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Cynthia Borders-Byrd, CPA, MBA

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member of Florida State Board of Accountancy; Board Chair and Chair of the Probable Cause Panel for 2012; Previously served as Vice-Chair of the Board and Chair of the Rules Committee; Previous board member of the Executive Committee of Florida Institute of CPAs; Past Chair of Junior Achievement of South Florida; Member and Past Nominating Committee Chair, National Association of Black Accountants (NABA); 2012 National Award for Achievement in Public Accounting; Member and Former Treasurer of Delta Sigma Theta Sorority, Inc.; Chair Finance Committee and Chair of Pastoral Search Committee New Mt. Olive Baptist Church; Former Treasurer of Jack & Jill of America, Fort Lauderdale Chapter; Member The Links, Incorporated, Fort Lauderdale Chapter and Chair of the Services to Youth Committee; Member National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA).

Hobbies: Reading, playing piano, traveling and walking.

[Click here to see the other honorees of the 2012 "Most Powerful Women in Accounting" awards.](#)

Q&A:

Studies show that more women than ever are graduating with accounting degrees, but few are pursuing, or staying in, public practice careers. What do you think may be causing them to think public accounting careers are not as attractive as other careers?

I recently attended a regional meeting of NASBA and this subject was a topic of discussion.

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improve over time; however the public accounting firms have to consistently demonstrate their commitment to life balance from day one.

What advice would you give to these college students about the opportunities for women in the accounting profession?

Obviously I enjoy working in the profession. I would advise, as I do the individuals I mentor, that public accounting is similar to college except you are constantly learning and being compensated based upon your ability to apply what you have learned. Experience in public accounting prepares you for a multitude of opportunities if you decided to leave.

If you were asked as a consultant to give advice to firms, would you have any recommendations on things they could do to better retain and advance more qualified female staff?

As I stated earlier, I would ensure that the culture of the firm fosters a balanced life from day one and I would ensure that the organization from the top to the bottom demonstrated that culture.

Do you think that there is still a glass ceiling in accounting firm senior management and partner levels, or that the profession has moved to a mostly gender neutral state?

I believe that great advancements have been made. My experience is that when those around the table making the decisions are a diverse group with respect to gender, it is mostly a gender neutral state. So the organization would need to perform an assessment to determine where they are in the process.

Do you think being a woman in the accounting profession has made career advancement more challenging than it might have been for a male in the same situation?

Everything is relative. I don't believe that being a woman in the accounting profession has

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How mobile are you regarding your work? How have mobile devices and apps impacted your productivity and work-life balance? (Spending less time in the office?)

Very mobile. We are utilizing technology in my accounting practice today which reduces the amount of time required to be in the office and allows for more face time with clients.

What single piece of technology could you absolutely not live without, and why?

My iPhone: It has become a tool that is convenient, fits in my purse and through it I have access almost every tool I need on a daily basis.

What is your favorite professional mobile app, and why?

Apple Reminders: I rely on this app to keep me organized.

What do you like to do when you actually have free time without any obligations to work or family? (Examples: reading, wine and movies, tv, art, travel, exercise, cooking, etc).

Reading, I look forward to having free time. What is that and I have more work life balance than ever.

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