



ORGANIZING PARTNERS



Press Release
For Immediate Release

Black CPA Centennial Highlights Year-Long Campaign Achievements

CHICAGO, Dec. 15, 2021 – In 1921, 25 years after the first certified public accountant (CPA) certificate was granted in the United States, John W. Cromwell Jr. became the first Black CPA. He opened a door through which thousands of Black accountants would eventually pass, yet representation of Black CPAs remains far too low. With 2021 marking the 100th anniversary of Cromwell’s landmark achievement, the Black CPA Centennial set out to help change that through a year-long national awareness campaign recognizing Black CPAs and pushing for more progress to be made in achieving diversity, equity, and inclusion in the CPA profession.

The multifaceted commemoration was a collaboration of the AICPA, Diverse Organization of Firms, Illinois CPA Society, National Association of Black Accountants, and National Society of Black CPAs, who collectively supported the creation and release of two podcast episodes, six in-depth video interviews of trailblazing Black CPAs, 11 articles, a 40 Under 40 Black CPA Award program, and a live-streamed virtual celebration. This original content serves to preserve and honor the rich histories of some of the first Black CPAs, celebrate the achievements of Black CPAs positively impacting the profession, and build on the future of the Black CPA community, including the creation of the Black CPA Centennial Fund.

The Black CPA Centennial Fund offers the community an opportunity to help pave the way for more Black individuals to pursue careers in accounting and earn the CPA credential. To date, the campaign has raised more than \$78,000, which will be disbursed in 2022 in the form of national scholarships and resources to make an immediate, meaningful impact on the advancement of Black CPAs. Tax-deductible donations will be accepted through Dec. 31, 2021.

“We’re extremely proud of what we’ve accomplished to bring to light and preserve the inspiring stories of some of the first Black CPAs, while also honoring and celebrating the remarkable achievements of those who’ve followed in their pioneering footsteps,” says Todd Shapiro, president and CEO of the Illinois CPA Society, in speaking on behalf of the Black CPA Centennial’s organizing partners. “It’s our hope that this important national initiative will drive momentum, encouragement, and support for more Black individuals to enter the accounting profession, become CPAs, and help shape the CPA profession into one that matches the rich diversity of all the people and businesses it serves.”

To watch the recording of the virtual celebration, view the impactful interviews, read the inspiring articles, listen to the podcasts, learn about the remarkable 40 Under 40 Black CPA Award recipients, make a year-end gift to the Black CPA Centennial Fund, and more, visit www.BlackCPACentennial.cpa.

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