



TXCPA 2019 RISING STARS

By Kari Owen and DeLynn Deakins

Through the Rising Stars Program, TXCPA recognizes CPA members 40 years old and younger who have demonstrated innovative 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 2019.

TXCPA 2019 RISING STARS



Lara Akinboye, CPA, CFE, CMA
Senior Tax Advisor
Durbin Bennett Tax Advisors Inc.,
Austin

Lara Akinboye is a senior tax advisor at Durbin Bennett Tax Advisors, where she is responsible for preparing and reviewing federal and state tax returns, as well as training new staff on best practices. She is an active member in TXCPA Austin, where she has served on the chapter's Executive Board, chaired the Leaders Emerging in the Accounting Profession (LEAP) program and participated in student outreach initiatives as a member of the Accounting Career Exploration Panel. In the community, she considers one of her most significant achievements to be her work with the IRS' Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) and Tax Counseling for the Elderly (TCE) programs that assist the elderly and low-income families. She approaches her professional involvement and community service activities with an attitude of diligence and the desire to make an impact no matter how small.



Robert Allen
CPA, CFE, CTL, MBA, MSIS, ALMI
President
The Allen CPA Firm, Houston

Robert Allen founded his accounting firm to assist individuals and businesses by focusing on their long-term financial well-being, believing that those who build a solid financial foundation can realize their dreams. He serves in many volunteer roles. He's a committee member for TXCPA Houston's CPAs Helping Schools program, which provides funding to local districts for educational projects. He also serves with several other community and professional organizations, but he considers one of his most significant accomplishments to have been a mission trip to Temale, Ghana to rebuild and renovate a children's orphanage, including the children's playground area. With only two weeks and working in 90+ degree temperatures, his team was able to complete the project. He stresses the importance of never giving up despite the challenges and is convinced that individuals are much stronger as a team.



Marianne Barry, CPA
Director, Finance
Cook Children's Physician Network,
Fort Worth

In her position at Cook Children's Physician Network in Fort Worth, Marianne Barry is responsible for physician financial reporting and compensation calculation. Being promoted twice with the same employer has allowed her to advance professionally and she shares her knowledge with others through the mentorship of CPAs within her organization. She has served on TXCPA Fort Worth's Board of Directors for a number of years, as well as on the Business and Industry Committee and the Executive Committee as the vice president of programs and secretary. Her work in the community includes roles at her church and at the Texas Ballet Theater School Society. She considers her work helping others grow personally and professionally to be very exciting and rewarding.



Adrian Brito, CPA
Tax Shareholder
Lauterbach, Borschow & Co.,
El Paso

Adrian Brito is one of the youngest shareholders in the tax practice of Lauterbach, Borschow & Co. He has served a diverse client base and earned a reputation as an expert in tax advising for businesses, particularly in the real estate industry. Brito's dedication to the accounting profession is evident in his service as a board member for TXCPA El Paso and on the NMSU College of Business Advisory Board. He is also an active member of his community. He volunteers at his church and serves as the treasurer of Rotary Club of El Paso's free health clinics, Rotacare. He is well regarded by his colleagues and recognized as one of the El Paso area's rising CPA stars.



Stephanie Buduhan, CPA
Audit Manager
PSK LLP
Fort Worth

At PSK LLP, Stephanie Buduhan is an audit manager who prides herself on maintaining strong relationships with clients and serving as a trusted advisor. She enjoys communicating the value of the CPA license to others, particularly to accounting students, through her involvement in various TXCPA Fort Worth activities. Her community involvement includes working with the Greater Arlington Chamber of Commerce Women's Alliance, a group that raises funds to provide scholarships to women enrolled in college in Arlington. She also serves on the Board of Directors of Higher Education Servicing Corporation, a nonprofit student loan servicing agency that aims to inspire students to achieve a higher education through its outreach division, inspirED.



Caitlin Chupe, CPA
Shareholder
Collier, Johnson & Woods, PC
Corpus Christi

As a shareholder at Collier, Johnson & Woods, Caitlin Chupe manages key client relationships and approves audit plan and staffing assignments for various

governmental, not for profit and financial institutions, as well as employee benefit plans. She is considered to be very knowledgeable in her field and is the youngest shareholder at her firm. She has served on TXCPA Corpus Christi's Board and at the state level, on TXCPA's Board of Directors. She also participates in activities for young and emerging professionals at both the state and local level. She is passionate about encouraging young professionals to roll up their sleeves and take ownership in their community and profession, and she seeks to guide future CPAs with any challenges or questions they encounter.



Kate Devey, CPA
Tax Manager
Johnson, Miller & Co., CPAs
Midland

Kate Devey is a tax manager at Johnson, Miller & Co., where she oversees a diverse portfolio of client engagements and relationships, collaborates with management, and is actively engaged in staff development, training and process implementation. She has served on TXCPA Permian Basin's Board of Directors, and is active as part of the CPE Committee, Outreach Committee and Young & Emerging Professionals Committee. She serves her community as vice president for Mission Center Adult Day Service in Midland. In this role, she assists in planning, organizing and developing their annual fundraisers and increasing awareness of the organization's services to improve their presence and recognition in the community. She is regarded as a volunteer who is always quick to jump in and help in any way possible.



Rachel Glasser, CPA
Audit Supervisor
Stovall, Grandey & Allen, LLP
Fort Worth

Rachel Glasser began her career at Stovall, Grandey & Allen as an intern and is now an audit supervisor. Her primary responsibilities include managing audits and reviews for a diverse range of clients. She is an active member of TXCPA Fort Worth, striving to lead her peers through education while advancing the CPA image. Her service includes being a committee member, writing an article for a local publication, participating in the leadership development program and speaking at TXCPA Fort Worth events. She is also a dedicated volunteer with the Girl Scouts organization. Being recognized as a valued member of the CPA community is extremely important to her. She looks to give back to her profession and the public to ensure there are opportunities for individuals in the future.



Phillip Hernandez, CPA
Tax Manager
BKD LLP
Fort Worth

Phillip Hernandez is a tax manager at BKD LLP in Fort Worth. He actively participates with TXCPA Fort Worth, serving in a leadership role in the young professionals

group and making a number of innovations that enable rapid growth of the chapter's November service project. He also serves on The University of North Texas (UNT) Junior Accounting Advisory Board (JAAB), which advises the chair of the accounting department about curriculum and professional development issues, and was on the board of directors of a not-for-profit entity called Project 2713. This organization exists to support local and inner-family adoptions. He considers it very important and rewarding to use his knowledge and skills as a CPA to help others in his profession and community.



Jessica Lopez, CPA
Director of Finance & Controller
All Web Leads, Inc.
Austin

As the director of finance and controller, Jessica Lopez manages and mentor's AWL's accounting team, oversees internal financial reporting functions, manages the monthly close cycle, evaluates and applies technical accounting guidance, and more. Her extensive participation with TXCPA Austin includes serving as treasurer-elect and serving on the Leaders Emerging in the Accounting Profession (LEAP) Committee and the Membership Committee. She has also assisted in reviving the chapter's leadership development program, Pathway to Leadership. In the community, she has been involved with a number of civic organizations, including Keep Austin Beautiful and the Central Texas Food Bank. Lopez finds great satisfaction in leading and encouraging a high-performing team, volunteering, and growing both professionally and personally.



Laura Mardis, CPA
Tax Manager
LaPorte CPAs & Business Advisors
Houston

Laura Mardis has been with LaPorte CPAs since 2012. She serves in the tax services department, managing client relationships, compliance, training and development of staff. Mardis is actively involved with TXCPA Houston and volunteers on the CPAs Helping Schools Committee. In this role, she enjoys talking to students about accounting careers. She has presented to several audiences, such as Junior Achievement Inspire and the Expanding Your Horizons in Science and Mathematics 26th Annual Conference. She was awarded TXCPA Houston's Outstanding Young CPA award in 2018 for volunteer work with this committee.



Brett Morrison, CPA
Managing Partner
Jennings, Hawley & Co., P.C.
Corpus Christi

Brett Morrison's most significant business achievement was rising to the position of managing partner at Jennings, Hawley & Co., P.C. before he turned 30. In this position, he manages the firm, oversees tax planning for clients and prepares advanced tax returns. He served as president of TXCPA

Corpus Christi in 2018-19 and continues to be involved in student and college activities at the chapter level. He enjoys attending career days at local high schools and universities to offer advice and insight into the accounting profession. In addition to his work with TXCPA, he serves as a board member of the USS Lexington Museum on the Bay Association.



Nina Perez, CPA
Tax Principal
Briggs & Veselka Co.
Houston

Nina Perez has worked at Briggs & Veselka for more than 10 years. She currently serves as a tax principal, where she is responsible for the preparation and review of large corporate and individual federal, state and international tax returns. Her biggest personal achievement was becoming the first person in her family to graduate from college. To accomplish her goal of becoming a CPA, she worked during the day and attended school at night while raising two young children. Today, she is passionate about helping students and serving as a mentor for the next generation of CPAs. She is also active within TXCPA Houston and has served on their Community Services Committee, Scholarship Extravaganza Committee and Membership Committee.



Heather Sanders, CPA
Tax Manager
Henry & Peters, PC
East Texas

As a tax manager at Henry & Peters, PC, Heather Sanders focuses on tax planning, reporting and compliance services for individuals, partnerships and corporations, trusts, and estates. She continually seeks opportunities to promote the CPA profession and creates programs to assist aspiring CPAs. In 2018, she helped develop a mentorship program between TXCPA East Texas and UT Tyler. She currently volunteers as a mentor at UT Tyler and helps recruit students to the profession by speaking at local high schools. She also serves as treasurer of The University of Texas at Tyler Advisory Council and is an active member of TXCPA East Texas' Young CPAs Committee and the Tyler Young Professionals Network.



Lauren Seaux, CPA
Assistant Controller
The Signature Group
Southeast Texas

Lauren Seaux is the assistant controller at The Signature Group, where she assists with the accounting operations of the company, including the production of periodic financial reports, maintenance of an adequate system of accounting records, and a

comprehensive set of controls and budgets. Her commitment to the accounting profession is demonstrated through her active involvement in TXCPA and chapter-level programs. She is serving her second year on TXCPA Southeast Texas' Board of Directors, where she participates in a variety of programs to support Lamar University, scholarship fundraising and community awareness. She is also a graduate of TXCPA's 2018 Leadership Development Institute. Outside of TXCPA, she is a member of the United States Tennis Association, Leadership Southeast Texas and St. Elizabeth Catholic Church of Port Neches.



Stephanie Shaner, CPA
Tax Manager
Averett Financial, LLC
Fort Worth

Stephanie Shaner has held several accounting positions since 2005 and has extensive experience in tax preparation and consultation. She has been an instrumental leader in the development of TXCPA Fort Worth's "Under 40" programming and was honored recently as their Young CPA of the Year. She is currently the chair of TXCPA's Young and Emerging Professionals Committee. Shaner has served on the TXCPA CPE Advisory Board, TXCPA Fort Worth's UP Group, TXCPA Fort Worth's Young Professionals Planning Committee, as well as other groups. She currently serves as the treasurer-elect of TXCPA Fort Worth. In addition to her work with TXCPA, she provides volunteer accounting and data entry services to Rivertree Academy, a community-funded private school for under-resourced students in the Lake Como neighborhood.



Megan R. Terrell, CPA
Principal – Nonprofit and Governmental
Lead, Texas
CliftonLarsonAllen LLP
Fort Worth

As a principal for CliftonLarsonAllen, Megan R. Terrell leads the firm's Nonprofit and Governmental team for Texas, dedicating the majority of her time to serving nonprofits, governmental organizations and employee benefit plans. She has demonstrated her commitment to the profession through active participation in TXCPA Fort Worth's CPA-PAC, which she chaired for two years. She is also one of the few in her age group to serve as a member of TXCPA's Legislative Advisory Committee. In addition to her work with TXCPA, she volunteers with The Ladder Alliance, First Baptist Church of Benbrook and Women's Policy Forum of Tarrant County.



Lucy Turek, CPA
Tax Manager
BKM Sowan Horan
Dallas

Lucy Turek is a tax manager at BKM Sowan Horan, where she manages the preparation, work flow and completion of both personal and business tax clients. She is actively involved with TXCPA Dallas as a committee member, and former graduate, of the Leadership Development Academy, as well as past co-chair of the Young Professionals Group. She also serves on the University of North Texas Department of Accounting Junior Advisory Board. In 2018, Turek had the opportunity to present her leadership styles at the 2018 TXCPA Fort Worth Career Development Forum. Her most significant personal achievement was passing the CPA Exam within 12 months using her own self-study program. Her hard work, leadership and dedication to helping the next generation of CPAs have earned her respect and recognition by her peers.



Chad Valentine, CPA
Partner – Assurance Services
Weaver
Permian Basin

Chad Valentine currently serves as an assurance services partner at Weaver and has more than 12 years of experience in public accounting. He focuses his practice in audit, review and agreed-upon procedures for public and private energy companies. He is active in TXCPA Permian Basin, currently serving as president for the 2019-2020 year. In addition, he is an active member of Young Professionals in Energy and volunteers with the Boy Scouts of America – Buffalo Trail Scout Council as treasurer and member of the executive board. In 2017-2018, he was named Outstanding Executive Director by TXCPA Permian Basin for his numerous volunteer efforts.



Rubik Yeriazarian, CPA
Principal
Briggs & Veselka Co.
Houston

Rubik Yeriazarian is a forensic, valuation and litigation support principal at Briggs & Veselka Co. Throughout 11 years in public accounting, he has provided forensic accounting and litigation support services to numerous clients in the areas of complex commercial litigation, fraud investigations, anti-fraud, waste and abuse, and compliance matters. He is active in TXCPA Houston, currently serving on the Board of Directors, and as a member of the CPAs Helping Schools Committee. He is also involved with Future Business Leaders of America (FBLA), a high school business organization that has had a significant impact on his personal and professional life, and regularly volunteers at FBLA workshops and events at the district, state and national levels.

Rising Star Nominations Now Open!

Do you have a friend or colleague who has shown innovative leadership qualities within the accounting profession, their local community or TXCPA?

We want to hear from you! Anyone can nominate a rising star, but the nominees must be TXCPA members. Nominations can be made on our website at tscpa.org and must be completed by December 16, 2019.