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Joanne S. Barry, CAE – 2017 Most Powerful Women in Accounting Honoree

Professional Credentials: CAE

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Women have more mentors within the firms and the infusion of younger generations demanding better work/life balance is starting to shift the disparity women have faced.

The changing demographics of the marketplace that firms serve has sent a statement that women need to be better incorporated into high level client service. Marketplace demographics are shifting and increasing numbers of women business owners as well as women in the corner offices in corporate America are demanding inclusion. Change is happening faster from external forces in many cases.

How important is work/life balance and what suggestions do you have for those who are struggling to attain this?

Work/life balance is vitally important but it needs to be dealt with regardless of gender and not as a concession for women only. Research is already showing that the profession is often de-selected by both genders who do not want to be their grandfather's CPA, who often defined their value by the length of their work week. Younger CPAs prioritize family, charity work, and balance. regardless of gender. This next generation is demanding healthy balance in their firms.

What is the most difficult part about being a woman in the accounting profession?

Many of the female CPAs I have spoken with point to the scarcity of female leadership that puts them at a disadvantage with networking, and securing prime assignments and clients. They also speak of unintended biases within firms such as holding

networking events at typically male venues. At the New York State Society of CPAs,

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Those of us who are the CEO of a state CPA society are in a unique position that we can harness the frustration of women CPAs in firms and build events to address the challenges in a non-threatening (to the firms) environment. We can build support systems and provide the platforms for women CPAs to develop the skills needed to gain visibility and recognition within their firms. Decades ago, Society Boards were almost all male; today there is a healthy balance by gender, which positions women prominently with other leaders in the profession. The value of an active Society membership should not be underestimated.

Please share any other comments or insights you would like to share with our readers about what has driven you to be a person who is recognized as a leader in this profession.

Define your goal early in your career and don't be afraid to set your bar high. Don't be afraid of failure and don't strive to be a perfectionist. Bring others along with you as you climb the ladder and don't look back. Just keep on swimming until they see the value in you that you know is there.

[Learn more about the 2017 Most Powerful Women in Accounting.](#)

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