



## Profiles in Success

# Advice From Trailblazers and Rising Stars

Since 1986 more than 50% of accounting graduates have been women vs. just 10% in 1970. Much of this impressive progress is due to noteworthy women and their contributions to their employers and to the profession.

### Be True to Personal Values

**Shirley Cheramy** was the first female managing partner of a “Big Eight” firm. “The partner who appointed me was totally unaware no other woman had ever held a similar position. He said he chose me for the ‘right reasons’ and not because I was a woman.” A 1970 University of Washington graduate, she joined Price Waterhouse, Seattle, and in 1990 became the first woman to be a managing partner of the Century City, Los Angeles, office. In 1994 at age 46, Cheramy retired to Wyoming and is currently active in nonprofit organizations.

### Speak Out, Move Up

**Lissa Perez** is a Deloitte & Touche partner and Tennessee practice leader for the enterprise risk services group. The 1991 Miami University graduate successfully handled international assignments, spousal job relocation and three children by a willingness to be adaptable, using flexible work arrangements and having self-confidence. Perez says women in general are not good about “tooting their own horn”

and tend to focus on the project at hand, believing that if they are successful in completing it, their work will speak for itself.

### “Can-Do” Attitude Works

**Julie Floch** of Eisner LLP in New York became an audit partner in 1998. An avid fitness, music and

dance enthusiast, she cites helping to start Eisner’s not-for-profit practice as her greatest professional accomplishment. It enabled her to combine her arts background and love of the not-for-profit sector with her “day job” of accounting. Floch also is proud to be an adjunct lecturer for New School University and Baruch College’s MBA program. Married with

**Shirley Cheramy**



**“The ability to focus on true priorities in life (not the ‘status’ that one has from a career) is so important and yet it often is very difficult if not impossible to do.”**

**Lissa Perez**



**“Make sure you are proactive in seeking challenging assignments that provide visibility and then don’t be shy about making your accomplishments known.”**

two teenage stepsons, she is aware that her full life naturally involves trade-offs.

**Emulate the Best**

**Wanda Wallace**, CPA, PhD, CMA, CIA, professor emeritus at the College of William & Mary, began her career in public accounting with a BBA at just 18 years of age. After completing a PhD at the University of Florida in 1978, she received numerous honors including being named “the most published accounting academic” as author of more than 40 books and 200 articles. Wallace has served the profession extensively through the FASAC, AICPA, AAA and Government Auditing Standards Advisory Council.

**Surpass the Status Quo**

Professor **Karla Johnstone** recently achieved tenure at the University of Wisconsin. Married for 14 years with three young children, she is proud of maintaining strong relationships with colleagues and family. She says her mother was key to her professional and personal success. “My mother was a working mom who showed me how to embrace and manage a full professional and personal life. She gave me the confidence to know that

**Julie Floch**



**“The greatest challenge for anyone, male or female, is to believe in his or her own ability to ‘do it all.’”**

a woman can be many things, and that being multidimensional is not only possible, but fun, interesting and satisfying.”

**Confidence Propels**

Judge **Judy Trepeck** of the Michigan Tax Tribunal entered public accounting in 1971 and built a consulting practice around law firm management, family-owned businesses and boards of directors. She has served the AICPA and the Michigan Association of CPAs, speaks internationally,

**Wanda Wallace**



**“Be professional, strive for excellence and always evaluate yourself relative to the top tier of your profession.”**

has received multiple honors and is the mother of two adult daughters. Central to her success was an early acknowledgement that accounting was about making information useful to clients.

**Listen and Respond**

**Gloria Lamb Jarmon**, managing director for congressional relations at the U.S. Government Accountability Office, is the Comptroller General’s chief liaison with Congress. A 1982 College of William and Mary graduate, she began

**Karla Johnstone**



**“Women must develop the social and political skills necessary to manage individuals whose views are inconsistent with seeing women in leadership roles.”**

**Judy Trepeck**



**“Get others to really listen. Women think differently and that can create barriers. The ‘glass ceiling’ can be shattered by persistence, creativity and self-esteem.”**

**Gloria Lamb Jarmon**



**“Be very responsive to people and results-oriented. When people see you come through for them, they forget your sex, race and family status.”**

## Mandy Pope



**"The greatest challenge faced by women is overcoming the internal struggle of work/life balance."**

her career at Peat Marwick Mitchell in Norfolk, Va., where there were no minorities, female partners or female managers with children. Married for 19 years to a fellow accountant, Jarmen has two teenage sons. She's experienced barriers—a lack of role models—and made a financial trade-off by leaving public accounting as a senior manager for better work/life balance in government.

### The Work/Life Balance Challenge

**Mandy Pope** is senior vice-president and controller at Parkway Properties, a publicly held real estate investment trust in Mississippi. After obtaining bachelor's and master's degrees at the University of Southern Mississippi, Pope spent six years in public accounting before joining the Parkway organization. She cites numerous individuals as mentors, including several at Parkway, which has been named one of the top 25 small companies to work for. She says, "Thankfully, I've always worked in environments where promotions are based on meritocracy instead of gender, race or years of service."

—Elizabeth Dreike Almer, CPA, PhD,  
is an associate professor and Meadows  
Faculty Fellow at Portland State  
University in Oregon

## AICPA RESOURCES

- The AICPA's Work/Life and Women's Initiatives Executive Committee. For information on work/life effectiveness and staff retention and development, e-mail [educat@aicpa.org](mailto:educat@aicpa.org).
- Research. The latest research report containing trends and analysis is available at [www.aicpa.org/worklife](http://www.aicpa.org/worklife).
- *Women to Watch*. The AICPA, in conjunction with state CPA societies, honors women as role models for new professionals in the Women to Watch program.
- Women's Financial Literacy Campaign. The AICPA is helping women become more aware of financial literacy issues. Visit [www.360financialliteracy.org/women](http://www.360financialliteracy.org/women) for more information.
- Web site. Information on workplace flexibility and women's advancement is available at [www.aicpa.org/worklife](http://www.aicpa.org/worklife).

### Publications

- *Promoting Your Talent: A Guidebook for Women and Their Firms*, by Nancy R. Baldiga, provides practice tips and real-life examples from leaders in the profession for tackling the obstacles firms and organizations encounter in leadership development and promoting talent as well as career guidance for CPAs. To order this publication visit [www.cpa2biz.com](http://www.cpa2biz.com) or call the Institute at 888-777-7077.
- *The Facts on Workplace Flexibility*. Free brochure on a variety of topics pertaining to work/life, such as return on investment, culture change and benchmarking. E-mail [educat@aicpa.org](mailto:educat@aicpa.org).
- *Mentoring Program Guidelines*. Free brochure to help mentors, protégés and employers implement a mentor program, tips for successful partnerships and agreement and evaluation forms. E-mail [educat@aicpa.org](mailto:educat@aicpa.org).

### DVD

Work/Life: Striking a Balance. Free DVD that explores the human interest story, the business case and best practices for work/life effectiveness. All complimentary items are available by request. Please e-mail [educat@aicpa.org](mailto:educat@aicpa.org).

### Conference

Women's Summit. Tuesday, October 11, 2005, Chicago. AICPA Vice-Chair Leslie A. Murphy will chair this event for managing partners, women's initiatives directors and human resources professionals of public accounting firms to share information on helping women professionals succeed. For more information visit [www.aicpa.org/worklife](http://www.aicpa.org/worklife).

Copyright of Journal of Accountancy is the property of American Institute of Certified Public Accountants. The copyright in an individual article may be maintained by the author in certain cases. Content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.