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accomplishments and contributions of women in the CPA profession and demonstrate to emerging female leaders that success is not out of reach.

Sep. 27, 2021

Six outstanding business leaders have been honored by the Maryland Association of CPAs as Maryland's "Women to Watch" for 2021. The honorees are:

- Tamara Bensky, CPA, a member and partner at Myers and Stauffer LC in Baltimore, in the "Experienced Leader" category.
- Sharon Gary Finney, Ph.D., CPA, a professor and chairperson with Morgan State University, in the "Experienced Leader" category.
- Karen Syrylo, CPA, sole practitioner and owner of Karen T. Syrylo, CPA, in the "Experienced Leader" category.
- Stacy Gretz, CPA, a principal at SC&H Group in Sparks, Md., in the "Emerging Leader" category.
- Jessica McClain, CPA, CISA, PMP, CITP, CGFM, controller with Brand USA in Washington, D.C., in the "Emerging Leader" category.
- Tricia Katebini, CPA, MBA, senior manager at GRF CPAs & Advisors in Bethesda, Md., in the "Emerging Leader" category.

Launched in 2014 by the American Institute of CPAs, the awards highlight the accomplishments and contributions of women in the CPA profession and demonstrate to emerging female leaders that success is not out of reach.

"We are incredibly proud of this year's winners — indeed, of all the honorees for this year's awards," said MACPA CEO Jackie Brown. "They represent the best this profession has to offer, and they serve as role models not only for other women in the profession, but for every accounting and finance professional on the planet."

“We had 22 honorees for this year’s awards,” said Lexy Kessler, CPA, chair of the

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This year’s winners are:

- **Tamara Bensky, CPA**, a member and partner at Myers and Stauffer LC in Baltimore. She is partner-in-charge of numerous engagements across several engagement teams at the firm, including Cost Report / Disproportionate Share Hospital Auditing, Managed Care, and Benefit-Program Integrity. Tami has a long history of volunteerism within the profession. She served as a member of the MACPA’s Board of Directors from 2003-08; her tenure included a year as chair of the board from 2006-07. She continues to be an active volunteer for both the MACPA and the American Institute of CPAs and has served on numerous committees and task forces for each organization. Most recently, she is serving as a member of the Maryland State Board of Public Accountancy.
- **Sharon Gary Finney, Ph.D., CPA**, professor and chairperson of the Department of Accounting and Finance at the Earl G. Graves School of Business and Management at Morgan State University in Baltimore. Dr. Finney was one of the earliest minority females to pass the CPA Exam in 1977. She went on to earn a Doctorate in Accounting and had dedicated more than 32 years to teaching, mentoring students, doing research for many publications, and actively participating in national organizations such as AACSB, NABA, AICPA, MACPA, and the American Accounting Association.
- **Karen Syrylo, CPA**, sole practitioner and owner of Karen T. Syrylo, CPA. She has specialized in multi-state tax consulting services for more than 35 years, working with clients in a wide variety of industries on matters of multistate tax planning, compliance, and audit defense and appeals, in income tax, sales tax, property tax, unclaimed property, and other taxes. The highlight of her tax career saw her initiate the constitutional argument for the *Wynne v. Comptroller* case, which was ultimately successful in front of the United States Supreme Court. Karen is a long-time member and former chairperson of the MACPA’s State Tax Committee, and a member of the

planning committee for the annual Advanced Tax Institute. She has been recognized

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Severn, Md.

- Alla Kashlinskaya, CPA, executive director of tax at KPMG LLP in Baltimore.
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Emerging Leaders

This year's winners are:

- **Stacy Gretz, CPA**, a principal at SC&H Group in Sparks, Md. She assists the firm's clients through the entire process of administering an estate – from the probate process, to gathering and retitling assets, and even the taxes and distribution of assets. Stacy is a member of the AICPA and the MACPA, and is also a member of the Baltimore Estate Planning Council. She is the lead representative of SC&H's volunteer initiative with the Ronald McDonald House Charities of Baltimore. Stacy also volunteers regularly with Junior Achievement of Central Maryland and participates as a mentor in the Towson University Accounting Mentorship program.
- **Jessica McClain, CPA, CISA, PMP, CITP, CGFM**, controller with Brand USA in Washington, D.C. She is an accomplished, award-winning, and credentialed accounting and audit leader with more than 12 years of experience and a deep understanding of financial reporting, financial statement and information technology auditing, business process evaluation and improvement, internal control and risk assessment, and audit remediation. Jessica serves on several AICPA volunteer committees, as a board member of the newly restructured MACPA Foundation and with the Greater Washington Society of CPAs as a board member. She is an appointee to the Board of Maryland 529, where she serves on the Audit and Governance committee. She has been recognized as a 2020 Leading Women award-winner by *The Daily Record*, a 2020 CPA Practice Advisor 40 Under 40 Professional, and as a 2020 Top 50 Women in Accounting by Practice Ignition.

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Other nominees in the Emerging Leader category are:

- Addie Blickenstaff, CPA, senior auditor with DeLeon and Stang, CPAs & Advisors in Frederick, Md.
- Kelli Cobb, CPA, MBA, member with Smith Elliott Kearns & Company, LLC, in Hagerstown, Md.
- Mary Kathryn Demarest, CPA, adjunct lecturer and faculty advisor to Beta Alpha Psi at the University of Baltimore
- Samantha Fisher, CPA, CVA, manager of the Forensic Investigations and Litigation Support Services Group with BDO USA, LLP, in Owings Mills, Md.
- Kristy Gold, CPA, audit director with PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP in Baltimore
- Samantha Haines, CPA, senior manager of tax services at Rosen, Sapperstein & Friedlander, LLC, in Towson, Md.
- Andrea Imhoff, CPA, PHR, human resource manager and EEO officer at M. Luis Construction Company, Inc., in Silver Spring, Md.
- Kori Pitts, CPA, tax manager with RSM US LLP in Baltimore
- Rachel Reiter, CPA, assurance supervisor with RSM US LLP in Baltimore
- Jeanette Stillwagner, CPA, signing director with CliftonLarsonAllen LLP in Baltimore
- Marietou Yao, CPA, staff accountant with Garbelman Winslow CPAs in Upper Marlboro, Md.

The 2021 MACPA “Women to Watch” awards were made possible by the [MACPA Foundation](#), which is committed to building a diverse CPA talent pipeline to secure the future of our profession.

The awards also were made possible by the following strategic partners:

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