

MEET OUR MEMBERS



TIM STILES

JOB: Finance director with the City of West Des Moines

HOMETOWN: Newton

ALMA MATER: Luther College

COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY ACTIVITIES: Chair of ISCPA Governmental Committee, board member of the Iowa Public Agency Investment Trust, serves on the Finance Committees of the Des Moines Metropolitan Planning Organization and the Iowa League of Cities, and serves on the City of Altoona Parks Board.

Tim and his wife Michele live in Altoona and have two sons, Brock (22) and Gabe (19).

My inspiration to become a CPA: My roommate my freshman year at college was tracking to be an accounting major. He was complaining about his class and said he didn't think I could even pass accounting, so I signed up to take an accounting class and ended up liking it.

How has being a member of ISCPA helped you? First and foremost, the education benefits – not only the technical accounting training, but it has helped with skills including leadership, management, ethics, and even public speaking.

Biggest changes you've seen in the profession: For my first job out of college at a Des Moines-based CPA firm, none of the staff had computers. What we did have were a lot of green pads, and pencils and manilla folders.

Favorite thing about your job: My co-workers. The City of West Des Moines Finance Department is a great team. Everyone on our small-but-mighty team contributes. We perform high-level public service, everyone does their job very well, and we have fun together. Managing that group keeps me excited to come to work every day. There is also a great group of management leaders in place across the various city departments.

Outside of work: I have been an Iowa High School football game official for 25 years, and spend much of my spare time playing golf, attending sporting events and relaxing at Lake Okoboji.

Message for students considering a career as a CPA:

Every single business/organization across the world needs a good accountant and being a CPA translates to having credibility as a good accountant. Mostly because it's not easy to obtain. With the CPA designation, you can take your education and certification and pretty much work in any industry or environment, and that's powerful.

Have you had mentors? I have had many but learned from my father first and foremost. He was a successful high-school football coach for his entire teaching career. My dad always coached the offensive line which was just a small unit of the larger team, but if you know football, a good offensive line is critical for any team success. He didn't play favorites and he made sure every lineman on his unit was shown they had an important job and needed to work together. His group always knew their assignments because they practiced the same details every day. As a result, the players put in great effort and were loyal, and so many of them overachieved which translated into very successful teams.

People don't know this about me: I am allergic to dogs and cats. In fact, my wife had a cat when we first met and fortunately, she chose me over the cat.

Best concert I've been to: Last summer, I got to see Bruce Springsteen play in Edinburgh, Scotland at their outdoor rugby stadium along with 67,000 fans.

What I wanted to be when I grew up: A sportswriter for Sports Illustrated. As a kid, I read every word of SI and the Des Moines Register sports section.

Best advice I ever received: Right before I got married, my father-in-law told me, "Tim, sometimes it's better if you just go along with it."

First job: Concessions at Adventureland

If I weren't a CPA, you might: Find me teaching. Both of my parents were teachers, so that might have been a path I'd have taken.