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Leader and Experienced Leader.

Isaac M. O'Bannon • May. 15, 2023



2023 Women to Watch Award Recipients: Starletta Forson, CPA (left); Melissa E. Struck, CPA (center); and Beth A. Mueller, CPA (right).

The Illinois CPA Society (ICPAS), in partnership with the ICPAS Women's Committee, presented the recipients of the prestigious 2023 Women to Watch Awards at the ICPAS Women's Leadership Forum last Friday, May 12, 2023, in Chicago, where they received their awards and participated in a panel discussion on advancing women in the accounting profession.

Each year, Women to Watch Awards are presented in two categories, Emerging

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and inclusion and are paving the way for more women to find their own success in the accounting and finance world.”

The following honorees will be further recognized at the ICPAS Leadership Recognition and Awards Dinner on June 8, 2023, also in Chicago.

Emerging Leader Award

Bestowed upon professionals with less than 15 years of experience in the accounting and finance profession, the Emerging Leader Award recognizes women demonstrating outstanding leadership, contributions to the profession, creation and implementation of unique initiatives in the workplace, involvement in community service and/or professional organizations, and involvement with their Alma Mater or high school or college-level finance and accounting students. This year's recipient is:

- **Starletta Forson, CPA**, is a senior tax consultant with Deloitte LLP, where she currently helps lead teams consisting of corporate, partnership, and individual entity tax engagements. An alumna of ICPAS' Mary T. Washington Wylie Internship Preparation Program, Forson shares this program inspired her to focus on advancing diversity and inclusion not only within her workplace but also within her community. At Deloitte, Forson sits on diversity panels, speaks at recruiting events, and serves as a diversity advocate. She has also started her own not-for-profit, “Inclusive Teams, Inclusive Dreams,” which creates community and mentoring relationships between young professionals and high school students. Forson is being recognized, in part, for her efforts to move the needle on achieving greater diversity in the accounting profession and for her mentorship to others.

Experienced Leader Award

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guidance and oversight to Deloitte's MADE commitment to advance diversity and equity in accounting and established the Deloitte Foundation for Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Fund at the School of Accountancy at her alma mater, Southern Illinois University. A recipient of mentorship, support, and sponsorship throughout her career, Mueller shares that she is committed to paying her success in the accounting profession forward by supporting other aspiring professionals and striving to increase diversity within the profession. Mueller is being recognized, in part, for her efforts to ensure the profession reflects the communities it serves, for creating work environments where everyone can thrive, and for striving to bring innovation into the recruiting and retention process to open doors to diverse individuals seeking careers in accounting.

- **Melissa E. Struck, CPA**, is a principal with CLA (CliftonLarsonAllen LLP) and has spent most of her 22 years in the accounting field performing, managing, and supervising audits of tax-exempt organizations. She has extensive experience handling the distinctive issues facing these organizations in today's challenging environment and is the leader of the Greater Chicagoland Nonprofit Services Group. Struck is a frequent speaker at both trade association and CLA seminars and conferences addressing topics such as cost allocation, alternative investments, and accounting for contributions. Struck is being recognized, in part, for her vast professional involvement with organizations like the AICPA, American Society of Association Executives, Association Forum, and ICPAS, as well as for her contributions to the betterment of associations and the profession through her speaking and educational presentations.

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