

2015 Best Firm



“My mission in
LIFE IS NOT
merely to survive,
BUT TO THRIVE;
and to do so
WITH SOME PASSION,
some compassion,
SOME HUMOR,
and some style.”
-MAYA ANGELOU

JENNIFER TOBIAS

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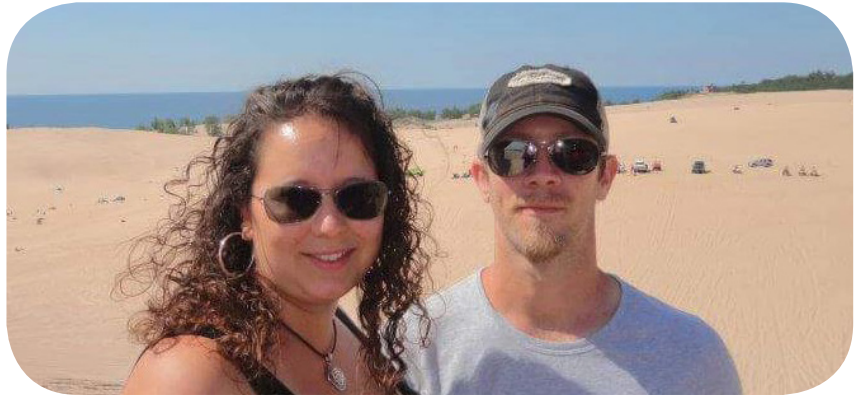
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BEST CPA FIRM FOR WOMEN 2015

Jennifer Tobias

Women Leaders in Accounting



Meet Jennifer

I am a 2006 graduate of Central Michigan University, with a double major in accounting and finance.

While at CMU, I served as president of Beta Alpha Psi, an honors organization for accounting majors. My husband and I own a small farm where we raise chickens, sheep and pigs. We are also leaders in the Barry County 4-H program, where I serve as clerk of the small animal sale and superintendent of the Young Clover Poultry group. I am also a very proud aunt of four nieces and one nephew. I love to read, travel, play cards, watch movies and be with my family and friends. I enjoy attending rodeos, sporting events, concerts and just about any type of motorsports racing that exists!

Tell us about your career with Yeo & Yeo

I knew accounting was for me in my junior year of high school. My teacher, Mr. McKee, was so passionate about accounting that when he explained it, the dots began connecting for me and debits and credits made sense. Everything else I had been thinking of as a future career path was replaced by accounting.

During college, as a member of Beta Alpha Psi, I was able to have a lot of interaction with several firms. As I learned more about each firm, I started looking closer at Yeo & Yeo. During my interview with Tom Hollerback, currently our CEO, one of his first questions was, “So, what are my chances?” We had already gotten to know each other through the recruiting process and Beta Alpha Psi meetings on campus so, instead of a traditional interview, he wanted to know what the chances were of me working at Yeo & Yeo. To me that was a pivotal moment in my selection process. Here was a firm that I liked, that had several office location choices and served many different industries, and they wanted me to work with them.

During the nine years I have worked at Yeo & Yeo, I have enjoyed growing as a professional and investing in more than just a job, but a career. I appreciate the autonomy that I have to pursue projects I am passionate about. I like being able to set my work week schedule and meet with clients as needed.



My clients are one of the biggest factors that keep me in public accounting. I love helping them solve issues, preparing tax returns, keeping them compliant with state regulations, and consulting with them on their accounting software and watching them learn what it can do.

As co-leader of the firm's Death Care Services team and Client Accounting Solutions team, I am able to share the knowledge I have gained with other staff as well as devote time to learning more about these industries. I also serve on the Agribusiness Team which helps combine my love of agriculture and accounting.

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

My husband and I are judges at county fairs across Michigan. Sometimes the days we are asked to judge livestock shows are in the middle of the week. Working at Yeo & Yeo allows me to schedule my week so we can attend the fairs together.

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

The partners in my office include me in client or prospect meetings and challenging situations. This helps me learn from them and makes me feel part of the team. They encourage me to attend training in areas in which I have chosen to specialize. I also have the opportunity to take extra time to research or learn something new in the course of my day. They don't question my every move; they encourage me to learn and grow.

"Be confident in who you are as a person and where you want your career to take you. Don't be afraid to correct or change your plans and speak your mind when needed. Know when to challenge a situation. Trust yourself. This profession can lead you to hundreds of avenues to maximize your talents."

I have also been honored to co-lead two of our firm's niche teams. This has helped me learn how to lead a group of peers, how to set goals as a team and be held accountable to report the team's status to partners.

Another way I try to develop future leaders is through our mentor program. I strive to be the best advocate for my mentees and help them learn new skills and improve in areas that are challenging. By giving new staff the proper skills early in their career, it will help our entire team grow and learn. We can depend on their skills to perform tasks we once did, and that will free up our time to advance ourselves while still maintaining client focus.

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

The biggest challenge I have faced in accounting is not being recognized as a knowledgeable professional. I have been in conversations at networking events where men will join the group and introduce themselves to everyone except the women. Sometimes one of the men I am speaking with in a group will introduce a newcomer to only the men. These situations made me feel insignificant and disrespected. At first, I acted as though nothing occurred and excuse myself from the conversation. Now I stand there and push myself to lead the introduction. It has given way to great conversations and business relationships.

What is your favorite motivational quote and best advice you have ever received?

I have several quotes that motivate and inspire me. Two of my favorites are:

Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn. ~ Benjamin Franklin

My mission in life is not merely to survive, but to thrive; and to do so with some passion, some compassion, some humor, and some style. ~ Maya Angelou

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.