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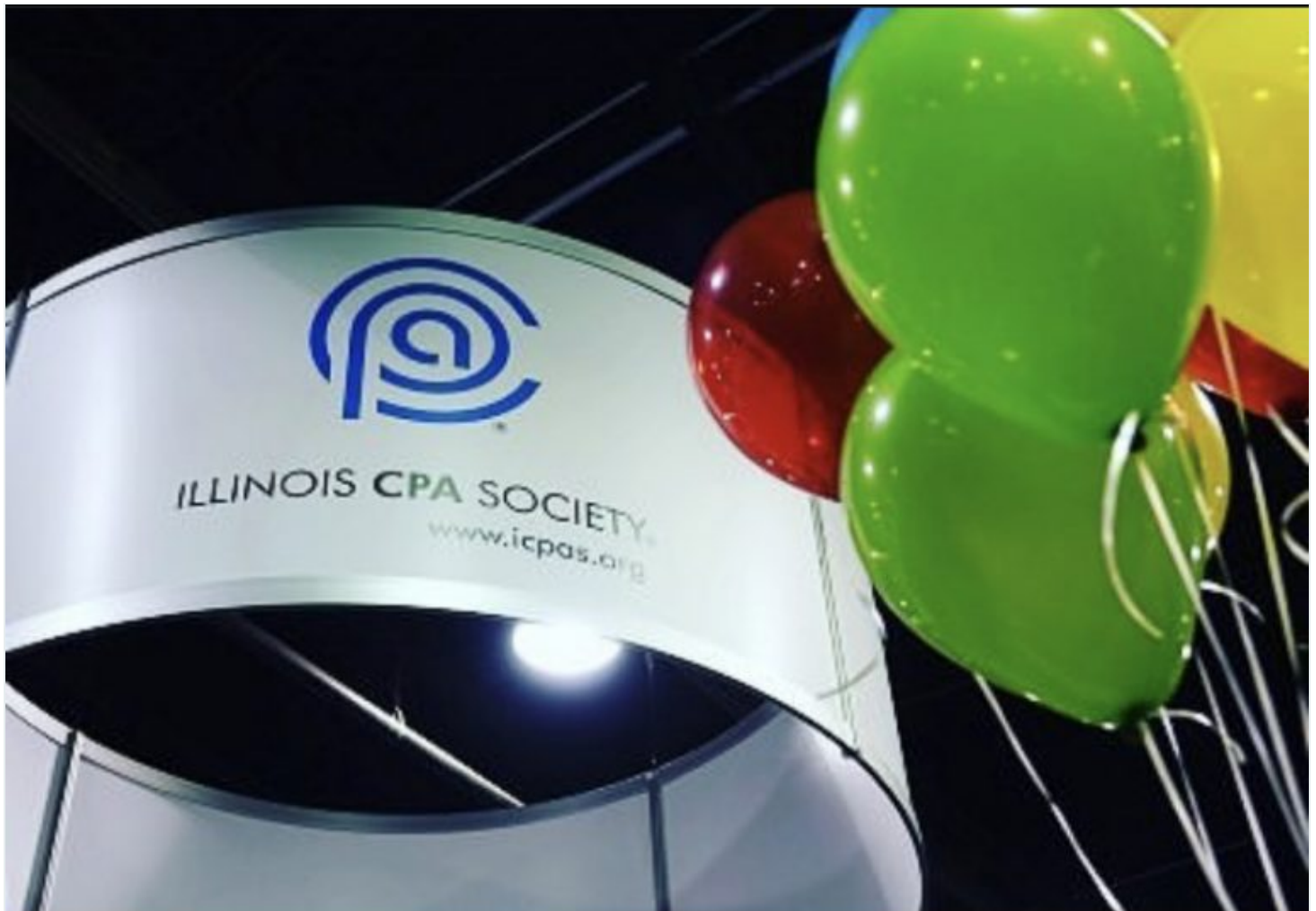
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ACCOUNTING & AUDIT

State CPA Societies in Action: Illinois CPA Society

ICPAS serves an extraordinary community of more than 22,600 accounting and finance professionals in a variety of CPA and non-CPA roles.

Mary Girsch-Bock • Jan. 18, 2023



Founded in 1903, the [Illinois CPA Society](#) (ICPAS) is one of the largest state CPA societies in the nation, with the core mission of “enhancing the value of the CPA profession” through meaningful and convenient education, timely and relevant information, influential advocacy, and countless opportunities to make powerful professional connections. ICPAS serves an extraordinary community of more than 22,600 accounting and finance professionals in a variety of CPA and non-CPA roles positioned throughout the public accounting, corporate finance, not-for-profit, consulting, education, and government sectors.

The Illinois CPA Society: At-a-Glance

Current Members: 22,600

Founded: 1903

Headquarters: Chicago

www.ICPAs.org



ILLINOIS CPA SOCIETY®

Entering its 120th year, the Illinois CPA Society begins the new year with a new President and CEO slated to take the reins in February 2023. With current President and CEO Todd Shapiro announcing his retirement, Geoffrey Brown will step into the role next month.

“The society’s position as a respected thought leader and catalyst for change in the profession is part of what drew me to the organization,” said Brown. “As we move forward together, I want to make sure we don’t lose sight of that position.”

Brown has more than 20 years of experience as an association professional. He comes to the Illinois CPA Society from the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA), where he served as CEO for the past nine years. Before NAPFA, Brown was an executive and an Association Manager at SmithBucklin Corporation.

In his role as President and CEO, Brown will play a prominent role in the Society’s growth and evolution. He will be the fifth leader of the Illinois CPA Society, and its first Black President and CEO.

“My immediate priority for 2023 is ensuring that the leadership transitions are successful and that we don’t lose focus on the mission-critical issues during this important time of change. The society has a solid history, and a great team and culture, so I’m confident we’re positioned to navigate the change we’re facing as an organization along with the change impacting the members and profession we serve.”

Brown holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Maryland and lives in Chicago with his family. He is also a board member for the AIDS Foundation of Chicago and the Association of Fraternal Leadership and Values.

“The Society has a long history of growing and stewarding the CPA community in Illinois and I am honored to have been selected to lead it into the future,” said Brown.

Who are the members?

With more than 22,000 members, the Illinois CPA Society is one the largest CPA societies in the U.S. Their membership breakdown is as follows:

- 43% are in public practice
- 17 % are in corporate finance
- 15% are non-CPA finance and accounting professionals
- 11% are students
- 9% are retired professionals
- 5% are in the non-profit/government sector

Member age varies as well, with 37% of members under 35, with 29% aged 51-65.

Giving Back

Founded by Illinois CPA Society members in 1998, the [CPA Endowment Fund of Illinois](#) is the charitable partner of the society. A 501(c)(3) charitable organization, the Fund offers funding for scholarships for students unable to keep up with the cost of completing their education. The Fund also offers outreach programs that are designed to support accounting students and future CPAs.

One of the Fund's most recent projects was [“A CPA Diversity Report: Uncovering the Barriers to Success.”](#) Focusing on the firsthand experience of Mary T. Washington Wylie Internship Preparation Program (MTWW IPP) participants, the study uses survey data and insight from personal interviews of program participants, who shared what they've experienced since entering the workplace.

Outgoing Illinois CPA Society President and CEO Todd Shapiro announced his retirement in late 2022 after a 24-year career with the Society. Here he shares some of his thoughts on the Society and the profession.

“I’m really proud of the work we’ve done to keep pushing the needle on two key areas of focus for our organization: 1) ensuring the long-term relevance of the CPA profession, and 2) increasing diversity in the profession.



Outgoing president
Todd Shapiro.

Shapiro notes how the CPA profession is changing, particularly in light of new technology such as AI and RPA changing what CPAs do and how they do it, especially in key areas such as compliance services. “Technology is a valuable tool, but we must be mindful of how it risks further commoditizing our services.”

Shapiro goes on to say “we believe that CPAs need to become the most trusted *and* strategic business advisors, which is a message we’ve been pushing since our 2019 Insight Special Feature, “[Trust Is Not Enough: Recharting the CPA’s Path Forward](#),” was released. Our thought leadership and the implementation of our Strategy Academy have been instrumental in helping our members adapt and develop their critical and strategic thinking skills.

Increasing diversity, equity, and inclusion continue to be challenging, which Shapiro also addresses. “We’ve never shied away from talking about these tough topics, and our two recent Insight Special Features go in-depth on both of these issues. “[A CPA Pipeline Report: Decoding the Decline](#)” shares our findings on what’s causing students and young professionals to forgo pursuing the CPA credential, inspiring national conversations on the topic.

New President Looks Forward

Brown shared his thoughts on how he hopes to contribute over his tenure and beyond.



New ICPAS president
Geof Brown.

“Over the next few years, we’ll continue to focus on making the society and profession more relevant and sustainable,” he said. “This focus will be anchored in delivering member value through our strategic pillars of advocacy, information, education, and connections; amplifying our work to diversify the profession; and cultivating valuable relationships with our partners and stakeholders. In my short time with the society, my appreciation for its focus on the profession’s relevance, talent, and diversity challenges has only increased. These are long-term issues that demand the attention and resources of everyone involved in the CPA profession—and we’ll be here to champion positive change.”

State CPA Societies in Action is a new series that will highlight current events at all of the state and territorial CPA societies across the U.S.

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