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African-American female, she began her own firm in a basement on the South Side of Chicago where she opened doors for future generations of African-American ...

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Seventy-five years ago, Mary T. Washington Wylie (1906 – 2005), became the first African-American, female certified public accountant (CPA) in the nation. In doing so, she became a visionary, trailblazer and mentor, inspiring other young African-American CPAs and paving the way for generations to come.

To honor the 75th anniversary of her becoming a CPA, the city of Chicago has

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Americans or females, let alone an African-American female, she began her own firm in a basement on the South Side of Chicago where she opened doors for future generations of African-American accountants to follow in her historic footsteps.

Her accounting practice, known today as the Chicago firm of [Washington, Pittman & McKeever, LLC](#), one of the largest black CPA firms in the country, is now combining forces with Mitchell Titus, carrying on her legacy.

“When we think about how hard it must have been for Mary to break through the barriers she faced and still succeed in becoming an accountant and the first African-American female CPA, we should all celebrate her spirit, drive and determination as a true trailblazer,” said Todd Shapiro, President and CEO of the Illinois CPA Society. “Her passion and devotion to others’ development serve as a cornerstone for changing the culture and diversity of our profession – and while there is still much work that needs to be done, we are proud to have her as an inspiration and a powerful example to follow.”

As a tribute to her legacy, on what would have been her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in 2006, Lester H. McKeever Jr., along with the Illinois CPA Society and the CPA Endowment Fund of Illinois established the Mary T. Washington Wylie Opportunity Fund. Donations to the fund support programs and opportunities that promote diversity and strengthen the accounting profession.

To learn more about the lasting impact of Mary T. Washington Wylie please visit ([web link](#))

Accounting

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