The stereotype of the solitary accountant walled up in a cubicle and poring over spreadsheets for hours a day was always a little dubious. But industry expert Nichole Jordan (BBA ’95) says new technologies are shattering the image of the bean-counting accountant on a mundane career path.

Deciding how to properly address new technologies and digital strategies in the classroom at McCombs is a top priority. “One of my main concerns is to make sure our students can thrive in the world of big data,” said Department Chair Michael Clement, noting shifts in the curriculum are starting in the MPA program, with reverberations in the undergraduate and doctoral programs likely in the near future.

As Michael attested, there’s a revolution afoot, leaving the Department no time to rest on its laurels. “There’s a lot going on in the accounting profession, and we want to give our students the tools so that when things change, they can adapt to those changes,” he said.

To that end, the MPA program recently adopted a proposal requiring that every accounting course include content on data analytics by the end of the next academic year, said MPA Program Senior Director Stephen Smith.

As Michael attested, there’s a revolution afoot, leaving the Department no time to rest on its laurels. “There’s a lot going on in the accounting profession, and we want to give our students the tools so that when things change, they can adapt to those changes,” he said.

What’s new in accounting is not the idea of analyzing data — the difference is in the type and volume of data. In this big-data era, accountants must also manipulate unstructured data that appears in myriad formats and without pre-defined models. Unstructured data is more challenging to analyze and make sense of.

“So more and more an accountant’s job is answering the question, ‘What is the data telling us?’” said Steve, in addition to presenting that data for others to analyze and interpret.

That’s the important question, added Nichole Jordan, a Regional Managing Partner at Grant Thornton and a member of the Department’s Advisory Council. “Technology is crunching the numbers to a greater extent and making it possible for us to be more strategic and analytical when it comes to identifying patterns in the data,” she said. “The job becomes more about understanding the real performance of the business.”

These are skill sets already addressed in several MPA courses, including Information Technology for Accounting Control (ITAC), a requirement for all MPA students, taught by Patti Brown, who joined the faculty in 2011.

Patti’s teaching approach is two-pronged: introducing technology tools and business process methodologies, and then providing students with large volumes of real data in case studies, where they apply technology tools to gain insights from the data. “It’s very hands-on, to help students gain confidence in working with various technologies,” she added.

Students in her class learn SAP, Tableau, Microsoft Access, and Power BI. And, Patti said, while trying to find the right answer, students are challenged to use their critical thinking skills. “Why did the coffee shop spend this much on marketing in the Northeast? Why did green tea in the South not do as well as the Northeast? I want them to explain what the data says utilizing the different insights that they’ve gained applying these tools.”

DATA ANALYTICS BY THE NUMBERS

Assistant Professor Nicholas Hallman has discovered a way to identify Big 4 auditors’ attempts to win clients away from their competitors. The SEC publishes data about which IP addresses download public-company financial statement information. This enabled Nicholas and his coauthors to match those IP addresses with Big 4 firms and then use a machine learning algorithm to find instances when, for example, Deloitte begins performing research on a PwC client potentially as part of an attempt to win the client over.

Some highlights from Professor Hallman’s study include:

- **866** Unique Big 4 IP addresses that accessed EDGAR (the SEC’s electronic data gathering, analysis, and retrieval system) at least once during their sample time period.
- **>1 TRILLION** Individual downloads of SEC filings by Big 4 audit firms.
- **44%** Improvement in audit quality in years when incumbent auditors have to defend against a rival’s attempt to win the client’s audit work.
FROM THE CHAIR
MICHAEL CLEMENT

DEAR FELLOW
ACCOUNTING LONGHORNS:

When we started work on this edition of The Accounting Times we could not have had any idea how much our world would change by the midpoint of the semester. In responding to COVID-19, the Texas McCombs community faced the need to quickly transform one of the world's largest and best business schools—a community that includes more than 6,500 students, 330 staff, and 250 faculty—into a first-class institution of remote learning. Here are just a few of the highlights of what was accomplished during the first three weeks of the transition:

» 229 faculty members were trained to use Zoom to teach courses online for the rest of the spring semester;
» As of March 30, 2020, 528 courses (across all McCombs departments and degree programs) were taught remotely;
» A task force was launched to build and maintain engagement across our many constituent groups;
» 146 computer services support tickets were resolved; and
» More than 30 faculty interviews regarding the impact of COVID-19 (across local, state, and national press outlets) were conducted.

In addition to these specific accomplishments, our faculty and staff teams crafted and sent hundreds of communications to students, employers, alumni boards and councils, and many others, keeping everyone informed about our response and action plans. The support and engagement across our community has been exceptional, reflecting the strong commitment to our mission.

During this shift to a virtual environment, we are exceptionally grateful for the strong support we continue to receive from our friends and donors. We are especially grateful for our students, who came to this new learning environment ready to adapt, learn, and contribute; and to you, our alumni and friends, who reached out to offer support during this unprecedented time of crisis and uncertainty.

Throughout this transition, the Department of Accounting has continued to perform at an exceptional level. As in the past, faculty, doctoral students, and MPA students have all been recognized for numerous accomplishments. In addition to the awards detailed on this page, recently faculty members Lisa Koonce and Brian White were recognized by the College for their outstanding research contributions, and 12 (yes, that's twelve!) MPA graduates won the prestigious Elijah Watts Sells Award for their outstanding performance on the CPA exam in 2019. We will tell you more about those latter two accomplishments in our fall edition.

The transformation and collaboration by our community in adapting to our changing situation has been tremendous. The Texas McCombs community has displayed resolve, commitment, and agility in the face of adversity. It is part of our shared Texas McCombs DNA and spirit: showing strength and leadership during a crisis is at the core of who we are. Although the content of this issue was prepared early in the semester, the stories in this edition of The Accounting Times also showcase that strength and leadership. We hope you enjoy reading more about our efforts on the dimensions of analytics and diversity, some classroom happenings, and the stories of a few of our alumni. As you’ll read on the back page, Dr. E. Ben Yager received the very first CPA degree in 1947; we trust that our spring 2020 MPA graduates will be the next in a long line of many future MPA graduates.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the strength of the McCombs leadership team. By now you know that Dean Jay Hartzell has been selected as the interim UT President and Professor Lil Mills has been selected as our interim Dean. These selections speak highly of the leadership talent that exists in McCombs. Some of you may remember Lil as your professor, others may remember her as our Department Chair (2011-2015). She did an excellent job as Chair and we are grateful for her leadership skills during these unprecedented times. Congratulations, Lil!

We are all in this together. Be well and stay safe. Hook ‘Em!
EY ACCOUNTING AMBASSADORS PROGRAM

Seven years ago, the Ernst & Young Foundation and the Department of Accounting partnered to create the EY Accounting Ambassadors Program. This program is dedicated to encouraging underrepresented business students to study accounting at Texas McCombs.

“Success is doing something today that your future self will be thankful for,” said Ken Bouyer, EY Americas Director of Inclusiveness Recruiting, at the EY Accounting Ambassadors reception this past September. That reception is the kickoff for the semester’s EY Accounting Ambassadors Program events.

Many organizations that recruit MPAs come to campus to meet students from an array of backgrounds and perspectives. The Ambassadors Program is one way that Texas McCombs facilitates this interaction, helping students to both be more successful in their accounting coursework and to learn more about the accounting profession.

“You have the highest performing teams when you have diversity among those teams,” said Bouyer, who has worked at EY since he graduated from Manhattan College almost 30 years ago.

Students can get involved with the EY Accounting Ambassadors Program by becoming a mentee or MPA mentor, attending monthly meetings, joining class review sessions, and even receiving financial awards and scholarships.

“The biggest impact of the Ambassadors Program has been the two-tiered mentoring: from EY professionals to our MPA students, and from our MPA students to our sophomores and freshmen. This chain of interactions gives underrepresented students a home in accounting from their first semester at McCombs,” said Lil Mills, faculty co-advisor of the program.

Each freshman and sophomore participant with an interest in accounting is paired with an MPA mentor. MPA mentors share their experiences with mentees, offer advice about course selection, and provide tips on thriving at Texas McCombs, with the overall goal of contributing to the success of these undergraduate accounting students. Sixteen EY professionals are also currently serving as mentors to MPA participants in the program.

The Ambassadors Program also hosts accounting experts each semester who share their knowledge and experience with participants. Speakers include industry and public accounting professionals, faculty, and staff members with experience in networking and career development.

To reduce the financial burden of going to school full-time, high-achieving Ambassadors have the opportunity to apply for financial awards funded by the EY gift that created this program. Awards are available to help subsidize conference travel, study-abroad expenses, and pay for books. A portion of the EY gift is also used to provide scholarships to incoming traditional MPA students.

The Ernst & Young Foundation is helping to provide underrepresented students the tools to be successful both in school and in their careers, whether that is with EY or another employer. “This organization has helped me meet other students, faculty, and employers in a stress-free and encouraging atmosphere, while also providing academic assistance in my first McCombs accounting classes,” said a current participant.

Since the 2011 inception of the EY Accounting Ambassadors Program, the MPA program has seen a 35% increase in underrepresented students, which, consistent with Ken’s belief, contributes to creating a better classroom and (eventual) workplace environment.

TEXAS PROUD
JOHN BRISCOE

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO STUDY ACCOUNTING AT UT AUSTIN?
When it came time to apply to universities, I only applied to one school, UT. I didn't visit another school or think about other options. As unlikely as it may sound, I didn't know what I wanted to major in. My roommate was an accounting major and he convinced me to try some accounting classes. As it turns out, accounting was a great fit.

WHAT MOTIVATED YOUR TRANSITION FROM PUBLIC ACCOUNTING TO THE ENERGY INDUSTRY?
When I graduated in 1981, the energy industry was booming. I was lucky that most of my clients were either energy or financial institutions; I was able to learn the fundamentals of energy and corporate finance, borrowing, and what banks looked for in making loans. After the downturn in the mid-1980s, I thought it was a good time to learn more about operations at energy companies and found it challenging, complex, and mentally stimulating.

From the time John Briscoe (BBA ’81) was young, he was making the three-hour drive from Corpus Christi with his dad and brother to see Darrell Royal coach the ‘Horns. Nowadays, John has over 35 years of accounting and energy experience under his belt and gives his time to speak at UT about his experiences in the professional world. Keep an eye out for John at future commencement ceremonies and other Texas McCombs events.

 WHAT COMPELS YOU TO COME BACK TO UT TO SHARE YOUR EXPERIENCES?
I learned a lot during my time at Texas McCombs. Everyone in my upper-level accounting classes was smart and that forced me to be competitive and work harder than I ever expected. In many ways, the challenge and competition also forced me to grow and mature, which ended up being a huge benefit throughout my career. In business school, I learned life lessons and a good work ethic, along with meeting great friends, but for me it really comes down to giving back. Many of my career opportunities started here, and the school clearly made an impression on me and others who attended. If I can inspire someone or make an impact on another student or alumnus, then I consider that a win. Plus, I always meet someone new and interesting at every event I attend!
Cynthia Ramos was raised in Mission, Texas and came to UT to double-major in accounting and economics. After graduating, she worked in the insurance industry for 16 years before starting her own companies. With the insurance expertise she acquired at several life insurance companies, Cynthia became a small business owner in 2007. She is now President and Owner of Ramos Admin, LLC, a third-party administrative firm that provides administration services to insurance companies, and Cynthia Ramos, CPA, PLLC, a certified public accounting firm that provides accounting and consulting services to the insurance industry.

Cynthia currently volunteers her time by connecting with alums for the Texas Exes’ Hispanic Alumni Network. Additionally, she is a member of the Integral Care Board of Trustees and past president of the Texas Chapter of the Insurance Accounting and Systems Association. She has also served with the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA), the Texas State Board of Public Accountancy Scholarship Program, and the Austin Affiliate of Susan G. Komen for the Cure. Cynthia is a member of the AICPA and the Texas Society of CPAs. We are proud of Cynthia’s service and thank her for her contributions to the accounting profession!

Valuing her community and UT Austin, Cynthia Ramos (BBA ’91) became a Texas Exes Life member and began volunteering with the Texas Exes’ Hispanic Alumni Network. She’s currently serves as the Network’s Treasurer.

Are you looking for a way to get involved with your alma mater? Stay connected with the 40 Acres and become an active member in the McCombs Alumni Network! Whether you graduated 50 years ago or five months ago, we’ll tell you how accounting alums are engaging with the McCombs community locally and at the state, national, and global levels.

1. **JOIN THE CONVERSATION**
   - Follow Texas McCombs on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Include “Red McCombs School of Business” in the education section of your LinkedIn profile and you’ll automatically join the group.

2. **BE IN THE KNOW**
   - Find alumni stories on the Alumni News Blog, learn about school happenings on Texas McCombs News, and follow business and policy news on Big Ideas.

3. **SHARE YOUR NEWS**
   - We want to hear from you! Share your awards, promotions, birth announcements, celebrations, job postings, and more: alumni@mccombs.utexas.edu

4. **STAY UP TO DATE**
   - Update your contact information, including address, phone number, email, and name changes, by emailing: alumni@mccombs.utexas.edu

5. **ATTEND AN ALUMNI EVENT**
   - Reconnect with your classmates, network with fellow alumni, and hear the latest faculty perspectives at McCombs alumni events. Find events near you: bit.ly/alumcalendar

6. **BECOME AN ALUMNI LEADER**
   - McCombs has over 25 alumni chapters worldwide. Learn how you can take on a leadership role in your local chapter: bit.ly/msbchapters

7. **OFFER YOUR EXPERTISE**
   - Speak to a class, present to a student group, or join a panel! Fill out this survey to offer your expertise to Texas McCombs students: bit.ly/mccombsvolunteer

8. **MENTOR A STUDENT**
   - Volunteer your time and mentor students who are interested in pursuing a career in accounting: bit.ly/mccombsvolunteer

9. **CONNECT WITH NEW MPAs**
   - Chat with newly admitted MPA students to share your experiences as a Texas McCombs student. Email us to get connected: MPAmarketing@mccombs.utexas.edu

10. **SEND A TESTIMONIAL**
    - We love to hear from our alums! Email us a quote or testimonial that we can use in our promotional materials: MPAmarketing@mccombs.utexas.edu

11. **TEXAS EXES MEMBERSHIP**
    - A Texas Exes membership powers the programs that strengthen UT, enhances the student experience, and keeps alumni connected. Become a member or renew today: texasexes.org

12. **GIVE BACK**
    - With every contribution, you’re advancing the work of students, hiring top academics, and pushing the boundaries of higher education. Your gift makes a difference: links.utexas.edu/bjxndcg
A PEEK INTO THE CLASSROOM

TAX RESEARCH

From earning his MPA degree to becoming a Director in PwC’s Financial Markets practice, Chad Clark (tMPA ’09) is utilizing his tax expertise both in his professional life and back on campus. Let’s learn about a case he developed for Professor Kristina Zvinakis’ Tax Research course.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN THE CASE YOU CREATED FOR PROFESSOR ZVINAKIS’ CLASS?
The case was about an investment in a financial product, a zero-coupon bond. It required students to use their research skills to determine the proper tax classification of the investment and the amount of taxable income the investment generated across time. The method for determining taxable income required more than basic arithmetic, so students also had to tap into their Finance 101 memory bank to compute those amounts.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR TAX RESEARCH COURSE?
We learned about issue spotting, research techniques, how to write a memo, the hierarchy of tax authorities, and so much more. Not only was Tax Research my favorite class in business school, I believe it has been more valuable to me as a professional than any of my other classes. I have been working for ten years and I still use the same techniques for research and writing that I learned from Professor Zvinakis.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO STUDY TAX?
I liked the idea that tax planning could impact an organization’s bottom line. I appreciated and enjoyed the compliance aspect of tax, but it was the strategy and planning that drew me in.

Tell us about your life since graduating from the MPA program.
I have been working with PwC’s Financial Markets group for the past ten years. I spent the first two in New York City and have been in Austin since then. When I am not working I am out enjoying Austin with my wife Kassie, daughter Quincy, 9, son Theo, 5, and identical twins Archie and Hawthorne, 18 months.

WHAT DO YOU RECOMMEND STUDENTS LEARN MORE ABOUT BEFORE ENTERING THE WORKFORCE?
Technology and data analytics have become an integral part of business, so I believe students will benefit by developing skills and knowledge in these areas as a supplement to their area of focus within accounting. This was one of the key themes we discussed while debriefing the case study during class.

Continued from Page 1

While it’s not the type of task accountants are traditionally known for, it’s not a huge stretch either, said Kristina Zvinakis, Assistant Department Chair. In her view, critical thinking skills have always been a hallmark of McCombs’ MPA program and one reason it is consistently ranked No. 1 in the nation.

“Technology will change, but not replace, the accountant’s job,” Nichole added. “An accountant paired with artificial intelligence or machine learning-enabled technology is a winning combination.”

In fact, for new accountants, proficiency in technology and critical thinking is not more important than the skills Nichole said she most remembered learning while at UT: teamwork and communication. With new technologies doing more of the tedious work, the accountant of the future will have more freedom, flexibility, and responsibility.

Nichole concluded, “The ability to go down the hallway and talk to the CFO and engage in a great C-suite conversation, ask the right questions, and seek to understand and be curious will be very, very important skills.”

The original version of this article was written by Judie Kinonen and appeared in the fall 2019 edition of McCombs Magazine. Her article is reproduced here, with edits for length and clarity.

THROUGH THE LENS

PAVING NEW PATHS. Some students enter the traditional MPA program with non-business backgrounds looking to make a career pivot. Let’s meet a few of our recent alums who did just that and find out where they are now.

MARA ETZ, tMPA ’16
“Specific to state and local tax, I enjoy the challenge of figuring out the differences in tax law in each jurisdiction. It keeps things interesting.”
UNDERGRAD: Northeastern University, Criminal Justice
CURRENT POSITION: Tax Senior Associate, PwC

SAM HENDERSON, tMPA ’19
“While it is a challenging role, I am being exposed to the entirety of ExxonMobil’s business and interact regularly with senior management.”
UNDERGRAD: Texas A&M University, Maritime Business
CURRENT POSITION: Internal Auditor, ExxonMobil

SYMONE GREEN, tMPA ’16
“My current company is small so I wear many hats. I’m mostly involved with the accounting and financial reporting that we do for mortgage-backed securities and loans.”
UNDERGRAD: Columbia University, Italian Cultural Studies
CURRENT POSITION: Analyst Accountant, MFA Financial

Chad Clark debriefing the case he created with a class of Tax Research students.

The original version of this article was written by Judie Kinonen and appeared in the fall 2019 edition of McCombs Magazine. Her article is reproduced here, with edits for length and clarity.
DONOR SPOTLIGHT
ANN KLUPPEL

While working with an energy client at Coopers & Lybrand early in her career, Ann Kluppel (BBA ’89) was fascinated by the special rules energy organizations were required to adhere to and knew she had found her calling. As Ann asked for more and more energy clients, she eventually committed to working in the industry full-time. With over 30 years of experience in energy, Ann has invested her time and resources to make UT Austin a hub for the industry she is so passionate about.

Thankfully, Ann Kluppel listened to her father’s advice. Her dad, who was in the coffee business for 40 years and had no association with the University of Texas, somehow knew that UT had one of the best accounting programs in the country. He also knew that accountants would always have jobs because even in bad times, they “turn out the lights.” So Ann decided to take accounting classes in high school, which she enjoyed to such a great extent that she majored in accounting at UT. “The ironic part of the story is that after going through a merger many years ago, I literally was the last one out of the building and turned out the lights. Love it when Dad is right,” said Ann.

After earning her BBA, she went to work for Coopers & Lybrand (now PwC) and earned her MBA from the University of Houston. After five years in public accounting, Ann left to work for a few energy businesses before landing at Conoco. Six months after starting that position, Conoco announced a merger with Phillips Petroleum. Ann was with ConocoPhillips for eleven years before they spun off their downstream businesses as Phillips 66 in 2012. She has now been with the combined companies for 19 years and has held nine different roles in the areas of Operations, Finance, and Human Resources.

Currently, Ann is the Midstream Finance Manager for Phillips 66. Her team is responsible for financial reporting as well as coordinating the approximately $2.4 billion operating and capital budgets for the company’s midstream business.

After the spin-off, Ann’s group was deciding which universities their new company would support. “We had executive leadership support for making sure that UT was part of our ongoing efforts,” said Ann. “As the first budget allocations were being made, I was able to set aside some money to establish the Phillips 66 Endowed Scholarship in Business, which will hopefully provide annual scholarships to McCombs students for many years to come.”

Eleven years ago, Ann wanted to give back even more substantially to her alma mater. She became the Phillips 66 Business Partner to the McCombs School of Business. She also stays involved with UT through her work in allocating budgets for the company’s midstream business. Currently, Ann is the Midstream Finance, and Human Resources.

Ann is also a member of the Advisory Council for the KBH Energy Center. This Center provides a vehicle to analyze and publicly discuss risks related to the production and use of energy. In his capacity as the Academic Director of the KBH Center, John Butler has worked with Ann on numerous projects. He notes that her passion for energy and her efforts at McCombs go beyond finding good employees for Phillips 66. She gives her time and provides resources to all students interested in energy, including the Energy 101 workshop for MPA students (part of the Accounting Careers Exploration course) and arranging for Phillips 66 support of the KBH Distinguished Lecture Series.

Originally from Iowa, Ann grew up in Houston and has been married to her husband for almost 30 years. They have two children; one is a mechanical aeronautical engineer and the other will graduate in May with a degree in education.

2019 DONATION STATISTICS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FROM INDIVIDUAL DONORS</th>
<th>FROM CORPORATIONS</th>
<th>FROM FOUNDATIONS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>410</td>
<td>370</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

313 made an outright gift
97 contributed to an endowment

THANK YOU, DONORS!

YOUR SUPPORT MATTERS

Student scholarships, faculty development, and curricular innovations are made possible through the generosity of our alumni and friends. Join us in our commitment to excellence in accounting education at the University of Texas at Austin.

NAME __________________________

STREET ADDRESS __________________________

CITY, STATE, ZIP __________________________

PHONE NUMBER __________________________ EMAIL ADDRESS __________________________

YEAR GRADUATED FROM UT __________________________ PROGRAM __________________________

(If applicable)

AMOUNT OF GIFT $ __________________________

To make a donation, fill out this form and write a check payable to: The University of Texas at Austin (note “Department of Accounting” on the memo line)

Your contribution may be sent to: The University of Texas at Austin McCombs School of Business Department of Accounting, Office of the Chair 2110 Speedway, Stop B6400, Austin, TX 78712-1281

ONLINE DONATIONS CAN BE MADE HERE: links.utexas.edu/bjxndcg

THE ACCOUNTING TIMES

DEPARTMENT CHAIR Michael Clement

ASSISTANT CHAIR Kristina Zvinkais

INTERFACE MANAGER Candace Misko

EDITOR AND DESIGNER Chelsey Stewart

HAVE AN ACCOUNTING NEWS TIP? Email accounting.times@mccombs.utexas.edu
and I haven't looked back. I knew it, I was applying to the MPA program the chance to have a successful career. Before Smith, I began to get excited about accounting—love for math and problem-solving with my

YOUR MAJOR, KARLA?

WHY DID YOU DECIDE ON ACCOUNTING AS

and Accounting.

college student, double-majoring in Plan II Honors community involvement. Karla is a first-generation who have demonstrated academic leadership and 2019 award, which provides $10,000 to students Karla Aguilar (iMP A '22) is a recipient of the Jorge Caballero Student Leadership Award. It was so overwhelming and I could only say “Thank You!” over and over. I don't think I paid much attention to the lesson after that!

TELL US ABOUT YOUR LIFE SINCE GRADUATION.

After graduating from Texas McCombs, I was on a two-year engagement that had me in Chicago on a weekly basis. I have since worked in Tennessee, Atlanta, Cleveland, San Francisco, San Diego, Scottsdale, Miami, and even internationally in Ireland and India. The iMPA program puts you in a position to own your career if you're willing to put in the effort and hard work. I’ve been lucky enough to come back to campus for speaking engagements and to help students whose shoes I was once in develop professionally and polish themselves for interviews and career fairs. Accounting is a career with no upper-limits other than those you set yourself.

CAN YOU EXPLAIN YOUR WORK IN TAX TECHNOLOGY AND ANALYTICS?

As most of us know, taxes are an unavoidable thing in life. We're using technology, an ever-changing monster, to try to make the unavoidable more manageable. In five years, my work has taken me from VBA-macros in Excel to robotics process automation (RPA) to data wrangling tools (e.g. Alteryx, PowerQuery, Pyramid) to machine-learning and AI (artificial intelligence) tools. When your job is to save a client money, they're willing to invest in creative, cutting-edge technology and will be even happier if your solution can help them forecast cost savings years head of schedule!

HOW DO YOU SEE TECHNOLOGY CHANGING THE ACCOUNTING PROFESSION?

Technology is certainly changing the landscape of the tax profession. If we can identify logical steps for a computer to perform today, we can scale that ability without limit tomorrow. I believe accounting is quickly evolving into something more scalable to help businesses automate a large percentage of repetitive tasks. Clients are already utilizing technology to comb through millions of transactional details and flag anomalies in regular patterns, allowing them to focus more on the subjective human-analysis as opposed to spending hours in Excel trying to figure out why amounts don't tie out. Tomorrow's technology will learn from human analysis to not only provide a list of “exceptions” from a database, but also provide suggestions on how to address the transactions, all based on similar items were treated in previous iterations.

WHAT DOES BEING NAMED THE FIRST EVER RECIPIENT OF THE JORGE CABALLERO STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD MEAN TO YOU?

This award was named after a senior partner at the firm who saw potential in me as a student. His decision to invest in my future is more than humble, as it allowed me to shoot for a master's degree and start my career at Deloitte. In hindsight, I owe a lot of my professional development to Jorge Caballero, the Association of Latino Professionals for America (ALPFA), and the mentorship that has been provided to me along the way by both. Had I not been at the ALPFA Convention in the summer of 2011, I would not have met Jorge and who knows where I’d be today.

2019 JORGE CABALLERO STUDENT LEADERSHIP AWARD: KARLA AGUILAR

Every year, Deloitte partners with the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) to offer the Jorge Caballero Student Leadership Award to high-achieving accounting students. Karla Aguilar (iMPA '22) is a recipient of the 2019 award, which provides $10,000 to students who have demonstrated academic leadership and community involvement. Karla is a first-generation college student, double-majoring in Plan II Honors and Accounting.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE ON ACCOUNTING AS YOUR MAJOR, KARLA?

I wanted a career that would combine my love for math and problem-solving with my tendency to go about everything analytically. After taking ACC 311 with Professor Steve Smith, I began to get excited about accounting as a viable way to merge my interests and have the chance to have a successful career. Before I knew it, I was applying to the MPA program and I haven't looked back.

HOW DID YOU HEAR THAT YOU WERE A RECIPIENT OF THIS AWARD?

During one of my classes, I kept receiving calls from an unknown number. I had no clue who was on the other end, but I knew I needed to answer my phone. After I finished a quiz, I raced to the hallway and called the number back. When I did, I found out that I was the recipient of the 2019 Jorge Caballero Student Leadership Award. It was so overwhelming and I could only say “Thank You!” over and over. I don't think I paid much attention to the lesson after that!

HOW DO YOU STAY INVOLVED IN THE COMMUNITY BOTH ON AND OFF CAMPUS?

I spend a lot of time working with the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement Global Student Fellows organization on campus. It's a long name for a fantastic organization that motivates students from underrepresented populations to study abroad. I plan and attend workshops that help students learn about available programs, find funding opportunities, and understand the intricacies of the study-abroad experience. Outside of UT, I started volunteering as a tax preparer, in a program that provides low-income households with free tax assistance, something I find incredibly rewarding.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE FUTURE?

This summer, I will be taking classes in preparation for my senior year and working on my Plan II thesis, which I'm incredibly excited about!
LEAVING A LEGACY

E. BEN YAGER

TELL US ABOUT YOURSELF, KATIE.
I grew up in Florida and completed my undergraduate studies at Elon University. In addition to my grandfather and me, my father, sister, uncle, two aunts, and two cousins have majored in accounting!

WHAT SPARKED YOUR INTEREST IN ACCOUNTING?
Initially, I was attracted to accounting because it offered solid career opportunities. Through my accounting coursework, I have been pleasantly surprised to find that it is also dynamic and growth-oriented.

WHY DID YOU DECIDE TO ATTEND THE TEXAS McCOMBS MPA PROGRAM?
Because of its prestige, wealth of resources, and the exceptional community of diverse, impressive faculty and peers. I knew this program would offer a broad array of opportunities for academic and professional growth. Plus, my grandfather went to school here, so McCombs runs in the family.

WHAT DO YOU REMEMBER MOST ABOUT YOUR GRANDFATHER?
I remember that grandfather was a loyal fan of both Longhorn and Cincinnati Reds’ baseball, and he always welcomed my visits to Texas with Fig Newtons — a tradition begun by his father.

WHAT LEGACIES DID YOUR GRANDFATHER LEAVE BEHIND?
In his 35 years as a professor and later as a department chair, my grandfather worked to enhance the accounting profession by educating several generations of accounting professionals, actively contributing to numerous professional organizations, and building long-term professional relationships with leaders in accounting and finance. Upon his retirement in 1989, an endowment was created in his name that provides scholarships for accountancy students at Miami University.

E. Ben Yager received a BBA from the University of Texas at Austin in 1947 and received the first ever MPA degree in 1949. Seventy-one years later, his granddaughter, Katherine Glass, is following in his footsteps and will graduate with her MPA this spring. Though Ben passed away twelve years ago, as Katie tells us, his legacy lives on through his family and accounting career.

WHAT ARE YOUR POST-GRADUATION PLANS?
This fall, I am excited to be joining PwC’s Assurance practice in Tampa, Florida!

ABOUT DR. E. BEN YAGER
After graduating from UT Austin, Ben worked as the Chief Accountant of Sul Ross State College in Alpine, Texas. He then entered Indiana University’s PhD program and received a Doctorate of Business Administration. At Indiana, he met his wife, Jeanne, and they were married on June 13, 1953. In 1955, Ben began his teaching career at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio. He was named the C. Rollin Niswonger Professor of Accountancy and was Department Chairman for over five years before returning to his beloved job as a professor. He co-authored three editions of the CPA Examination: A Comprehensive Review. Ben was a CPA in Texas and Ohio and was a member of the American Institute of CPAs, Ohio Society of CPAs, American Accounting Association, Financial Executives Institute, and Alpha Kappa Psi business society. The E. Ben Yager Scholarship is awarded to one undergraduate student at Miami University annually.