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"Get in the Financial Know with Joe," in Little Rock. The program allowed him to discuss personal finance topics including taxes and money management via call-in or

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Jun. 17, 2020



The [American Institute of CPAs](#) (AICPA) has named Joseph M. Rugger, CPA, CGMA, MPA, accounting director and profit consultant at Tooth & Coin, winner of the 2020 [AICPA Outstanding Young CPA Award](#) in Honor of Maximo Mukelabai. Rugger was recognized for his contributions to the profession and leadership of other young CPAs.

The annual award, now in its ninth year, recognizes a CPA under age 41 who personifies a commitment to the profession as demonstrated through successful

practices and involvement in and contributions to the interest of the accounting

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“Joseph has not only been a vital contributor to the Arkansas CPA Society, he has worked to raise awareness of accounting and personal finance principles among the general public through his radio show. And he has shared his time and expertise to help other young CPAs grow and develop within the profession,” said Susan S. Coffey, CPA, CGMA AICPA executive vice president – public practice. “Joseph embodies the values held by Maximo Mukelabai and bestowing the 2020 AICPA Outstanding Young CPA Award upon him is a tribute to his legacy.”

Rugger is a 2013 graduate of the [AICPA Leadership Academy](#) and served on EDGE Conference Planning Committee and AICPA Young Member Leadership Committee from 2014-2018. He also routinely speaks to state CPA societies and civic organizations about the importance of soft skills, such as communications and networking.

He is an active member of the Arkansas CPA Society, having served on the society's board of directors since 2015, and will serve as the society's youngest chair in 2021. He spearheaded the creation of an annual conference for the state's Emerging CPAs and was named the society's first “Outstanding Emerging CPA of the Year in Arkansas” in 2011. In 2019, he served as the Chair of the Task Force for the Arkansas CPA Society's inaugural Leadership Academy Program.

“Since I was young, my parents ingrained in me the value of serving my community. And I've carried that with me whether it's through my church, neighborhood, Boy Scouts or the accounting profession,” said Rugger. “I know a lot of people have invested their time and energy in helping me grow professionally, and I want to give back to the younger generations of CPAs.”

More broadly, he has committed to sharing his expertise outside the profession. He served on the board of trustees of his alma mater, Lyon College, from 2016-2018 and

as the chapter advisor to his fraternity there from 2013-2016. He also has served on

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help them improve their financial lives.”

The AICPA created this award to honor the legacy of Maximo Mukelabai, a member of the inaugural class of the [AICPA Leadership Academy](#) and the youngest chair of the North Carolina Association of CPAs Board of Directors. Tragically, his life was cut short at age 36.

The eligibility criteria to apply for the Maximo Mukelabai award are:

- Holding the CPA license and being between the ages of 22 and 40
- Being a regular voting member of the AICPA
- Promoting the CPA profession
- Volunteering in activities that advance the accounting profession
- Participating in community-based organizations that improve people's lives

To be considered for the award, candidates submitted applications and details on their volunteer history, along with professional reference forms from peers, employers and state CPA societies. A task force of young CPAs then reviewed all qualified nominations to determine the winner.

Questions on the nomination process may be directed to [YoungCPANetwork@aicpa.org](mailto:YoungCPANetwork@aicpa.org). The application period for the 2020 award will begin this summer. More information is available at [www.aicpa.org/YoungCPAAward](http://www.aicpa.org/YoungCPAAward).

Accounting

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