the profession. Many jobs will even change radically from the time they enter a program to when they graduate, technologies like AI are just evolving that rapidly. It’s going to be critical for those students to be able to adapt to change, and it is up to us as educators to prepare them.”

The study, “The ChatGPT Artificial Intelligence Chatbot: How Well Does it Answer Accounting Assessment Questions?,” is forthcoming in Issues in Accounting Education, which is published by the American Accounting Association.

Learn more about the American Accounting Association at aaahq.org.

Deloitte.

Congratulations

We are proud to recognize our accomplished leader, **Rebecca Lohrey**.

Deloitte **congratulates** Rebecca Lohrey and all outstanding leaders named as **Women of Influence in Accounting** by the *Los Angeles Business Journal*.



Rebecca Lohrey
Audit & Assurance Partner
Deloitte & Touche LLP