

# MEET TIM PIKE

## CPA, CFE, CGMA



BY JODI ANN RAY, CAE  
TXCPA PRESIDENT AND CEO

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**T**XCPA President and CEO Jodi Ann Ray, CAE, recently connected with 2023-2024 TXCPA Chair Tim Pike, CPA-Dallas, CFE, CGMA, to talk about his journey as a CPA and how volunteer service has enriched his life. Read on to learn more about his personal career path, how TXCPA is working to address the shrinking CPA pipeline and how his running habit helps him problem solve.

**Q. You're the Managing Partner at Howard LLP, where you direct the firm's assurance practice in addition to developing and implementing firm growth strategies and performing peer reviews on other CPA firms. How did you begin your career and why did you choose the accounting profession?**

I have no idea why I chose this profession! I'm not joking either. I do not remember a conscious decision to be in accounting. I was in my junior year in college, and I finished a nine-month internship in a health care related profession and did not enjoy it. I am thankful I did not simply "finish my degree" knowing I didn't want to follow that path while at the same time, I was frustrated and uncertain what to do. My father had a couple of master's degrees, one was in accounting, and he did work in industry. I mentally shrugged my shoulders and decided to "try it out." From that point, I did what many of my fellow CPAs did when switching degree plans. I worked my tail off for two years taking all of my accounting courses in that short span.

If anything, I was originally attracted to the finance side of things. I was already saving and investing in college and enjoyed learning about the leadership of companies and thinking about living the high life one day due to some savvy investing. I noticed some mutual fund managers who were CPAs and thought to myself that it made a lot of sense because they would understand and could explain tax consequences to their clients.

It's pure luck that I didn't end up following the finance route. I had a really bad interview with a financial advising firm that made it clear that their goal was only to earn fees from the client and never once spoke in a way that advocated for their customers. I was a disillusioned college student who assumed that one interview represented the whole industry. After that, feeling I didn't have a lot of ideas left, I casually thought that I might as well try audit while I figure out what to do with my life. I recognize the irony of "trying" out assurance having just completed a two-year term serving as the chair of the peer review committee.



### *Interesting Facts About*

## **Tim Pike, CPA, CFE, CGMA**

### **TXCPA's 2023-2024 Chairman Tim Pike:**

- Started out to be a physical therapist and switched tracks in his junior year in school
- Ended up in audit simply because he liked the people he interviewed with; he always assumed he would go into tax
- Started in a small firm before going to Grant Thornton

### **He has actively served in the following organizations:**

- Texas Society of CPAs
- TXCPA Dallas, Leadership Development Academy and Legislative Affairs Committees
- American Institute of CPAs - Advisory Council
- Association of Certified Fraud Examiners
- Speaker for CPE Programs

**Q. What aspects of your work interest you the most?**

There are two main drivers. The first is feeling like I am assisting someone. I absolutely love feeling like I made a significant difference for a client, something that they can feel, something that is tangible. Whether it's assisting them through some litigation support, providing a unique solution to a problem or simply reducing anxiety, I absolutely make a difference. I would guess I'm not that unique in that respect!!

The second driver is developing the team around me. I spend a significant amount of my days having coaching conversations. There is nothing more encouraging than seeing team members and colleagues being successful in areas that once intimidated them. I think sometimes we get deterred or discouraged when coaching others because the payoff is so rarely immediate. It's also difficult to quantify. It's not as if we could say "as a result of my coaching, my team's leadership skills improved 31%" or something like that.

**Q. If you could change anything about your career, what would it be?**

I'm a relatively patient person with one significant exception ... I am not patient with myself. I do expect immediate results from myself. We all know that in order to grow in an area, we need experience in it and the more complicated the area, the more experience we need. Despite knowing this, I'm very poor at applying it to myself. If I were to go back in time, I would tell myself to relax and be more patient. Allow yourself to grow. There's no trophy; there's no finish line.

**Q. Attracting the next generation of CPAs is a critical issue for the accounting profession. How has TXCPA helped address the pipeline concerns we face and what is planned?**

You aren't kidding that it's critical. I think we are quite blessed to have so many areas that TXCPA and its volunteer leaders have moved the needle (and continue to do so). The first thing that sticks out in my mind is that we mobilized. We didn't sit back and simply agree that it's a problem. One thing that often occurs in any



organization is the thought that there needs to be full agreement on the cause and the actions to address the cause. The truth is that there is no one cause and no one action that will sufficiently address the pipeline. The mobilization of a task force was critical, to take action together with the best available information at that moment. I believe the inclusion of our contemporaries in other state CPA societies also ultimately accelerated our pace, as well as the pace of the national discussion and strategy.

Our plans are multifaceted and include things like advancing legislative change, reducing the financial burden to becoming a CPA, and increasing outreach and visibility across Texas. We've already seen successes in things like the legislation in Texas to allow candidates to sit for the CPA Exam upon attaining 120 credit hours. There has been a significant push to meet with educators at various colleges and universities to educate those in front of our students on the possibilities and opportunities in our profession to incrementally improve an understanding of what we as CPAs really do.

**Q. When and why did you become an active volunteer leader in TXCPA and your chapter? What are the most meaningful areas of service to you?**

This profession has given to me. This is a profession that I didn't even fully get into on purpose, but it has enriched my life so incredibly much. I believe very deeply in being a "net giver." It's simply a question of whether I give to others more than I take from others. We all know individuals who tend to want things from us and then disappear when they get what they want. To the extent that I can, I want to provide others the incredible opportunities that I've experienced. I have seen the effect that one person or one piece of information can have on someone's path and it keeps me engaged both locally and statewide.

When I think of things that have been meaningful to me, I think of those who have the greatest opportunity for impact. I think about all the students I've spoken to over the years at various student organizations. I think about speaking at the Leadership Development Academy in the Dallas Chapter. I think about the times that I pull someone aside and have a conversation to both encourage them, but also to coach them to think about what the next step will be and to challenge them. TXCPA has certainly provided those opportunities!

**Q. Who is the person you most admire and why?**

Seems like it might almost be insulting to name just one individual! I suppose the person I admire most is someone I've never met but followed for a while now. I absolutely love what I learn from Brene Brown. If you are unfamiliar with her, she will say that she is a guilt and shame researcher. Sounds pretty sexy, I know. However, when you break down human behavior like she does, it assists us with knowing who we are fundamentally.

One of the things she points out is that there has never been an act of courage that did not require vulnerability. We cannot grow without taking risks and we cannot take risks without being vulnerable. She also talks about how we all as humans make up stories in our heads to explain the world around us and many of those stories are negative. But when I wake up in the morning, I do not often think about how I want to make someone's life more difficult. I think about what I need to accomplish that day. We do not always assume positive intent. Brene's work really has influenced the way I think about and approach conversations and how I enact change within Howard.

**Q. Tell us about your family and other interests. What do you like to do on the weekends and after work?**

I'm relatively recently married, so a big part of my available time is simply exploring and doing new things with Kristin. We're really big on finding new experiences to explore and always have a date night on Saturday nights. My kids are 16 and 12, and when my 16-year-old son started driving, it was somewhat of a game changer! His first car is a stick shift and where I live in Dallas definitely afforded him the challenge of learning to drive in a hilly area! My daughter's main interest is volleyball, a sport I never played well myself. She recently went to a week-long leadership camp and I especially enjoyed her recounting to me what she learned and, in her words, how she became more confident.

As far as individual interests, most of those who know me know I'm a runner. There's a joke that goes "How do you know if someone is a runner?" and the punchline is "they will tell you." I certainly went through a cycle that my life revolved more around running and races than it does now; however, I always find a way to fit in a run five days a week no matter where I am. Running is my meditation and it gives me time to solve problems. I can really get lost in my thoughts and it gives me dedicated time to focus those thoughts better.



**OUR PASSION IS  
DOING *GOOD THINGS*  
FOR *GOOD PEOPLE*.  
WHAT IS YOUR PASSION?**

HERE ARE SOME OF THE PASSIONS WE HAVE HELPED  
MAKE POSSIBLE FOR OUR CLIENTS

- Purchase my dream home
- Fund my children's college education
- Donate to my favorite charities in a tax efficient way
- Gift to my children now so I'm here to see them enjoy it
- Retire early and spend quality time with my grandchildren
- Ensure my loved ones are in good hands for years to come



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