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Accounting awards. This annual celebration recognizes women throughout the profession who are making a measurable difference in the success of the accounting profession itself as ...

Gail Perry • Dec. 18, 2017



In November, we announced the winners of the **25 Most Powerful Women in Accounting** awards. This annual celebration recognizes women throughout the profession who are making a measurable difference in the success of the accounting profession itself as well as those around them.

As I mentioned when presenting the awards at Intuit's annual QBConnect conference in San Jose, I am frequently asked why there should be awards for women – aren't we all supposed to be equal in the workplace? I ponder that question myself from time to time, and so I did a bit of research on the subject.

One thing I discovered is that there are annual awards for outstanding women in just about all walks of life. There is the *Forbes* annual "World's 100 Most Powerful Women" list. *Fortune* magazine names its own list of the 50 most powerful women

each year. States and cities have women recognition awards too. And then there are

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strong. We're looking for women who are proven leaders within their own environment: their firm, their consultancy, their company, wherever they happen to hang their work hat. We then look for women who are striving to improve the profession beyond the confines of their own office – through speaking, writing, educating, broadcasting, working with accounting-related organizations, making a difference in new and innovative ways. Third, we're looking for women who are helping in their community, their state, their country, demonstrating their compassionate side. And finally, and perhaps most importantly, our winners truly care about helping others in the profession succeed.

During the awards presentation, I mentioned a conversation I had with one of this year's winners, Kimberly Ellison-Taylor, global accounting strategy director for Oracle and chair of the AICPA's board of directors. She talked about the television awards shows like America's Got Talent and American Idol. She asked me if I had ever noticed that the winner of American Idol isn't necessarily the person who has the best voice. It's the person with the whole package – the talent, the achievement in spite of obstacles, the ability to walk out on a stage and share that talent with others. And most importantly, the winner is the person who's ready to step aside and hand the microphone to the next contestant and applaud for that person to do his or her best.

And that describes this year's winners so well. Our profession's outstanding women include CPA firm partners, CEOs, a Fortune 500 firm director, business founders, published authors, keynote speakers, consultants, trainers, podcasters – and that just covers the primary titles of these women, many of whom work at multiple jobs and also volunteer their time. And all the while, they are proud to hand their microphones to the next leaders of the profession who will continue to carry the torches. Hats off to all of these outstanding women!

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