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advocate of giving back to the community.

**Taija Sparkman** • Aug. 21, 2013

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Robert is managing partner at MayerMeinberg, where his son manages the firm's NYC office and his daughter manages the lifestyle management practice. Robert serves on the Corporate Committee of the Nassau County Museum of Art, the Hofstra Business School Advisory Board and U.S. Trust Advisory Board. He is a huge advocate of giving back to the community.

### **What is your personal motto?**

I have always had the attitude that if things are going right for you, you need to turn around and give to others. I try to take the younger staff with me when I meet with clients so they can get a feel for what being an accountant entails. It's more than just crunching numbers. You have to be outgoing and somewhat aggressive. It's very tough to become a partner unless you're a rainmaker, and you can't be a rainmaker unless you're outgoing and social. If you're not social, you can't bring in clients.

### **What are some community activities you're involved in?**

I'm involved in some nonprofit organizations, advisory boards for banks and the advisory for the Hofstra School of Business. I give a lot of personal time for business because business has been good to me. I'm the co-chairman of the Nassau County Museum of Art. It's really the only art museum in Nassau County and I want to bring art to the area, spread the word so more corporations know about it. Everybody goes to sporting events, but what about entertaining clients in a more prestigious setting? Nothing's more prestigious than art. I believe the museum is the area's best kept secret. It has rooms that can hold up to 150 people.

Serving on Hofstra's board lets me see how graduates have changed over the years. Many more graduates are concerned with work/life balance. Back in my day, quality of life didn't come into play. I don't know if there are many graduates ready and willing to work whatever hours. That definitely comes into play in the work environment. There are a lot of changes that have happened over time and you have to adapt your business to the people you want to retain.

## How do you manage your work/life balance?

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## How do you like to spend your time away from work?

I love spending time with my family. I like to visit our home on the water in West Hampton Beach in the spring, summer and fall. I also enjoy going to the beach with my two small grandchildren, ages 4.5 and 1. I play tennis and walk during the day. I'm a horrible golfer, though. I belong to two gyms that I rarely have the time to go to.

## What sports team/championship event do you absolutely refuse to miss?

My granddaughter's events. She's 4.5 and plays tennis, soccer, cheerleading and ballet. I like to go to her soccer practice or games on the weekends before we go to the beach. She loves it; she loves to go home with Pop Pop.

I also attend a Yankees or Mets game at least once a year and a Jets game once or twice. I mostly go because I'm invited by a client or banker. I also have tickets to the U.S. Tennis Open in Queens.

## What's your favorite spot to vacation?

I like to go to St. Martin. We have a few timeshares there and another home in Plainview. It's a very social gated community. We take a trip to a new place Europe every year. Last year, we went to Argentina. The trips are usually with clients that have become friends or friends that have become clients. It's a good opportunity to be in a different environment with people that you work with in a business relationship.

## How "plugged in" are you when it comes to your personal life?

I prefer to be proactive versus reactive when it comes to technology, but sometimes that can create more work. I like the mobility of the iPhone, and I use the iPad around the house to watch TV and send emails. I used to bring it in the office, but I found that I'd rather use the computer if I was sitting at my desk and I don't find the

need to take detailed notes on the iPad during meetings. It does make it easier to stay

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### **How did you get started in the profession?**

I took a course in business law and college accounting in high school. I really liked the college accounting course so I decided to go to Rider College, which had a very good business school. I attended for one semester. The second semester, I transferred to a school in Long Island for an internship. I was laid off when construction slowed down, but I still had a good relationship with the firm. I went to work for them when I graduated but eventually left to work at another firm in the entertainment business. I was very young and I decided that if I stayed there, it would be my only job because the firm was so specialized.

I look at myself as an entrepreneur more than an accountant. I started my practice from scratch in my basement and now we have 30 employees bringing in more than \$7 million. I enjoy working with my son and daughter and the other staff. Most of our staff is very young and are very excited and willing to put forth their best effort.

*If you work in the accounting profession and would like to be featured in a future blog post, please contact Taija Jenkins at [taija.jenkins@cpapracticeadvisor.com](mailto:taija.jenkins@cpapracticeadvisor.com).*

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