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FIRM MANAGEMENT

Irene Walsh, EA – 2015 40 Under 40 Honoree

This year's 40 Under 40 honorees are among the best and brightest talent in the accounting profession. They are all active in the professional community, as well as in their local communities, where many are small business owners and employers.

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Irene Walsh, EA – 30

Tax Manager,
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What is the name of one book that has been a great influence to you?

The Power of Positive Thinking by Norman Vincent Peale has had an enormous influence on me. I try very hard to live by the idea that bringing a positive attitude to everything I do will help me far more in life than any negativity.

In what ways have you contributed to your firm/company to make it better?

I was very involved when our firm moved to a paperless work environment. The move has helped us increase our responsiveness to clients, better utilize remote staff, and increase our staff without increasing our workspace by utilizing the space previously allotted to paper files.

In what ways do you participate in the professional community to change/improve the accounting profession?

My work in the professional community, whether dealing with business clients or participating in industry affairs, is defined by my interest in promoting accountants as innovators. We perform crucial services for individuals and entities to strengthen their financial well being in order to meet their short-term and long-term goals, but we also strive to educate the public on the wide array of additional services the accounting industry has to offer. In this way, I am able to showcase the variety of skills that accountants in today's market possess.

In what ways do you participate in your local community to help others?

I spend most of my free time volunteering as a coach for two adaptive rowing teams – Medstar National Rehabilitation Hospital Paralympic Sports Club and Athletes Without Limits. As a coach for Medstar, I train recreational and elite level athletes with physical disabilities. I am on the water multiple mornings a week before work helping athletes prepare for the 2016 Paralympic National Team Trials. Through Medstar I am also involved with the veterans adaptive sports community which is a cause that's very important to me. With Athletes Without Limits, I coach and mentor athletes (mainly youth) with intellectual disabilities. I am also a rowing coach for my local masters rowing club where I serve on the Steering Committee.

What changes do you foresee in the accounting profession of the near future (3-5 years)?

Technology advances which streamline much of the “number crunching” done by accountants in the past and offer remote work options through cloud computing and other telecommuting platforms will redefine the way accounting firms and their members interact and work in the future.

How do you see yourself participating in shaping the future of the accounting profession?

One misconception of accountants by those outside the industry, accounting students, and entry-level accountants is that the bulk of accounting work entails working with numbers, journal entries, etc—what essentially amounts to bookkeeping. However, analytical, technological, interpersonal, and communication skills are those that define the successful modern accountant. I am dedicated to training and education that promotes the importance of these skills to the accounting profession and the public at large. I believe this will enhance not only the reputation of the many career paths available in the accounting industry but also the overall awareness of what its members have to offer their communities.

What is your career philosophy?

Be kind. Ask questions. Always strive to learn.

Describe one person who has been an important mentor to you and how that person helped change your life.

Fr. Raymond Kemp, one of my professors and my priest from college, has had a huge impact on my life. Fr. Kemp has taught me that what I do matters and that change only comes from questioning the status quo. He instilled in me the importance of being passionate about what I spend my life doing. I have applied his lessons to every area of my life including my career.

[See all of the “40 Under 40” honorees for 2015.](#)

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