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From the December 2009 Issue

There's something about Texans. Whether it's because of the state's history, southwest lifestyle, multicultural heritage or its sheer size, many native Texans seem to share the traits of strong-willed independence and personal determination. And they respect the same characteristics in others, especially those with whom they do business.

For Donna Hugly, a CPA and resident of the Dallas area, these traits have led to a successful 31-year career in which she has worked with companies of all sizes throughout the state and across the country; even internationally. But like most professionals, of course, the founder and president of Hugly and Company, PC, in Addison, Texas (www.hugly.com), didn't start at the top.

Her journey into the profession started in high school in the east Texas city of Tyler, where a former boyfriend's father had an accounting practice. He would become a mentor during her early years, offering guidance and support.

"I always liked math and working with numbers, so it made sense to choose accounting as a major when I went to Texas A&M," she said. After her college years, Donna earned her CPA credential in 1981 and moved to the Dallas area where she worked for a large local practice for more than 15 years. She formed Hugly and Company in 1998, and the firm has since grown to serve a client roster of more than 400 businesses and a similar number of individual taxpayers.

With a staff that includes her sister Cara, fellow CPAs Lisha Russo and Stephanie Golem, and Nikki Spitzer, the practice specializes in providing small to mid-sized companies and nonprofit groups with strategic consulting, tax planning,

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factor in the practice’s success and its ability to grow its client base and services. During her career, Donna has been witness to many of the most notable advancements in this area, from the first computerized tax returns, to web-based programs and remote client service capabilities that allow her to retain clients that may move ...

and even attract new business clients from other states.

The practice uses multi-screen monitors for all workstations and enjoys the occasional support of Donna’s “tech geek” husband, Stephen.

Hugly and Company earned a score of 359 on *The CPA Technology Advisor’s*

Productivity

Survey, a free tool that helps professional tax and accounting firms assess their use of technology. The score is high for a practice of their size and is above the average for north Texas area. You can take the Productivity Survey and get your score at www.CPATechAdvisor.com/productivity.

Helping clients to better use technology has also become a part of the practice’s consulting services, especially with the current economy causing many small businesses to run leaner and more efficiently.

	Donna Hugly, CPA Principal Hugly & Company, PC www.Hugly.com Addison, TX Productivity Score: 359	

Adopting these technology tools and workflow processes has helped the firm

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the year include going to Texas Rangers baseball games, little gift baskets and a company holiday party. Technically speaking, there is one male usually in attendance in the office: Donna's year-old beagle, Crumpet. (No, he didn't get a pedicure.)

Outside of her practice, Donna has been active in state and local professional groups, including serving on the Texas Society of CPAs (TSCPA) executive board four times and currently on its board of directors. She is also a former chair of the Dallas chapter and has sat on various committees in those groups. She has been quoted as a professional resource in several TSCPA publications, as well as in the Dallas Business Journal and Inc. Magazine's small business newsletter.

Non-professionally, Donna is involved in community organizations, most notably WaterTower Theatre (www.watertowertheatre.org), the resident theatre company in Addison, Texas. The group's December production is "Forever Plaid: Plaid Tidings," a "best-of" compilation of the Stuart Ross musical comedy.

With her younger sister Cara working with her in the firm, and having met her husband while his company was an accounting and tax client of hers, Donna seems quite content to mix a little of her personal life with her business life. Through coincidence or some unknown element in the Tyler, Texas, drinking water, the ties between her profession and her family go a bit further. Her three sisters also happen to be in the accounting field.

When they get together for the holidays or other family events, some of the discussions might be just as well suited to a TSCPA conference. Although most of her family is still in the state, her husband's family is back in England, so the two take occasional trips to visit his children and grandchildren. They

plan to re-turn there later this year. Closer to home, the couple also enjoys

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“The most important things in life are in the bigger picture, and accounting has provided a good living but has also given me the ability to be truly helpful to others by contributing to their success. And that is really gratifying.”

Firm Management • Technology

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