

# Rising Stars

By DeLynn Deakins, Today's CPA Managing Editor, and Kari Owen, TXCPA Marketing and Communications Specialist

Through the Rising Stars Program, TXCPA recognizes CPA members 40 years old and younger who have demonstrated significant leadership qualities and active involvement in TXCPA, the accounting profession and/or their communities. A TXCPA selection committee named the following 20 up and comers based on their contributions to the accounting profession and their communities. We now introduce you to the members, in alphabetical order, who are the Rising Stars honorees for 2022.



**Joshua Audi, CPA | Fort Worth Chapter | CFO/Vice President of Administration | Catholic Charities Diocese of Fort Worth Inc.**

In his position as the CFO/Vice President of Administration, Joshua Audi leads the accounting, business operations, project management, social enterprise and Texas Office for Refugees divisions within the organization.

As a volunteer for TXCPA Fort Worth, he brings his critical thinking and problem-solving skills to the chapter's Nonprofit Interest Group. He has also mentored many CPAs in the not-for-profit area.

His service in the community includes mentoring a refugee from Somalia who was searching for a safe place to call home. Audi tutored him for years in math and science and was amazed at his drive and hard work. Incredibly, despite being years behind in school, he graduated high school by 18, was the first member of his community to go to college and graduated with a business degree from the University of Texas at Arlington. He now has a family and is working in business to build a new life in America for the next generation.

**Tara Blazor, CPA | Brazos Valley Chapter | Senior Lecturer & Assistant Department Head | Texas A&M University**

Tara Blazor is a senior lecturer and assistant department head at Texas A&M University where she teaches junior-level accounting courses and coordinates their internal audit program.

She is passionate about the CPA profession and her students. In May 2020, when COVID-19 disrupted in-person events, she went above and beyond to send encouraging words to students whose CPA testing was disrupted and worked with colleagues to coordinate a virtual graduation ceremony.

She is actively involved in TXCPA Brazos Valley, having served as treasurer from 2016-2021. She currently serves as the TXCPA Brazos Valley Career Awareness chair and as a faculty ambassador for TXCPA. Throughout the year, she continues to coordinate and host chapter events on campus to increase students' awareness of local accounting opportunities and provide a chance for employers to find local talent.





### **Anat Borodyansky, CPA | Dallas Chapter | Shareholder | Huselton, Morgan & Maulsby (HM&M)**

Anat Borodyansky is a tax shareholder at Huselton, Morgan & Maulsby PC. She has an extensive tax practice providing exceptional service to businesses and individuals in the construction, professional services and health care industries.

She is a strong advocate of the accounting profession, encouraging students to pursue their CPA license and work in public accounting. She is also a past president for the Dallas Chapter of the Accounting and Financial Women's Alliance (AFWA) and has served as a director on the National Foundation Board of the AFWA.

She was born in the former Soviet Union, moved to Israel as a small child, but got to Texas as soon as she could when she moved to the U.S. in her teens. She understands the sacrifices and drive needed to pursue education and opportunities to make a better life.

### **Rebecca Buell, CPA | Dallas Chapter | Chief Financial Officer | National Breast Cancer Foundation Inc.**



As the CFO, Rebecca Buell oversees multiple functions of the organization, including finance and accounting, human resources, risk management, business operations, information technology and the general administration of the office. She also has a heart for mentoring young people and started the first internship program for college students. The organization now has 10 full-time hires directly from the program.

In the community, she serves on the Board of Directors for JFS of Greater Dallas, a non-profit mental health and social services agency. She has also formed the NTX Nonprofit CFO Affinity Group that exists to provide peer support and share best practices among people in similar roles for the betterment of the industry.

Her colleagues have said that she exemplifies what it means to be a true servant leader, never too busy to mentor and pour into others to help them reach their full potential.



### **Sarah Burgess, CPA | Austin Chapter | International Tax Manager | Lumen Technologies**

Sarah Burgess is an international tax manager at Epicor Software. In her position, she ensures compliance for Epicor's footprint across 130 jurisdictions and manages all aspects of transfer pricing, including documentation requirements, policy changes, strategy and planning, and calculations.

She currently serves on the TXCPA Austin Executive Oversight Committee and is actively involved with TXCPA Austin's Leaders Emerging in the Accounting Profession (LEAP) group.

Her greatest personal achievement was working to pay for her own education and graduating at age 29. She was the first in her immediate family to graduate from college in several generations. Adding to her success, she was also named TXCPA Austin's Rookie of the Year in 2020 and TXCPA Young CPA of the Year in 2021.

### **Samuel Cooper, CPA, CFE | Houston Chapter | Forensic and Litigation Services Senior | Weaver**



Samuel Cooper is a forensic and litigation services senior at Weaver in Houston. In his position, he analyzes company financial data to identify potential fraud, and assists with the preparation of testimony for losses and economic damages.

He is actively involved with TXCPA Houston and serves on the planning committees for their CFO/Controllers Conference, Spring Accounting Expo and CPE by the Sea Conference. He is also on TXCPA's Young CPAs and Emerging Professionals Subcommittee of Membership Committee and Business Valuations, Forensic and Litigation Services Committee, and will be on the 2023-2024 Houston Association of Certified Fraud Examiners (Houston ACFE) Board of Directors, serving as the student relations director.

He is dedicated to helping students and mentoring those entering the accounting profession. He has participated in mentorship programs, attends career fairs and organizes events to encourage the next generation of CPAs.



### **Emily Do, CPA | San Antonio Chapter | Tax Manager | Haynie & Company**

Emily Do is a tax manager at Haynie & Company, with experience in tax compliance, planning and consulting for high-net-worth individuals and businesses in various industries, including construction, real estate and manufacturing.

She is an active member of TXCPA San Antonio's Member Involvement Committee, participating in community service projects and networking events. She was the 2020 winner of the chapter's Fiesta Design Medal Contest, which raises funds for their largest community service project, Funlympics.

Her greatest personal achievement was moving from Vietnam to the U.S. to pursue a master's degree in accounting. While attending Texas State University, she was active in their Beta Alpha Psi and Accounting Club activities and was selected as a McCoy College of Business Fellowship of Distinction recipient.

## AJ Evans, CPA | East Texas Chapter | Assurance Manager | Prothro Wilhelmi & Company, PLLC

In his position at Prothro, Wilhelmi & Company in his hometown of Tyler, Texas, areas of practice for AJ Evans include audits of financial statements for local governments, school districts, not-for-profit organizations, small businesses, and employee benefit plans.



He is currently serving as vice president on the Executive Committee of TXCPA East Texas, where he also chairs the CPE Committee. He has been involved as a board member for the chapter, as well as serving on the chapter's Young CPAs Committee.

He is involved as a board member and Executive Committee member with Heart of Tyler, a non-profit organization that strives to partner with small businesses, local government and passionate members of the community to showcase and revitalize historic downtown Tyler for the people and places that make it incredible. He has assisted with planning showcase events that have raised tens of thousands of dollars for downtown causes.



## Derby Gallo, CPA | Permian Basin Chapter | Tax Professional | Derby Gallo, CPA

Derby Gallo is an entrepreneur who has entered into a joint venture with David W. Baker, P.C. in Midland. As a tax professional, she prepares and reviews tax returns for individuals, companies and other organizations.

She is very active in TXCPA Permian Basin, currently serving as chapter president. Additionally, she has chaired both the Outreach and Pipeline Committees of her chapter. In these roles, she continually strives to advance new ideas and ways to engage current members, CPA candidates and students with TXCPA Permian Basin.

She also leads efforts for the chapter to volunteer with the West Texas Food Bank, Keep Midland Beautiful and Keep Odessa Beautiful. Her peers consider her to be a CPA who takes her contributions seriously and is an asset to both TXCPA and the accounting profession.

## Sara Grenier, CPA | Fort Worth Chapter | Assurance Partner | FORVIS

Sara Grenier is an assurance partner at FORVIS where she provides audit and consulting services for not-for-profit organizations and higher education institutions. She is also experienced with single audit requirements and has participated in peer reviews of other firms.



She has presented at several TXCPA events, including the TXCPA Fort Worth Member Appreciation Day, TXCPA Dallas Convergence 2021 and CPE Expo.

She is also involved with Child Care Associates, one of the largest child development programs in North Texas. She has served on the Board of Directors since 2018 and served as chairman in 2020. In 2020, she was recognized by the Fort Worth Business Press as a "40 Under 40" award recipient.



## Benjamin Johns, CPA, CGMA | Fort Worth Chapter | Owner | BWJ CPA PC

Benjamin Johns is a CPA in Fort Worth. His firm services individuals, partnerships, corporations, subchapter S corporations, trusts and estates, and non-profits.

He has been involved in numerous charitable activities, including Habitat for Humanity, the Tarrant Area Food Bank and building a playground for the children at the RISE School.

He has served on TXCPA Fort Worth's Accounting Career Education Committee (ACE) and participated in the CPA Career Forum the committee hosts at the University of Texas at Arlington. He considers it very important and rewarding to talk with college students about a career as a CPA, explaining what it's like to work in both audit and tax and how the knowledge gained from working in one can be applied to a myriad of other opportunities available outside the traditional realm of accounting.

## Jordan Johnston, CPA | San Antonio Chapter | Tax Senior | Lowrey Powell Stevens and Mangum PC

Jordan Johnston has been with the San Antonio CPA firm of Lowrey Powell Stevens and Mangum PC since 2017. He works primarily in the areas of tax, audit, consulting and accounting services. He approaches his work as a highly knowledgeable and adaptable professional who is ready to take on challenges of all sizes.



He has served as chair of TXCPA San Antonio's Member Involvement Committee, which is one of the chapter's most active volunteer-led groups. He led the development of the chapter's New CPA Orientation program. The program integrates new professionals to the chapter and is offered in both in-person and virtual formats.

As a high-energy and ambitious CPA, he embraces professional involvement and community service activities with an attitude of diligence and the desire to share with new members the benefits of getting involved.



### **Kristie Jumper, CPA | Permian Basin Chapter | Controller | Elevation Resources**

Kristie Jumper is the controller at Elevation Resources, an independent energy company based in Midland. In this position, she oversees the organization's accounting processes, compiles and prepares financial reports and statements, and manages employees in the accounting department.

As a highly involved volunteer, she serves on the Board of Directors for both TXCPA Permian Basin and the Petroleum Accountants Society of the Permian Basin (PASPB). She has volunteered with TXCPA Permian Basin's Meet the CPAs event at the University of Texas of the Permian Basin campus where UTPB students had the opportunity to ask professionals in the area about the process and advantages of becoming a CPA.

She has also organized events for PASPB members, including ones to benefit other colleagues and non-profit organizations. Her peers consider her to be a bright and rising star in the Permian Basin.

### **Rebecca Manriquez, CPA | Dallas Chapter | Senior Tax Analyst | Thomson Reuters**



In her position as a senior tax analyst at Thomson Reuters, Rebecca Manriquez develops tax software for their GoSystem and OneSource products. This involves implementing tax law by coding the tax calculations with logic in the software, designing the visual representation used by clients, and coordinating the forms and e-file approval for product release.

She is a graduate of the TXCPA Dallas Leadership Development Academy and has been a valued member of the chapter's CPA Involvement, Scholarship, and Membership Committees, as well as the CPE Council and Young Professionals Group. She has also represented the chapter on the TXCPA Board of Directors and is involved with the Latino Employee Network at Thomson Reuters.

She is regarded as a dedicated, enthusiastic contributor who is always ready to make a positive impact on her profession and community.



### **Andrew Merryman, CPA, RIA | Victoria Chapter | Partner | Bumgardner Morrison & Company LLP**

Andrew Merryman is a partner and licensed financial advisor at Bumgardner, Morrison and Company. In his position, he performs peer reviews, oversees technical reviews for all accounting and auditing engagements, is the primary reviewer of approximately 250 tax clients, and assigns and facilitates firm-sponsored CPE.

He has served on the TXCPA Peer Review Committee (and several others) and five years on the TXCPA Victoria board, donated time on the board of Habitat for Humanity, and has shown great leadership skills both within his firm and the community. He also plays guitar in his church worship band.

His colleagues consider him to be a wonderful example of a CPA who shows enthusiasm for the profession and is always eager to lend his expertise to those in need, whether it be in the area of wealth management, tax, audit or general accounting.



### **Julie Zamora 2022 Rising Star Award**

Congratulations, Julie, for receiving such a prestigious award from the Texas Society of Certified Public Accountants.

We are proud of all you have accomplished professionally and personally. We know your future will bring continued success.

## Alba Priest, CPA | Permian Basin Chapter | Audit Manager | Whitley Penn LLP

Alba Priest is an audit manager at Whitley Penn, where she works as the engagement lead on multiple audits and facilitates contact between clients, the staff and the partner.

She is actively involved in TXCPA Permian Basin, having served on the Young and Emerging Professionals Committee. She is also the treasurer for the Petroleum Accountants Society of the Permian Basin (PASPB).

She moved to the U.S. from Mexico at a very young age and was the first person in her family to go to college. In her accounting career, she has worked her way up to management. She is regarded as a volunteer who strives to recruit young people into the accounting profession and enjoys seeing them get excited about their potential to make a difference.



## Renee Prince, CPA, CGMA | Fort Worth Chapter | Founder and President | Renee Prince CPA PC

Renee Prince is a sole practitioner in Granbury. Her firm has helped lead the way for virtual firms/services since 2012. She provides clients with tax preparation, consulting and accounting services.

She has led the Tax Group for TXCPA Fort Worth and serves on the AICPA Council. She works to make an impact by being involved in her small-town community in a variety of different ways, from helping small business owners get on their feet to helping individuals feel more comfortable about their tax returns.

She understands that her work as a trusted advisor is very important to clients and has a huge effect not only on their businesses, but also their lives.

## Andrea Rosillo, CPA | Dallas Chapter | Tax Senior | EY

As a Tax Senior, Andrea Rosillo provides tax planning consulting services to her corporate clients in the Technology, Media and Entertainment, and Pharmaceutical industries. Currently, her focus area is on calculating and substantiating the Research and Development tax credits that are claimed by her clients.

She is a member of the Association of Latino Professionals For America (ALPFA) DFW Professional Board and was recognized as one of 50 successful women across the nation in ALPFA's 2021 Latinas to Watch list. She is also part of the Co-Lead for EY's Dallas-Fort Worth LatinX Professional Network.

Her parents moved their family from Mexico to Texas when she was 10 years of age to pursue a better future. In her career, she has learned that networking is not enough - you have to create and invest time in relationships where you can share lessons learned, opportunities and knowledge.



## Julie Sigety, CPA | Austin Chapter | Auditor | Atchley & Associates LLP

As a Senior Audit Associate, Julie Sigety reviews financial statements, reports and other documents to ensure they are accurate and complete and coordinates the different steps of audit engagements with her clients and staff. She helped to improve audit documentation related to internal controls and audit programs. She also researched the AICPA audit standards and her firm's RSM Alliance audit guides to propose necessary audit documentation improvements that were accepted across areas of the audit.

She serves on TXCPA Austin's Oversight Council, is very involved in the chapter's Leaders Emerging in the Accounting Profession (LEAP) group, and is the chair of the TXCPA Austin Mentor Program.

She has an educational background as a teacher prior to becoming a CPA and greatly enjoys mentoring and helping others reach their educational and career goals. She looks to continue mentorship throughout her career to assist the next generation of CPAs.

## Julia (Julie) Zamora, CPA | San Antonio Chapter | Tax Senior | ATKG LLP

Julie Zamora prepares and reviews federal and state tax returns, consolidated federal income tax returns, and federal and quarterly estimated tax estimates. She also supervises and coaches staff personnel and is on the onboarding committee for new employees.

She has been an enthusiastic leader of TXCPA San Antonio's Young Accounting Professionals group, offering innovative and safety-conscious ways for the chapter's under-40 members to connect during the pandemic. In addition, she has greeted new CPAs at the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy Swearing-in Ceremony.

Her service in the community has included running the community involvement committee at her firm. She and the committee organized a food bank monetary donation drive, blood drives, multiple food drives, a Habitat for Humanity house build, and a fundraiser for the Capernaum Art and Talent Show. She is considered by her peers to be a volunteer who is quick to jump in and help in any way possible.

