

meet members



Jenny McGarry

Job: Senior manager, National Tax Office with Eide Bailly LLP in DeWitt

Hometown: Davenport

Alma mater: University of Iowa, St. Ambrose University (MAcc), and DePaul University (doctorate)

Professional/community activities: ISCPA Career Awareness Committee Chair, various sports and other positions to support our kids' school.

What I wanted to be when I grew up: An astronaut after the Challenger explosion.

I was inspired to be a CPA because: I was searching for something different within the financial service industry. I was a finance major, and my first job allowed me to obtain my security licenses. After the dot-com bubble burst and 9/11, I wanted a career with more stability, so I started the MAcc at SAU. My experience with the Series 7 securities license made me understand the importance of professional credentials early in my career.

If I weren't a CPA, you might find me: Teaching something somewhere, maybe golf.

I am passionate about: Students and helping all people find ways to be successful with their skillset.

People don't know this about me, but: I am an only child of only children. I do not have any aunts, uncles, or cousins!

How has being a member of ISCPA helped you? It is nice to have a network of other likeminded professionals that extends beyond the Quad Cities. I have met some amazing folks that I probably would not have met otherwise.

What are some of the biggest changes you've seen in the profession? Students have so many options and I am not sure that the CPA license holds as much prestige as it once did. However, I do think the value a CPA adds to business has increased dramatically. So, I think the biggest challenge we have is branding. We can fix that!

Who would you swap places with for a day? Having just left a career in higher education, I will miss working with students. I'll probably want to swap with an accounting professor somewhere, soon!

How has your background and experience shaped who you are today? My time as an accounting professor really helped me develop a whole new level of empathy. My life has been easy, many people have not had it so easy. Working with students and helping them develop skills to persevere and work through tough times in life (e.g., disabilities, homelessness, food insecurities, racial prejudices) has given me great perspective. One of my most influential mentors would often say, "Everyone wants to do a good job." No one wakes up wanting to do a bad job during their day. As leaders, we can play a small part in others' success by supporting and encouraging people. I hope I do this and encourage others to do the same.

What influences have helped you? I have had some great mentors that have supported me and gone to bat for me at critical times in my career.

What is your biggest achievement to date? My kids, shhhh, don't tell them!

In my free time, I prefer to: Not much free time with four kids. I look forward to kayaking more someday.

Place I'd love to live: I would like a few houses in different parts of the country to take advantage of the best weather.

Jenny and her husband, Leo, live on a 165-year-old family farm in DeWitt with their children Nate (16), Ryan (15), Claire (12), and AJ (9).

I never leave home without: I always forget something.

Favorite musician: Garth Brooks

Favorite food: Anything I don't cook!

Secret or special talent: I juggle and golf

Favorite movie: The original Ghostbusters

Best advice I ever received: TTT—Things take time, this is SO hard for me!

Famous person I would most like to meet: Jesus

If I were famous, I'd want to be famous for: Being kind, like Ellen and Oprah

Outside of work, I'm passionate about: Education, education, education!