

# CTCPA Women

An awards program celebrating exceptional female CPAs.

January 20, 2021 • Virtual Program

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# CTCPA Women

An awards program celebrating exceptional female CPAs.

## Schedule of Events

### 8:30 a.m. **Networking**

Welcome from CTCPA President  
**Marie Benedetto, CPA**

### 9:30 a.m. **Welcome and Keynote Remarks**

Remarks from CTCPA Executive Director  
**Bonnie Stewart**

Master of Ceremonies  
**Margaux Farrell**  
Anchor, FOX61 News

Keynote Remarks  
**Kimberly Ellison-Taylor**  
Global Technology and Financial Leader and Past Chairman – AICPA

### 10:00 a.m. **Presentation of Women to Watch Awards**

**Jenna M. Allegretto, CPA**  
Senior Manager, Assurance Services at Marcum LLP

**Anne M. Comer, CPA**  
Director of Operations at CRC Group

**Erica Czajkowski**  
Audit Senior Manager at Deloitte & Touche LLP

**Marissa R. LaBelle, JD, CPA**  
Staff Attorney at RSM US LLP

### **Presentation of Distinguished Service Awards**

**Susan Brosseau, CPA**  
Chief Financial Officer at Ädelbrook Behavioral and Developmental Services

**Dana M. Silva**  
Chief Accounting Officer & Corporate Secretary at Ion Bank

**Heather Ziegler**  
Stamford Managing Partner at Deloitte & Touche LLP

### 10:30 a.m. **Adjournment**



*Keynote Speaker*  
**Kimberly Ellison-Taylor**  
Global Technology and Financial  
Leader and Past Chairman – AICPA



*Master of Ceremonies*  
**Margaux Farrell**  
Anchor, FOX61 News

## Event Planning Committee

Thank you to these members for their hard work planning today's event and serving as the committee to select our honorees.

**Shanita Booker**  
The Hartford

**Christa Clark, CPA**  
RSM US LLP

**Angel Li, CPA**  
FML LLP

**Mary Manfredi, CPA**  
General Dynamics Electric Boat

**Amber Monaghan, CPA, MSAT**  
Marcum LLP

# Distinguished Service Award Honorees



**Susan Brosseau, CPA**

*Chief Financial Officer*  
**Ädelbrook Behavioral and  
Developmental Services**

Susan Brosseau of Hebron was inspired to join the accounting field 35 years ago because she saw many opportunities to work with a variety of clients before determining which industry to specialize in, as well as the chance for swift advancement.

“I was able to get a broad base of business knowledge and I could be promoted relatively quickly to increasing levels of responsibility,” she said. Susan spent most of her public accounting career serving large financial services and insurance clients.

Now the Chief Financial Officer (CFO), Susan enjoys strategic planning and other senior leadership activities at Ädelbrook Behavioral and Developmental Services, a non-profit organization specializing in the educational and residential needs of children and young adults with Autism Spectrum Disorder. Ädelbrook provides these services through four schools and both community homes and congregate residential programs, among other services.

Susan excels in her role as CFO by helping Ädelbrook managers and board members understand the complex funding and budgeting of the \$42 million nonprofit human service agency. She is a problem solver and proactively plans for the future needs of students and residents.

She completed the Encore! Hartford program, including participating in a fellowship with the Community Foundation of New Britain. She was a long-time board member of Girl Scouts of Connecticut, serving as the Treasurer from 2013-2020, as well as serving on the Finance Council of the Church of Holy Family, and numerous other board financial leadership positions. A little-known tidbit about Susan is she’s a big NASCAR fan!

Alyssa Goduti, Ädelbrook President and CEO and the colleague who nominated Susan, said “She is a mentor, teacher, and cheerleader to many young and aspiring future financial leaders. They are incredibly appreciative of her support, her leadership, and her modeling of best practice in financial management.”

To those new to the field, Susan recommends taking full advantage of the training you will receive while working in public accounting and any opportunities to travel and explore new places. Now in what she calls the “distinguished” part of her career, Susan emphasizes that ethics and integrity are as important as technical expertise.

# Distinguished Service Award Honorees



**Dana M. Silva**

*Chief Accounting Officer  
& Corporate Secretary*  
**Ion Bank**

Throughout a three-decade career in accounting, Dana Silva of Southbury has been able to experience all levels in the field, from managing an accounting department to leading critical projects. She has also been an active team member for conversions, mergers and acquisitions.

“I’m happy to say after 30 years I am continuously challenged and learning every day,” said Dana, who decided to enter the field because she excelled in math and enjoyed high school business courses. Now she enjoys the analytical and problem solving of her role.

Ion Bank President & CEO David Rotatori, who made the nomination, said, “Dana has made a tremendous impact on the success of this bank since joining the team as a Senior Officer in 2012. She is a key part of the executive leadership team, while still finding time to volunteer for multiple non-profit organizations.”

Her coworkers admire her unmatched dedication and perseverance as Ion Bank’s Chief Accounting Officer and Corporate Secretary. Not to mention, despite her fear of heights, Dana went extreme zip lining on her 50th birthday in Costa Rica!

She has been a mentor for more than 10 years and held multiple roles for the United Way campaigns at the banks where she has worked. She now serves as a board member of the United Way of Naugatuck and Beacon Falls and the Post College Foundation. Dana is also an active member of First Congregational Church in Waterbury, providing assistance in many ways and forms.

Her strong work ethic has served her well garnering positive results from her staff and co-workers. She also continues to adopt new technologies that create efficiencies and improve service. “She has an excellent predisposition to recognize issues, gain a full understanding of the impact, then quickly and efficiently resolve or implement solutions,” said Ion’s president.

Dana’s words of wisdom for those new to the field, including her daughter who recently passed the CPA Exam: “Do your best at every task; they’re all learning opportunities. Networking is a great way to meet people and make connections for the future.”

# Distinguished Service Award Honorees



**Heather Ziegler**

*Stamford Managing Partner*  
**Deloitte & Touche LLP**

For Heather Ziegler of New Canaan, problem solving was critical not only to succeed, but in some cases survive, growing up in Fairbanks, Alaska.

“This beautiful but challenging environment helped shape who I am today,” she said. “Facing challenges head on and navigating through creative solutions is part of my roots and very much influences my client service approach.”

Heather first chose accounting because she was good at math. “Debits and credits made sense to me and I love crunching numbers. But what I love about being a CPA in the accounting profession is helping companies make informed decisions when it matters most, advising them as they navigate their most challenging transactions and working through their most important milestones,” she said.

With more than 24 years of experience in public accounting, Heather has provided audit and related services to clients and companies addressing complex requirements in various industries. She is now the Managing Partner at the Stamford Deloitte and Touche LLP office.

As a role model, Heather oversees 1,100 professionals and has leadership responsibility for the Deloitte strategy and broader practice delivery of client services, corporate citizenship and inclusion efforts across Fairfield and Westchester counties. With a hands-on approach, Heather is respected for her teaming and collaborative, proactive leadership style.

“Heather takes time to focus on the development of others. She is a frequent facilitator of leadership development and technical training seminars and serves as a mentor to many professionals,” said Rich Tavolieri, Deloitte’s Hartford Managing Partner. She also hosts C-suite executive roundtable workshops on current events and emerging trending topics for clients.

Heather was named Volunteer of the Year by Junior Achievement, 40 under 40 in Fairfield County and is a current David Rockefeller Leadership Fellow with the Partnership of NY. Active with the CTCPA, she also serves on the boards of Stamford YMCA and New Canaan Community Foundation.

“Helping others achieve their objectives is the heart of this profession,” said Heather. “Take time to mentor and teach others, and don’t forget to listen and embrace new ideas and opinions to innovate and grow.” She shared one of her favorite quotes from Zig Ziglar: “You can get anything you want in life if you help others get what they want.”



# Women to Watch Honorees



**Jenna M. Allegretto, CPA**

*Senior Manager, Assurance Services*  
**Marcum LLP**

Jenna M. Allegretto of Seymour comes from a family of accountants, following both her dad Steve Allegretto and brother Stephen Allegretto in graduating from Fairfield University and entering the accounting profession.

“Since the day I sat in my father’s classroom as a little girl when he taught Integrated Clinical/ Financial Information Management at the Yale University Department of Epidemiology and Public Health, and I learned debits to the left and credits to the right, I was hooked on accounting,” said Jenna.

While interning at Ernst & Young during Summer 2010, Jenna and three other interns were selected out of more than 1,000 interns across the globe to travel with the Chairman & CEO to the International Intern Leadership Conference in Orlando, Florida on the EY One corporate jet. “It was one of the most exciting experiences to start my career in accounting,” she said.

Jenna refers to accounting as the language of business, where women have made significant strides. “Now more than ever, women are proving that there is room at the table for all of us. It is up to us as female business leaders to continue creating a culture for women to succeed in the profession, and most importantly, champion other women who may be following in our footsteps.”

“Jenna has established herself as a leader not only in the accounting world, but throughout the community, and tackles all she gets involved in with an energy and passion that truly makes a difference,” said colleague and nominator Kristin Bodner. She serves as a mentor, advocate and visionary in all that she takes on, including as a board member and Finance Committee Chair for both the United Way of Greater New Haven (UWGNH) and the International Festival of Arts & Ideas. In 2019, Jenna was also appointed to serve on the Young Professionals Steering Committee of Leading Edge Alliance Global by Marcum’s Chairman & CEO, where members identify specific challenges encountered in the profession and develop creative solutions to tackle those challenges.

“Public accounting keeps me forever on my toes,” said Jenna, who helps clients navigate their businesses with the highest standards of client service. Her role as an assurance senior manager at MARCUM LLP, a public accounting firm, is sometimes described as a “public watchdog,” making sure businesses record and report their transactions appropriately and transparently. “But it is so much more than that,” she said.

“I love that I chose a profession that requires life-long learning as it continues to evolve and change with the market landscape,” said Jenna, who also serves as a Continuing Professional Education (CPE) instructor at Marcum and an adjunct faculty member for Fairfield University’s Master of Science in Accounting program. “Accounting is much more than my day-to-day job. It is the passion I have found in a career, that makes going to work each day more of an opportunity, and less of an obligation. It is that joy and excitement for accounting I hope to inspire in others.”

Jenna was selected to deliver the valedictory address at Fairfield University’s Graduate Commencement Ceremony in May 2012, which capped off her “3+1” college career where she earned her bachelor’s degree in three years and pursued her master’s degree in her fourth year. Education has been a staple of Jenna’s focus – one that she passionately advocates to younger generations via participation in annual Read Across America events sponsored by UWGNH. In her personal life away from work, Jenna pushes her physical limits – including kickboxing, practicing Bikram yoga and training for half marathons.

# Women to Watch Honorees



**Anne M. Comer, CPA**

*Director of Operations*  
**CRC Group**

Imagine family dinner with four accountants? The Comer family of East Haddam most definitely has exciting discussions around the table when together.

Anne Comer never planned on becoming a CPA until she married her boss Thomas Comer, CPA. She worked as his office administrator before going back to college full time when their sons, Evan and Jonathan, were in high school and middle school, respectively.

It took her two years to complete three years of study, graduating Summa Cum Laude from Central Connecticut State University. With knowledge of the CPA process behind her, she was able to help her sons through the education and CPA certification process to reach their goals.

Within a few years of working at CRC Group, Anne was promoted to Director of Operations to oversee strategic initiatives for the \$9 billion public company. She calculates annual bonuses for roughly 40 national offices, manages the Catastrophic Event Team that oversees claim processing for CAT events, designed and implemented a direct billing system, and serves on the due diligence team for new acquisitions.

“What I like most about being a CPA is helping people and problem solving. I work for a large corporation and my current role as Director of Operations is to find ways to help our business divisions work efficiently and effectively ... always a challenge,” she said.

In her hometown, Anne serves on the Ray School Corporation Board of Directors, a group that oversees and manages a trust established to improve vocational education opportunities in the East Haddam school system. She is past president of the East Haddam PTO and served for 10 years as the player agent for the East Haddam/Moodus Little League.

“Anne is a highly motivated professional where the sky continues to be the limit. She’s worked hard for her accomplishments, both personal and professional, but she never let her personal goals stand in the way of her family,” said Tom Comer.

Her words of wisdom for those considering the field: “Go for it! I love the accounting profession and there are so many different facets to the profession, which provides many choices and opportunities. AND you don’t have to be good in math (computers and calculators do that for you). You need to be able to problem solve, as well as analyze and interpret information.”

# Women to Watch Honorees



**Erica Czajkowski**

*Audit Senior Manager*  
**Deloitte & Touche LLP**

Erica Czajkowski of Burlington was inspired to join the accounting field by a strong female role model – her mother – who was a tax partner at a regional accounting firm. “She inspired me to take an accounting class in high school that I really enjoyed, so I decided to become an accounting major in college,” she said. “What I like most is working with so many different people and clients. Every day is different. Being an accountant allows you to learn from others and provide value each and every day.”

Now the Audit Senior Manager at Deloitte and Touche LLP, Erica was selected to participate in the firm’s Management Development Program from 2013 to 2015. Leveraging her leadership skills, she serves as the Diversity & Inclusion Council leader, as well as the Women’s Initiative leader at Deloitte’s Hartford office. She is committed to helping other women, as well as junior professionals, excel in a field with countless opportunities. She even organized female golf lessons so her peers would feel confident on the course.

“Erica is dedicated and passionate in all that she does. She is passionate about the people at Deloitte, which is demonstrated by her coaching, promotion of others, and leading the inclusion council,” said colleague and nominator Paul Guzzardi.

“I also have had great flexibility, which has allowed me to find a balance in accelerating my career and being a mom to my two daughters, Avery and Cameron,” said Erica, who loves riding her Peloton bike along with her favorite instructor Cody Rigsby. She is the leader for her daughter’s Girl Scout Daisy Troop.

Erica also finds time to give back through community service initiatives including Junior Achievement, the United Way Back to School drive, United Way Power of Purse and Immaculate Conception Shelter Drive. She has also helped organize Deloitte’s annual Impact Day and annual giving campaign within the Hartford office for several years.

“She is dedicated to her local community, her children, and her family and friends, and is very deserving of this award,” said Guzzardi.



# Women to Watch Honorees



**Marissa R. LaBelle, JD, CPA**

*Staff Attorney*  
RSM US LLP

Marissa LaBelle of Milford is a high achiever who finished college in less than four years and earned her Juris Doctor from Quinnipiac University while working as a full-time auditor at RSM US LLP. She is now a member of the New York State and New York City Bar Associations, as well as the American Bar Association.

“Never let others discourage or limit you. If you have a goal or dream in mind, stay confident and keep fighting until you get there,” she said. “While I always wanted to be a brain surgeon, I discovered the right path for me. I love the unique nature of the field and the endless opportunities for growth.”

To her peers, Marissa is a natural leader, role model and culture carrier. She progressed rapidly in her roles and was promoted quickly to a manager because of her technical expertise, client capabilities and talent. She spent four months in the UK on a global rotation program only offered to a select group of associates. Today, she is part of a team of in-house attorneys that defends professional liability cases brought against the firm, focused largely on the audit practice.

“When I think about women to watch, Marissa is someone that has already achieved so much in a short period of time in her career. Marissa lives our values at RSM every day,” said co-worker and nominator Susan Martinelli, an inaugural winner of the CTCPA Women Distinguished Service Award in 2020 and past president of the CTCPA.

Marissa inspires, encourages and challenges others to be their best, while courageously exploring her own curiosity, always asking questions and seeking a different perspective. “She understands we are stronger together. And she uses critical thinking by learning new things, exploring issues and opportunities and shares those insights with others,” said Susan.

“The best part has been the continuous learning and constant ability to connect with other professionals,” said Marissa, who often shares career advice with peers both formally and informally.

Marissa is also active in her professional community, where she fundraises annually for the Junior Achievement of Southwest, volunteers for Habitat for Humanity, and serves on the Board of Directors of Community Mental Health Affiliates. She is also a member of the New York City Bar Association Securities Litigation Committee and CTCPA Bylaws Committee and received the CTCPA New & Young Professionals to Watch Award.