

2015 Best Firm



“Find what you
LOVE TO DO
and then
FIND A WAY TO
do it for others,
ALWAYS GIVING 110%.”

CAROL PATRIDGE

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BEST CPA FIRM FOR WOMEN 2015

Carol Patridge

Women Leaders in Accounting



Meet Carol

My biggest accomplishment is my family! My husband, Doug, has been my support system and partner for 33 years and we are blessed with three children, Lisa (25), Amy (21), and Trevor (18). We take a family vacation annually and each year I wonder when the kids will decide they are too busy with their hectic lives to attend. In the meantime, I am thrilled that they continue to make sure they are available and that they want to spend the time together. It is always the highlight of our summer. We also have our “boating” family in South Haven where we spend most of our summer weekends. We enjoy salmon fishing, watching sunsets and visiting with our boating friends.

In my free time, I get great personal satisfaction from volunteering. From being a Girl Scout leader for 10 years and lining lacrosse fields every week for several years, to community events such as the Mattawan Lions carnival, NAWIC Block Kids and the Miss Mattawan Scholarship event, I enjoy being involved.

Tell us about your career with Yeo & Yeo

I spent five years during college working for a national tax service preparing individual taxes. This piqued my interest in tax work and public accounting. It also provided me with great experience at graduation and lots of opportunities. I choose Yeo & Yeo because I connected with the principal interviewing me, Dick Wentzell, when he described the family-friendly environment and the nature of the clients served.



“Always lead with integrity and never ask anyone to do something you yourself would not or have not done.”

I think he was impressed that I had done over 100 tax returns manually while the client was at the table across from me the prior tax season. It was a great decision, as I have been with Yeo & Yeo for 27 years, I am the managing principal of the Kalamazoo office and a member of Yeo & Yeo's board of directors. I specialize in audit and tax consulting and work with clients in the construction, education, not-for-profit and employee benefit plan areas.

Carol, describe a time where Yeo & Yeo's work-life flexibility positively impacted you.

During my 27 years with Yeo & Yeo, I have always been impressed with the work-life flexibility. I have it all – a successful career and a happy home life. At every stage of my career, I have been able to grow professionally and not sacrifice family in the process. I have been able to attend my children's school and sporting events and play an active role in various social and community organizations while progressing professionally throughout my career.

How does Yeo & Yeo encourage the advancement of your career and how are you helping develop future leaders?

Yeo & Yeo encourages mentoring both internally at Yeo & Yeo and externally with the surrounding area colleges. I serve on the Western Michigan University Accountancy Advisory Council to help WMU develop curriculum to better prepare students as they leave college for careers in accounting. I have also mentored students at the Hayworth College of Business Leadership Scholar Program, which includes freshmen who have demonstrated strong leadership skills. Internally, I am passionate about mentoring and developing each member of the team. Mentoring is an ongoing process and not something you can discuss twice a year, so continually touching base with staff to discuss and guide them as they grow professionally is extremely rewarding. I was deeply honored when the staff nominated me and I received the Kalamazoo Regional Chamber of Commerce's ATHENA International Award in 2011. The Athena Award recognizes a man or woman who provides service to the community, demonstrates excellence within their profession and who assists women in attaining leadership skills and professional goals.

What challenges have you faced as a woman in accounting and how have you overcome them?

Twenty-seven years ago, the number of women in the accounting profession was not as significant as it is today and some men were not as accepting of women as they are now. I was also working with many construction companies that were often male dominated. I found that you have to project confidence and within a very short time they recognized that I had the knowledge to serve them. Being very proactive in serving my clients also helped to prove my value and expertise.

What advice do you have for women new to the accounting profession?

Find what you love to do and then find a way to do it for others, always giving 110%.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

The best advice I received is from a former mentor and managing principal. It was not what he said but his actions. Always lead with integrity and never ask anyone to do something you yourself would not or have not done. I have tried to follow his example in my efforts as managing principal and as I work with clients and staff.

Yeo & Yeo is among 10 firms named to the 2015 Accounting MOVE Project Best Public Accounting Firms for Women list, conducted by Wilson Taylor, www.wilson-taylorassoc.com. Follow Yeo & Yeo on LinkedIn and Facebook as we profile women leaders within our firm through September.