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AICPA and NASBA Recognize Top CPA Exam Performers with Elijah Watt Sells Award

NEW YORK AND NASHVILLE (June 2, 2026) — The American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) and the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) congratulate this year’s winners of the Elijah Watt Sells Award. This award is granted to CPA candidates who obtain a cumulative average score above 95.50 across four sections of the Uniform CPA Examination, pass all four sections on their first attempt, and completed testing in 2025.

An extraordinary group of six candidates met the rigorous criteria to receive the Elijah Watt Sells Award this year, underscoring their dedication to excellence within the profession. In 2025, more than 87,000 individuals sat for the CPA Exam.

“The Elijah Watt Sells Award represents one of the highest honors in the CPA profession, and this year’s recipients have demonstrated extraordinary commitment, intellect and discipline,” said Susan Coffey, CPA, CGMA, CEO of public accounting at the AICPA. “These individuals exemplify the highest standards of achievement and are well positioned to help shape the future of the profession with integrity, innovation and a strong sense of purpose.”

The Uniform CPA Exam is owned by the AICPA and administered in Prometric test centers by NASBA on behalf of the 55 U.S. Boards of Accountancy.

“The Elijah Watt Sells Award recognizes not only technical excellence but also a deep commitment to the accounting profession’s highest standards,” said NASBA President and CEO Daniel J. Dustin, CPA. “On behalf of NASBA and our member Boards of Accountancy, we congratulate this year’s recipients on their outstanding accomplishment. Their performance on the CPA Exam places them among the top candidates nationwide and reflects both their dedication to personal achievement and their future contributions to the profession.”

The Elijah Watt Sells Award program was established by the AICPA in 1923 to recognize outstanding performance on the CPA Exam and to honor Elijah Watt Sells, one of the country’s first CPAs. A founding member of the firm now known as Deloitte, Sells played a significant role in advancing the accounting profession, particularly in education and professional standards.

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The individuals listed below are the 2025 Sells Award winners, in alphabetical order, followed by their Board of Accountancy affiliation, education and present employer:

- **William Baker (Kansas)**, a graduate of The University of Kansas with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and Business Analytics, is employed with Wendling Noe Nelson & Johnson LLC in Topeka, KS.
- **Lauren Dever (North Carolina)**, a graduate of Dickinson College with a Bachelor of Arts in International Business and Management and a Master of Accounting from UNC Kenan-Flagler Business School, is employed with HealthEdge in Boston, MA.
- **Stephanie Guei (Texas)**, a graduate of the University of Houston with a Bachelor of Science in Kinesiology and a Master of Science in Accountancy, is employed with Weaver and Tidwell, LLP in Houston, TX.
- **Allison Hinaman (Texas)**, a graduate of the University of Florida with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting and a Master of Accounting, is employed with the Financial Accounting Standards Board in Norwalk, CT.
- **Sophie Kapler (Michigan)**, a graduate of Oakland University with a Bachelor of Science in Accounting, is employed with Ally in Detroit, MI.
- **Xin Jie Yu (California)**, a graduate of Washington University in St. Louis with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration in accounting, is employed with KPMG in Santa Clara, CA.

About the American Institute of CPAs

The American Institute of CPAs (AICPA) is the world's largest member association representing the CPA profession, with hundreds of thousands of members and a history of serving the public interest since 1887. AICPA members represent many areas of practice, including business and industry, public practice, government, education and consulting. A founding member of the Association of International Certified Professional Accountants, the AICPA sets ethical standards for the profession, attestation standards, and U.S. auditing standards for private companies, not-for-profit organizations and government entities. It develops and grades the Uniform CPA Examination, offers specialized credentials and drives continuing professional education to advance the vitality and relevance of the profession.

About NASBA

Since 1908, the National Association of State Boards of Accountancy (NASBA) has served as a forum for the nation's Boards of Accountancy, which administer the Uniform CPA Examination, license approximately 653,000 certified public accountants and regulate the practice of public accountancy in the United States.

NASBA's mission is to enhance the effectiveness and advance the common interests of the Boards of Accountancy in meeting their regulatory responsibilities. The Association promotes the exchange of information among accountancy boards, serving the needs of the 55 U.S. jurisdictions.

NASBA is headquartered in Nashville, TN, with operations in San Juan, PR. To learn more about NASBA, visit www.nasba.org.

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