



Mary T. Washington Wylie Opportunity Fund

Program Impact Report
January 17, 2023



Overview and History

Mary T. Washington Wylie (1906-2005) was the first female Black/African American CPA in the United States. With odds stacked against her at every turn, she overcame barriers and founded an accounting firm in her basement on the South Side of Chicago. She was a trailblazer and mentor who created opportunities for generations of aspiring Black/African American CPAs by building a sense of belonging and generously fostering their development and supporting their careers.

As a tribute to honor her legacy, the CPA Endowment Fund of Illinois' Mary T. Washington Wylie Opportunity Fund was founded by Lester McKeever Jr., CPA, JD, former managing principal for Washington, Pittman & McKeever, LLC. This fund offers the community an opportunity to help pave the way for diverse individuals interested in the accounting and finance profession.



Mary T. Washington Wylie Internship Preparation Program Changes Underrepresented Demographics in the Profession



For more than ten years, the Illinois CPA Society and CPA Endowment Fund of Illinois have partnered with accounting faculty and several accounting firms and organizations to hold the Mary T. Washington Wylie Internship Preparation Program, a 2015 recipient of the "Power of A" Gold Award from the American Society of Association Executives.



[Watch this short video.](#)

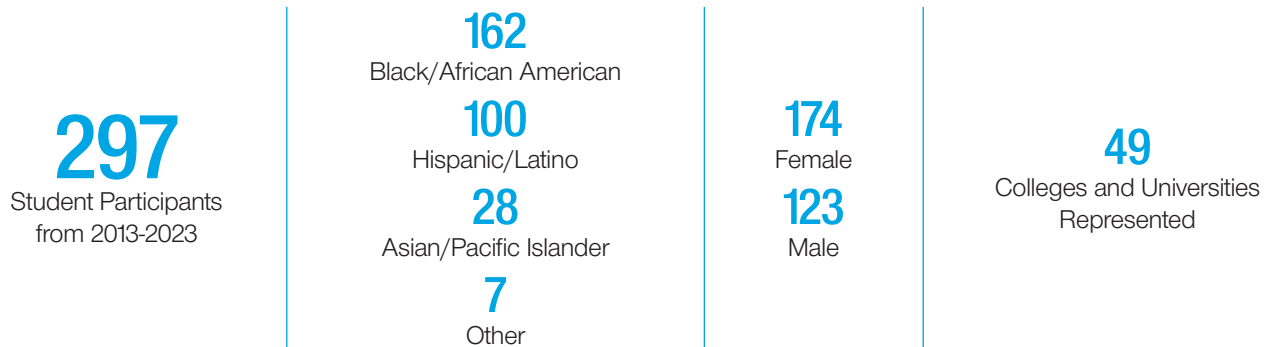


The three-day, all expenses paid program is available to qualifying students each year. The goal is to prepare and place Black/African American and other minority sophomore, junior, and senior accounting students in successful internships through exposure to the profession, practical training, financial resources, access to mentors, and internship interviews. The program attracts students from schools where accounting firms do not typically recruit, providing access and educational opportunities to individuals who otherwise may not receive them. All students receive a \$500 scholarship to help pay for educational expenses. In addition, through a unique partnership with the University of Illinois, these students receive the opportunity to interview for a free tuition and stipend scholarship for the Master of Accounting Science program. The next Internship Preparation Program is in development for January 2024.



Program Participants and Outcomes

Participants



Outcomes

297 students received \$500 scholarships, resume advice, interview coaching, workstyle assessments, access to mentors, onsite interviews, and more.

>85% students accepted leadership, internships, or full-time positions.

43 students received free tuition and stipend scholarships for the Master of Accounting Science program at the University of Illinois.

70/297 students are still undergraduates as of December 2022.

227/297 participants have completed their undergraduate degrees by December 2021.

- 9/227** are currently pursuing a master's degree*
- 89/227** have completed a master's degree*
- 176/227** are full-time accounting or finance professionals*
- 40** are now Certified Public Accountants*



*information is self-reported

Testimonials



Morayma
Barron

This program was a transformative opportunity! In addition to a scholarship, I had access to a large professional network and learned necessary business skills and interview tips. Because of connections I made, I've secured several internships which will further my career, as well as increase diversity in the accounting profession.



Jeaneice
Payne

I'm exactly where I should be because of your support. I lost my mom to Chicago's gun violence. I don't want to be another statistic. I'm no longer eligible for financial aid, so this scholarship allows me to complete my last semester of college and work toward my dreams and goals.



Robert
Navarro

Being in this leadership role really forced me to overcome my shyness and helped me have a better college experience. This great opportunity helped me discover how much fun it can be to get involved.



Briana
Williams

Thank you for believing in my future and helping me overcome adversity in my life. Your support renewed my sense of hope and motivation to make the seemingly impossible possible.



Jeren
Stewart

This program just may be the key to all the doors I wish to open in life. Extremely blessed, thankful, and humbled by the opportunity.



Erick
Tapia

It's easy to feel isolated in my accounting classes. Participating in a program amongst other minority students with my same drive to succeed reinvigorated my dedication to complete my degree in accounting. I just needed to know I wasn't alone – I can't thank you enough.



Jennile
O'Connor

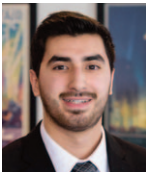
I wanted to thank you for all of the hard work you did to make the program such a huge success. The entire program was very informative and fun; it is one that I will remember for years to come. I honestly felt that this was just the kick-starter that my career needed, and I will always think of you as part of that journey.



Samantha
Perez

Through the MTWW program, I gained valuable insight into the CPA exam and the professional career opportunities within the field of accounting. I was also able to network with both new and experienced professionals from different firms and eventually interview with the firms themselves. It was because of the MTWW program that I was able to obtain an internship with Ernst & Young last summer and am excited to announce that I will be returning to their firm this coming summer as well!

Testimonials



David
Ascencio

I can point to the MTWW program as my initial exposure to the accounting world. In the three days of the event, I grew so much and began to understand how to be successful in the profession. Attending the program opened so many opportunities since I come from a small school.



Mia
Shah

Success is founded in hard work, but it is also reliant on the opportunities we receive. As we move forward, we need more diversity of thought to help build stronger teams and provide better solutions. Nearly two years ago, I had the opportunity to attend the Mary T. Washington Wylie Internship Preparation Program alongside a group of high-achieving individuals, and I attribute me starting my career at a big four accounting firm and getting my masters from one of the best accounting programs in the country to THAT opportunity.



Jared
Dandridge

I really enjoyed the program and I am truly grateful for ICPAS and all of your help. I feel a lot more comfortable reaching out to employers and starting my career! Again, thank you so much for everything!



Zaria
Ward

I know first-hand how important donations to the CPA Endowment Fund are to students. The donations are used to provide scholarships and training programs to outstanding students in need. I personally have received several scholarships from the Illinois CPA Society and that would not have been possible without your donation. Please help raise awareness or consider donating to provide support to a student in need!



Leslie
Clotney

I was privileged to participate this year and secured my first-ever accounting internship since I moved to the U.S. I was also awarded a new HP Envy 360 laptop in an essay competition. Most importantly, my network with relevant stakeholders continues to appreciate my net worth.



Amari
Hall

2019 has been off to a great start. I had the amazing opportunity to participate in the Mary T. Washington Wylie Internship Preparation Program. This program taught me a lot about business etiquette, how to be a successful student, and what I need in order to become a CPA.



Isabela
Valentin

As I start my journey with Deloitte, I am reminded of how I got there. This program is an incredible opportunity and has changed my life. Not only did I have an invaluable learning experience, I also made great friends along the way.



Emani
James

This past week was only the beginning of my journey into my career. You have to start somewhere and I couldn't imagine a better way to start it off than at the Mary T. Washington Wylie Internship Preparation Program. It was definitely an amazing experience and I learned so much about not just the accounting world, but also things to work on as I get deeper into the field.

Testimonials



Chakyah
Kessouagni

As an alumni of the Mary T. Washington Wylie Internship Preparation Program, I can proudly say that those were the best three days I spent investing in my future. Getting to learn more about the accounting profession and networking with different professionals from various firms really helped me figure out what I wanted to do with my career.



Brandi
Jackson

I received the MTWW and Herman J. Neal scholarships; both were more beneficial than people really know. I am where I am in part because of ICPAS! Forever grateful for the donors and the professionals at ICPAS! Your donation is more than just a donation, it's truly an investment in the recipient's life/future.



Kierra
Smith

If I hadn't participated in this program, I wouldn't be where I am today. Now, I have my independence, work for one of the largest accounting firms, and help other students and young professionals.



Brian
Denton

Hearing about the experiences of actual accountants has opened my eyes to the endless possibilities that being a public accountant has to offer.



Thu
Nguyen

Since the event, I have been motivated to accelerate in my studies and am looking forward to advancing my accounting career. The program rekindled the passion for scholars like me who may need reinforcement to continue the journey towards finishing in accountancy.



Abisola
Oladigbo

This program changed my life! I received helpful resume tips, interview advice, and learned all about the CPA exam. I also learned important lessons about my professional presence, attitude, and etiquette, which has provided me with a greater sense of self-confidence.



Andrew
Allen

Growing up in poverty, the odds were against me and I faced challenges that could have easily derailed my life. However, your programs and your investment in my future unveiled incredible opportunities that helped me stay focused and motivated.



Cierra
Walls

As I reflect on my week, all I can say is WOW! I have done so much in so little time. Thank you for recognizing my potential and investing your time into making sure I have every tool and experience I need to succeed. The program really made me feel more confident and self-aware of who I really am and what I can bring to the table. Because of this program, I have been selected to work at the #1 accounting firm, motivated to start a NABA chapter on my campus, and received sponsorship to attend the Forbes 30 Under 30 Summit. Your work is incredible and unmatched by anyone. I truly want to say thank you all from the bottom of my heart!