USC Leventhal welcomes new faculty

USC Leventhal will welcome five new faculty members for the coming academic year, following a year of recruiting success, welcomed Clive Lennox and Regina Wittenberg-Moerman to the senior faculty, and Mary Anne Sabido-Werner, Julie Suh and David Tsui to the junior faculty. “Our ability to attract such an outstanding group of individuals is directly attributable to the stature, reputation and hard work of current faculty and the strong support of Dean Ellis and the University.”

“We warmly welcome these new colleagues to the Marshall and Leventhal family,” said Gareth James, vice dean for faculty and academic affairs, E. Morgan Stanley Chair in Business Administration, and professor of data sciences and operations at the USC Marshall School of Business. “We look forward to their contributions at USC and their impact within the academic and business communities.”

Clive Lennox will join our faculty this summer as professor of accounting, with tenure. He will also be the USC Accounting Associates Professor of Accounting. He earned his Ph.D. in economics in 1998 from the University of Oxford. He is currently professor of accounting at Nanyang Technological University, Singapore.

Lennox is a prolific scholar with more than 30 journal publications (including more than 20 in the top-rated accounting

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19

CONTINUED ON PAGE 16
A Word From the Dean

To the USC Leventhal Community...

Among the matters addressed by this newsletter is some very sad news. The Marshall and Leventhal community mourns the loss of three much-loved family members: Ernst and Young LLP Professor Emeritus Andy Mosich, Professor Bob Trezevant and Gordon S. Marshall, benefactor of the Marshall School of Business. Through their many contributions, Andy, Bob and Gordon remain a part of not just our history, but also our future.

Andy is considered one of the founding fathers of our school. He joined the USC Leventhal faculty in 1964 and, over the ensuing decades, demonstrated a tireless dedication to our school and our students. In addition to teaching for nearly 30 years, he took a leading role in fundraising by creating the Accounting Circle and raising $5 million for USC, including the first gift to the School of Accounting from Kenneth and Elaine Leventhal, whom he counted as close friends for more than 50 years. An endowed scholarship and an endowed faculty chair honor his lasting influence and will contribute to the quality of our programs in perpetuity. Andy’s Celebration of Life event held on the USC campus was exceptionally well attended, including by approximately 350 former students, friends and colleagues. Our school is infinitely better off having had Andy as a vital teacher, advisor and contributor for so long. He will be sorely missed.

During his 24-plus years on the Leventhal faculty, Bob worked enthusiastically to nurture future leaders in accounting and spearheaded many projects designed to keep our school on the cutting edge. Recently, he chaired our Curriculum Revision Committee, taking the lead in developing a comprehensive plan for academic advancement. Courses on accounting valuation and accounting ethics were added, and many other important changes were accomplished under his leadership. Most recently, he chaired our recruiting committee, and during his term as chair we added four tenured faculty members and five tenure-track faculty members. We considered adding tenured faculty members to be essential to the continued advance of the Leventhal School, and Bob performed exceptionally well. He also served as our faculty liaison with the Board of Advisors committee on Curriculum Strategy and Innovation.

Gordon Marshall, whose contributions helped build a legacy at USC, passed away June 2 at his home in Pasadena, at the age of 95. He was an alumnus of USC’s College of Commerce who earned a degree in accounting in 1946, and built Marshall Industries from the ground up in 1953. Over seven decades, he profoundly impacted not only the accounting and business schools, but the entire university. He was a popular lecturer, an executive-in-residence and one of the longest-serving trustees in USC’s history. In 1996, Marshall’s $35 million gift was the largest endowment ever made to a business school and the second largest at USC. There will be a celebration of his life in the fall, and Dean Ellis will provide more information about this event as it becomes available.

As we consider the exciting opportunities awaiting us, it is important to remember the pathbreakers of the Marshall and Leventhal Schools who came before us. It is their legacy that propels us toward a future that is so bright and promising.

Fight on!
Best Regards,
William W. Holder
Dean, USC Leventhal School of Accounting, Alan Casden Dean’s Chair

‘Never Limit Yourself’

Commencement speaker Mary Ann Sigler counts hard work, integrity and confidence among greatest assets

On Tax Day, Mary Ann Sigler MBT ’80 got comfortable on a cushy sofa in the Club Room at the world headquarters of Platinum Equity in Beverly Hills, happy to chat about her upcoming address at the USC Leventhal Undergraduate and Graduate Commencement Ceremony. A genuine enthusiasm and good sense of humor shone through her stories, and when asked if she could name her greatest career accomplishment, the CFO and CCO positively lit up.

“That is so easy,” Sigler said. “My greatest career accomplishment is May 15 when I give this commencement speech. This is such an honor — I’m not sure how I top that. It’s not even a bucket list item! Who puts this on a bucket list? Nobody.”

About 10 years ago, Sigler retired from a 25-year career at Ernst & Young where she was senior partner to become the top finance executive at a private equity company with more than $7 billion of assets under management. At Platinum Equity, she oversees all accounting, tax, financial reporting and treasury functions for the global firm, which specializes in mergers, acquisitions and operations. She is also responsible for corporate governance and many of the firm’s banking relationships, while playing a critical role in strategic planning with Founder, Chairman and CEO Tom Gores.

“Surely over the past 35 years there was some major coup that tops her list of professional achievements?”

“I have worked on so many interesting transactions in my
career, and all of those were great in and of themselves and they shaped who I am,” she said. “But that whole career is what’s enabled me to give this speech. To be able to spend 15 minutes speaking to students and their families is going to be something I will remember for the rest of my life.”

This will actually be the second Leventhal graduation ceremony that Sigler is excited about. The first was her own, when she went back to school to follow up her bachelor’s degree in accounting from California State University, Fullerton with a Master of Business Taxation at USC.

“I couldn’t have been more excited to graduate — not to leave, because I enjoyed my classmates and made lifelong friends — but because it wrapped up what I considered to be a very successful graduate degree there,” she said. “It opened doors to get in public accounting. It was a unique degree at the time from a great institution, and I would not have had the opportunities I had and done what I had done without that.”

**Climbing the Ladder**

Sigler said her career was propelled by hard work and integrity, ideas she plans to share at Commencement. “I’m not so sure I wouldn’t put integrity before hard work,” she said. “But hard work has definitely been a theme in my life.”

Humility was also important. “I didn’t look for what kind of credit I got or that someone was giving me accolades,” she said. “I looked for opportunities that I felt would shape my career, round out my experience and help me to grow. I figured if you got the job done, the right people were going to know who did it.”

Not that she hasn’t earned accolades. For one, she was named among the Top 100 Most Influential People in Finance by Treasury & Risk magazine in 2010.

Sigler said she doesn’t drive an hour and a half to work every day because she needs the money either — she does it because she loves her job. And whether it’s solving a problem at work, making an impact through philanthropic endeavors or learning to drive roll cage ATVs in the desert hills with her grown sons, Sigler enjoys a challenge.

“Somebody telling me I can’t do something, oh, those are fightin’ words for me,” Sigler said with relish. “Just tell me I can’t and I’ll figure out how. Of course, maybe I won’t. Failure is an option. I’m not such a Pollyanna that I believe that if I just work hard everything will work out, but as much as my successes are part of what shapes me, so are my failures. I’ve learned a lot from them.”

Sigler said she’s happiest when she’s learning something new and figuring out how to get things done. Last year she purchased an asset that everyone told her would take years to accomplish.

“I managed to get it done — buying it, sourcing it, financing it, all of that,” she said. “I couldn’t have been more ecstatic when it was done. That sense of accomplishment is what keeps me going.”

**All-Business Woman**

Sigler gets asked a lot about being a powerful woman in business. Starting out in the ’70s, she took advice from a book called “Games Mother Never Taught You: Corporate Gamesmanship for Women” by Betty Lehan Harragan. It said women had to look, talk and act like men, so she had the oxford shirts, the gray and navy suits, the bow ties. Just a few days earlier, Sigler said, she had been going through some drawers and came across some of those bow ties.

“All little scary!” she said. “You can imagine 35 years ago when I started, there were a few less women in the business world. Public accounting was pretty much a man’s world. I spent a lot of years trying to just be one of the guys.”

But, today, sporting a dressy sweater, black slacks and ballet flats, Sigler said her advice to women is the same she would give everyone.

“Never limit yourself,” she said. “Have confidence in who you are and what you can do — that is key. Self-doubt can be destructive. Always look for opportunities and don’t be afraid to get outside the box, outside your comfort zone.”

“That said,” she added, “I have always enjoyed the Madeleine Albright quote: ‘There is a special place in hell for women who don’t help other women.’ … You might find that in my speech.”
Taking Business Literacy to Rural Panama

Students empower small businesses during winter break

For the past two years, Jared Ong-Siong ’16 has given up a week of winter break to share his business and accounting knowledge with indigenous people in rural Panama. With the USC chapter of Global Business Brigades, he has helped empower small businesses in Pueblo Nuevo to become more economically stable.

“The opportunities I had gave me a lot of perspective,” said Ong-Siong, who was one of the student leaders on the January 2015 trip. “We don’t need to spend our break in Las Vegas all the time. I think it’s good to give back once in a while, and these trips are something that we’ll never forget.”

Through GBB, Marshall and Leventhal students educated and consulted with small business owners, people who make and sell woven baskets, beaded jewelry and other handicrafts. They conducted morning workshops on financial literacy and planning. In the afternoons, individual consultations involved bookkeeping, inventory organization, strategic planning and other business essentials. The workshops and consultations were targeted for the women members of the local caja rural, or community bank.

“The women are more tied to the community and these small businesses, while men go out for agricultural work,” said Sara McLachlan, associate director of accounting master’s programs. “The women also spend money on nutrition and clothing, so it’s important to get the women educated and involved.”

The GBB students also helped the community financially. A portion of volunteers’ fundraising is deposited in the community-owned bank established by GBB for future savings accounts and loans.

“It was a truly amazing experience,” said McLachlan, who accompanied the students. “At its heart, Global Brigades believes that students have the manpower and passion to make the changes the world needs.”

Other Leventhal students on the trip were Jai Dolwani ’17, Eli Wininger ’15, and Natalie Tecimer ’15, who co-founded the nonprofit Ending All Roads to Silence.

On the trip, the two USC seniors also watched a couple of surgeries for cochlear implants. In all, EARS donated hearing aids to 30 children and cochlear implants to five. This visit was the first in a three-year program made possible by a $368K grant from the Jamsetji Tata Trust, of which USC Trustee Ratan Tata is chairman.

Tecimer proposed the idea for EARS for a project in one of her freshman classes. Her professor encouraged her to make it a reality, so the international relations major asked Wininger, a business administration and accounting major, to join her that year in recruiting members for an official USC student organization.
Wininger jumped at the chance to build EARS. Coming onboard with skills essential to fundraising, banking and money management, he helped the club become a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit in 2013.

“I wanted to be involved in a USC organization and take a leadership role,” he said. “I like helping people and doing community work and just giving my time for something bigger than myself. College is the perfect time to invest my outside-of-college time because I have the luxury to not have to be making money.”

Wininger learned a lot from Tecimer about the stigma of hearing impairment and how it can limit socialization. “A lot of parents, when they find out their children need hearing aids, think their children are not going to be normal,” he said. “But the truth is, hearing impairment is as easy to repair as vision. So I like to think of it as helping people become better than they think they can be.”

Part of EARS’ mission is to widen children’s horizons as much as possible. Through a music program they began in the LA Unified School District and replicated in India, they visit schools and introduce children to the basics of music. “We teach them that they can also make music if they want to,” Wininger said. “And they shouldn’t feel restricted by their hearing impairment.”

“Helping disadvantaged kids has been a passion of mine since I can remember,” said Tecimer, “and when I got to USC, it was wonderful to have the support of so many other students.”

When Wininger graduates in December, he plans to continue operating the nonprofit with Tecimer, working closely with the USC organization. He may also remain with a tech startup he has been working for in Santa Monica, or investigate a career in auditing or consulting with an accounting firm. He is also considering taking a little time off to join the Israeli army.

“I think taking a few years out of your time when you’re young is important to get a stronger gauge on the world and to do something not just for yourself, whether it be the military or working for a homeless shelter for a year,” Wininger said. “To take that time to get connected and grounded, I think the world and the United States would be a better place.”
Some Examples of Research Impacting Tax Policy

By Chuck Swenson, Professor of Accounting and Leventhal Research Fellow

One of the missions of a research university such as USC is to create and publish discovery research. In the tax area, such research contributes to the existing body of work and on occasion is used directly in setting policy. I have been fortunate to be a part of such policy-influencing research in the state and local arena in the last few years.

One example is my work on state Enterprise Zones (or EZs). EZs are geographically targeted areas set by 44 states where businesses receive tax breaks. Despite being used for over a quarter of a century and costing states more than $5 billion annually, there had been limited convincing research that such zones created jobs. So, I collected maps for the 8,000-plus EZs around the United States and digitized them using GIS software, and also digitized immediately adjacent areas as “control groups.” Coauthors John Ham (previously at USC Dornsife), Ayse Imrohoroglu (USC Marshall), Heonjae Song (Ph.D. graduate from Dornsife) and I found that, across states, EZs increased income, and decreased poverty and unemployment. I presented our results in a series of hearings before the California State Assembly and Senate in 2010 and 2011. This controversial $800 million/year program was retained in California, in modified form. The paper (Journal of Public Economics) was also used in policy settings in other states.

In 2011, I presented a paper (Journal of the American Taxation Association) before a joint committee of the California Senate and Assembly on the potential effects of California retaining a recently adopted (and hotly debated) method of taxing multi-state corporations. As with EZs, there was very limited prior research despite the fact that this method was costly to states ($700 million annually in California alone). Using a unique data set from Dun & Bradstreet which enabled me to precisely identify all firms’ multi-state operations, I showed that this method creates jobs, although only for companies based in the state. This “single sales factor” method of taxation was retained by the State, and my study was also cited in policy settings in other states.

Beginning in 2011 and continuing at this writing, I have been involved with the City of Los Angeles regarding potential reforms to the City’s business tax. The tax is unpopular with businesses and is widely thought to deter firms from coming to (or staying in) Los Angeles. In a study presented before various City lawmakers and committees on several occasions, I showed that a previous cut in the tax had led to economic growth. The Business Tax Advisory Committee (chaired by USC’s own Lloyd Greif) recommended a multi-year dissolution of the tax, and Mayor Eric Garcetti has announced plans to do so starting next year. The math here is a little tricky: the tax brings in $400 million per year, but I was able to show that, over time, business expansion would increase other city taxes toward an offset of loss of the $400 million.

In an expanded version of this study (Public Finance Review), I showed that business taxes have similar growth-inhibiting effects on other cities nationally. In a related project, I showed that if the City gave “preference points” for contractors based in the City, more work would be sourced to such firms, which would in turn lead to more jobs in LA. The math here was also tricky, since the potentially higher prices charged to the City by local bid-winners had to be offset by higher tax collections, after multiplier effects, to keep with a balanced budget. The preference program was put into effect in 2011.

At USC we have one of the very best undergraduate and graduate programs in the country for educating professional accountants. Our curriculum prepares students for understanding and working with very complex tax systems, but as a researcher I also try to make a point of spending some time explaining where these complex laws came from (and the related economic impacts).
Patti Mills Receives University Mentoring Award

Patti Mills, professor of clinical accounting at USC Leventhal, was honored with a 2015 USC Mellon Mentoring Award for the Faculty Mentoring Graduate Students category. The USC Mellon Mentoring Awards, made possible through a partnership between USC and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, honor individual faculty for helping build a supportive academic environment at USC through faculty-to-student and faculty-to-faculty mentoring.

“I am privileged to start with a renowned program that attracts top graduate students who are interested in a career in taxation,” Mills said in a statement written for the awards ceremony on April 13. “From there, I simply add my passion for the study of taxation and my respect and adoration of our students, along with empathy for what they are going through.”

Mills, who specializes in partnership, real estate and individual tax issues, joined USC Marshall full-time in 2002 after teaching part-time for many years and working in the private sector as a tax consultant. She said that, for her, mentoring involves connecting with the students on a daily basis.

“My mentoring will vary from student to student,” Mills said, “but whatever form it takes, I strive to encourage those who are insecure, support those who are making difficult decisions, help those who are struggling and praise those who are successful. Sometimes mentoring is simply laughing or crying with them, and it is always setting a good example and showing respect.”

Mills was nominated for the USC Mellon Mentoring Award by Shirley Maxey, professor of clinical accounting and management communication, who also directs the Master of Accounting and Business Taxation programs.

“Patti was a perfect candidate for this award,” said Maxey. “She not only mentors our graduate students while they are in school, she stays in touch with many former students who seek her advice about their careers. I knew it would be easy to find former students enthusiastic about nominating Patti as well.”

Student letters of recommendation for Mills’ nomination acknowledged her support in both academics and life in general, praising her devotion to empowering and enriching students’ lives while preparing them to be capable tax professionals.

Among those students was Julian Javor MBT ’15, who knew Mills as a professor and a faculty advisor to the Deloitte FanTAXtic case study competition team. “As the graduate student leader of the team, I received valuable mentoring from Professor Mills on how to be an effective captain,” Javor said. “She always issued advice rather than explicit instruction, thus encouraging my growth as a leader.”

Both USC Marshall Dean James G. Ellis and USC Leventhal Dean William W. Holder congratulated Mills in sharing the news with the Marshall and Leventhal community, noting that each year hundreds of nominations are received, but only a handful can be selected for the prestigious USC Mellon Mentoring Awards.

“This is a well-deserved campus-wide honor for Patti who has been a dedicated member for the MAcc/MBT program and has contributed to our school in many ways in addition to her mentoring activities,” Holder said. “For example, Patti’s stewardship of the online MBT program has been a significant reason for its success.”
**Beta Alpha Psi Iota Chapter Places in Best Practices Competition**

*By Sonja Wing Yan Cheung ’15, President of Beta Alpha Psi Iota Chapter*

At the 2015 Beta Alpha Psi Western Regional Meeting, the Iota Chapter from USC had the opportunity to participate in the Best Practices Competition and presented on three operational topics, including financial literacy, effective operations and international impact. We placed first in the International Impact category and third in the Financial Literacy category. The first place team will be competing on behalf of the Western Region in the Beta Alpha Psi Annual Conference in August in Milwaukee, WI. We are extremely proud of their efforts and hope to continue expanding our Best Practices subcommittee in the future.

This is our first year to compete in all three categories in the Best Practices Competition. Our chapter brought in six representatives — Russell Yue and Yu Chen from the Best Practices – International Impact subcommittee and Kelsey Lau and Ryan Stoll from the Best Practices – Financial Literacy subcommittee, as well as Jin Yeo Jung, the chapter’s student advisor, and Sonja Cheung, the chapter’s president. Our presentations involved the sharing of our semester-long effort on matters and events related to all three categories.

---

**Discover New Opportunities With CalCPA**

*By Daniel Kim ’17, CalCPA’s USC Campus Ambassador*

If you ask any given high school student what a CPA does, you’d be lucky if he knew it had anything to do with accounting. I was no exception. Raised by a CPA dad, I knew what the acronym CPA stood for, but really knew next to nothing about accounting. Two years ago during the college application season, I had checked off “accounting” mostly because of Dad’s influence. Just last year, I started to learn about the different accounting career paths. At a certain point, I became frustrated by the apparent limitations I perceived in the accounting profession. But then I was introduced to the California Society of Certified Public Accountants (CalCPA) by Professor Chrislynn Freed, who is also involved in the leadership of the organization. Now, serving as CalCPA’s USC Campus Ambassador, I have a more comprehensive understanding of the CPA profession, as well as the role I will play in it.

It is no wonder that the Leventhal School of Accounting consistently ranks among the top in the nation. The accounting program does a remarkable job of delineating the four-year course plan as well as exposing students to various career opportunities. We cultivated a culture of excellence, developing ourselves both academically and professionally to achieve the highest level of our potentials. I was initially blown away by the overwhelming multitude of opportunities and, like many others, dreamed of standing among today’s esteemed businesspeople. However, I quickly realized what a negative and limiting effect the focus on working solely for big corporations would have on me.

It is no secret that the Big Four professionals will work ridiculous hours during certain seasons. Moreover, much to my dismay, some become irrelevant to local and small businesses because they deal almost exclusively in corporate-level issues. Although prestige and, quite frankly, a professional salary sound desirable, I couldn’t envision myself 10 years down the road in that atmosphere, especially because I grew up in a quiet suburb surrounded by families of small business owners. In my personal quest to balance both the culture of excellence and my personal preference, I discovered CalCPA.

Founded in 1909, CalCPA serves over 40,000 accounting students, prospective CPAs and working CPAs across California. It is comprised of 14 regional chapters — the LA chapter is the largest, with 11,000 members. The mission of this professional organization is to advocate issues that affect working CPAs; to enhance and promote the visibility of the profession as well as the organization; and to attract, educate and support CPAs in both their professional and personal development.

These sounded all great and nice, but they did not really mean much to me as a student until I visited Sacramento this past January and interacted personally with CalCPA professionals at the CalCPA Day. My primary purpose, I had thought, was to attend the campus ambassador orientation taking place that afternoon, but what I least expected had the greatest impact on me. Over a hundred CPAs gathered at the state capital that morning not necessarily for social purposes or to share the latest accounting news, but rather to communicate with state legislators and their staff about issues that compromised not only their businesses but also those of their clients. They advocated the need for greater financial literacy education, in which CalCPA is already heavily
Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program Expands Impact

By Linwei Li BS & MBT ’16, President of USC VITA

USC Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) offers free tax preparation services to individuals with low-to-moderate incomes. Our IRS-certified volunteers are trained by Deloitte and PwC professionals to provide the highest standard of service to our community. Our volunteers are given the hands-on opportunity to experience real client interactions within a professional setting, while providing tangible, quantifiable benefits to our clients. Last year we helped file more than 300 returns and claimed $30,024 in tax refunds for our clients.

This year, we strove to expand our impact on USC and the surrounding neighborhood at our new location at the USC Catholic Center. Additionally, we extended our services to include preparing returns for foreign students. We continued our partnership with two PwC sites at El Centro and Barrio Action, allowing students the opportunity to meet professionals across a variety of practices while volunteering. We also reached out to nine sites within the Korean Youth Community Center network at various locations in Los Angeles to further increase outreach.

This year, our volunteers completed 643 returns, totaling $656,114 in tax refunds and $80,130 in tax due. USC VITA at Caruso alone handled 457 returns. We increased volunteer participation by almost 30 percent. More than 100 volunteers got their hands on a filed return this year, as opposed to only 79 last year. We are proud to say that USC VITA can now sustain itself through financial contributions from nonprofits without relying on funding from USC.

invested, and other relevant and critical issues that affect the lives of everyday working people.

These were practicing CPAs with dozens, if not hundreds, of clients involved not in corporate or federal affairs, but local and state proceedings. I do not intend to undermine the role of large corporations because they really are indispensable in our society, but I do believe that CalCPA has a niche that is applicable to a number of students at our Leventhal School of Accounting. Although CPAs in every practice will have to endure the long, weary tax season, it does not always have to be for large corporations. In fact, thousands of individuals and small businesses rely on local CPAs for financial services and advice. CPAs play an important role in cities and communities across the country, and that, I believe, is where I envision myself 10 years down the road.

There is no doubt that a huge emphasis is placed on the Big Four and the mid-tiers at USC, and it is appropriate for the majority of accounting students. However, it may be helpful to broaden the students’ perspective of the accounting profession, both public and private, at corporate and local levels. As the Campus Ambassador, I represent CalCPA on the USC campus, bridging the gap between the students and the professional organization. As part of my job, I visit student organizations, giving presentations on relevant topics, such as insights into a career as a CPA or tips and tricks on interviewing, and submit reports to CalCPA each semester. I look forward to serving the USC accounting community this year.
ACCEPTED FOR PUBLICATION

Mark L. DeFond, A. N. Mosich Chair in Accounting

John Karayan, Senior Lecturer in Accounting

Thomas W. Lin, Professor of Accounting

Shane Heitzman, Associate Professor of Accounting
Shane Heitzman was appointed to the editorial board of The Accounting Review and reappointed associate editor at the Journal of Accounting and Economics.

William W. Holder, USC Leventhal School of Accounting Dean & Alan Casden Dean’s Chair
Dean Holder was appointed by State Treasurer John Chiang to the California State Treasurer’s Task Force on Bond Accountability.

Tom Ryan, Professor of the Practice
Tom Ryan was appointed to the Business Valuation Resource Panel at the Appraisal Foundation for a three-year term commencing Jan. 26, 2015.

AWARDS & HONORS

Chrislynn Freed, Professor of Clinical Accounting
Chrislynn Freed was elected as a Trustee of the CalCPA Education Foundation for a two-year term.

William W. Holder, USC Leventhal School of Accounting Dean & Alan Casden Dean’s Chair
Dean Holder was named the inaugural Distinguished Alumni Scholar from the Price College of Business at the University of Oklahoma.

Merle Hopkins, Professor of Clinical Accounting
Merle Hopkins was named the 2015-16 president-elect of Beta Alpha Psi.

STAFF HONORS

Sara McLachlan, Associate Director of Accounting Master’s Programs
Sara McLachlan was named the USC Outstanding Academic Advisor 2015. She was one of two staff members across the entire university to receive this award.

STUDENT ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Gean Qin ’14, Suyuong Min ’15 and Julia Lee ’16, led by Faculty Advisor and Professor of Clinical Accounting Rose Layton, earned second place in the Internal Audit Case Study Competition, on Oct. 23, 2014, sponsored by the Los Angeles Chapter of the Institute of internal Auditors (IIA).

Another undergraduate student team, also led by Faculty Advisor and Assistant Professor of Clinical Accounting Zivia Sweeney, qualified for the West Coast regionals of the Ernst & Young case competition in March.
ANDY MOSICH: Remarkable Man, Remarkable Story
By Shirley Maxey

“What does USC mean to me? The School of Accounting was my academic home for 29 years. It is named for my dear friends of 53 years, Kenneth and Elaine Leventhal. It was the source of much of my professional and financial success. I love and respect USC and the Leventhal School of Accounting.”

—A. N. Mosich, May 18, 2006

If it weren’t for one weekend, five high school buddies and an invitation to take a ride in a 1939 Studebaker, Andy Mosich might have spent 40 years working for Shell Oil Company instead of becoming one of the most respected and influential accounting professors of our time.

Nothing in Andy’s family background or experience would have led toward higher education. A few months before Andy was born, his father left Croatia for Mexico, hoping to find work, join his seven brothers in the United States, become a U.S. citizen and save enough money to bring his family to America. His timing could not have been worse — it was 1928, the year before the start of the Great Depression.

In May 1939, just four months before Hitler invaded Poland, the Mosich family reunited in Los Angeles. Andy was 10 years old, and he was meeting his father for the first time.

Learning English was Andy’s first educational challenge. He arrived in California without knowing a word of English; so despite his age, he was placed in first grade. But before the year ended, he had learned enough English to be “promoted” to fourth grade.

In high school, Andy took classes that would train him for success as a tradesman — mechanical drawing, machine shop and woodworking. In his senior year, he received the highest award for “Excellence in Industrial Arts.” His parents were proud that he would transition directly from high school to a good job. The Monday following graduation was to be his first day working as a draftsman for Shell Oil Company. And that’s where his career might have ended except for that one weekend between graduation and his first day at work.

On a Friday in January 1947, the day after graduating from San Pedro High School, Andy went along for the ride with five buddies who were on their way to take an English placement test for college. By the time they arrived at the test site, they had goaded Andy into taking the exam too — just for kicks. On Saturday, they again piled into the Studebaker to pick up their scores. With results in hand, they met in the center of the courtyard. The five college-bound students had failed the test; Andy had passed it.

Everyone in the Mosich family certainly understood the value of hard work. Andy’s father and seven uncles were commercial fishermen. They had always worked long, hard hours in jobs that were demanding physically. Andy himself always worked one or more jobs. From the age of 11, he worked at Polly Ann Bakery in San Pedro. He also held down other jobs — working in a fish cannery, painting houses and working dockside as a part-time longshoreman.

So it wasn’t unusual that no one had mentioned the possibility of college — at least until that Sunday night when Andy told his parents about his new plans. His father was concerned; his mother was shocked. But by the end of the evening they blessed his decision and promised to help him however they could.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12
MILITARY EXPERIENCES

Even in the military, Andy made career advances. He spent his first year of service at Ford Ord, just north of Monterey, Calif., and not too far from home. A year later, he requested and received a transfer to Japan. (Note to mothers everywhere: Through a complex conspiracy perpetrated by caring family and friends, Andy’s mother enjoyed her long life always believing her son was sent to Japan, never hearing a whisper of his request for the transfer.)

On the U.S. Army base in Japan, Andy was assigned to the IBM Machine Records Unit, where he says he performed “the most boring and tedious work” of his life. He began each day with a tall stack of papers. “My job was to transfer the numbers on those papers onto another set of papers — listing the number of service personnel and their locations or assignments each day. That was the only time in my life that I remember feeling bored,” he said. But not for long.

Andy heard that the Major who ran the Officer’s Club needed help keeping the books. After a short conversation that allowed the officer to make fun of UCLA’s football team, the major asked Andy to help him run the Officer’s Club, a full-time responsibility that brought with it challenges and problem-solving opportunities only veterans could understand and appreciate.

“General Maxwell Taylor was a frequent guest at the club. Entertainers and celebrities visited regularly. I never knew what unusual request or event was coming next. Every day brought something new,” Andy said.

Until his discharge from the service in 1955, Andy put his MBA to work in the Officer’s Club, calling on such skills and disciplines as management, operations, human resources, strategy, communication, marketing and — of course — finance and accounting.

MILITARY EXPERIENCES

Even in the military, Andy made career advances. He spent his first year of service at Ford Ord, just north of Monterey, Calif., and not too far from home. A year later, he requested and received a transfer to Japan. (Note to mothers everywhere: Through a complex conspiracy perpetrated by caring family and friends, Andy’s mother enjoyed her long life always believing her son was sent to Japan, never hearing a whisper of his request for the transfer.)

On the U.S. Army base in Japan, Andy was assigned to the IBM Machine Records Unit, where he says he performed “the most boring and tedious work” of his life. He began each day with a tall stack of papers. “My job was to transfer the numbers on those papers onto another set of papers — listing the number of service personnel and their locations or assignments each day. That was the only time in my life that I remember feeling bored,” he said. But not for long.

Andy heard that the Major who ran the Officer’s Club needed help keeping the books. After a short conversation that allowed the officer to make fun of UCLA’s football team, the major asked Andy to help him run the Officer’s Club, a full-time responsibility that brought with it challenges and problem-solving opportunities only veterans could understand and appreciate.

“General Maxwell Taylor was a frequent guest at the club. Entertainers and celebrities visited regularly. I never knew what unusual request or event was coming next. Every day brought something new,” Andy said.

Until his discharge from the service in 1955, Andy put his MBA to work in the Officer’s Club, calling on such skills and disciplines as management, operations, human resources, strategy, communication, marketing and — of course — finance and accounting.

CHOICES FOR LIFE: Dorothy, Accounting and the Teaching Profession

People who seem to go through life with a “lucky charm” have much more than good fortune to explain their happiness. They choose wisely, and they appreciate life — even the smallest signs that each day is sure to hold magical moments.

Andy and Dorothy Mosich spent every day appreciating their life together and enjoying even the smallest gifts of life — the pure rose fragrance of a Double Delight, the taste of a homemade ginger snap, the peace and serenity that come from an evening walk. They chose wisely.

Not long after leaving the service and returning to UCLA to teach accounting courses, Andy Mosich met Dorothy Rasich, the Croatian daughter of a railroad man. They were married on June 15, 1958, and they soon had another choice to make.

Andy loved teaching accounting. But he knew that if he wanted to pursue it as a profession, he would need to earn a doctorate. Dorothy remembers well their conversation.

“He was smart enough to have noticed that earning a PhD was required to become a tenured professor of accounting. Dorothy remembers well their conversation.

“His passion for teaching was so strong. Since 1951 — even while he was in the Army — he had taught accounting classes. So I encouraged him to get his Ph.D. Little did I know what we were getting ourselves into. Those years were the most difficult for us, but probably the most important in terms of laying the groundwork for the future,” Dorothy said.

Two major contributors who helped Andy complete his doctorate were Professor J. Fred Weston and the “Big 8” accounting firm Arthur Andersen. Andersen helped Andy by giving him a fellowship toward the time and expense of writing his dissertation. Professor Weston advised Andy about his dissertation topic by reminding him about an old class paper on mergers and acquisitions that Andy had written and the professor had saved. But beyond that, Weston established a schedule that required Andy to produce at least one chapter a week for discussion at their Friday standing appointment. Between the Andersen fellowship and Professor Weston’s schedule, Andy completed his dissertation in fewer than four months, earning his Ph.D. from UCLA in May 1963.

Even before he had his degree in hand, Andy received offers to join the faculty at several universities, including UCLA, USC and the University of Illinois. But not knowing he would finish in 1963, he had already accepted a one-year position at Cal State

ON TO COLLEGE

Andy enrolled at Compton College with the idea that he would build on his industrial arts background and move into production management. When Andy transferred to UCLA, he also transferred from the industrial to the administrative side of business. He studied accounting and finance and graduated from UCLA with his Bachelor of Science degree in 1951.

The Korean War was at full strength in 1951, and Andy recognized the names of high school buddies on the lists of killed, wounded or missing in action. When he was accepted into the master’s program at UCLA, he also received a military deferment for education. Two years later, MBA in hand, Andy was drafted to serve in the U.S. Army.

CHOICES FOR LIFE: Dorothy, Accounting and the Teaching Profession

People who seem to go through life with a “lucky charm” have much more than good fortune to explain their happiness. They choose wisely, and they appreciate life — even the smallest signs that each day is sure to hold magical moments.

Andy and Dorothy Mosich spent every day appreciating their life together and enjoying even the smallest gifts of life — the pure rose fragrance of a Double Delight, the taste of a homemade ginger snap, the peace and serenity that come from an evening walk. They chose wisely.

Not long after leaving the service and returning to UCLA to teach accounting courses, Andy Mosich met Dorothy Rasich, the Croatian daughter of a railroad man. They were married on June 15, 1958, and they soon had another choice to make.

Andy loved teaching accounting. But he knew that if he wanted to pursue it as a profession, he would need to earn a doctorate. Dorothy remembers well their conversation.

“He was smart enough to have noticed that earning a PhD was required to become a tenured professor of accounting. Dorothy remembers well their conversation.

“His passion for teaching was so strong. Since 1951 — even while he was in the Army — he had taught accounting classes. So I encouraged him to get his Ph.D. Little did I know what we were getting ourselves into. Those years were the most difficult for us, but probably the most important in terms of laying the groundwork for the future,” Dorothy said.

Two major contributors who helped Andy complete his doctorate were Professor J. Fred Weston and the “Big 8” accounting firm Arthur Andersen. Andersen helped Andy by giving him a fellowship toward the time and expense of writing his dissertation. Professor Weston advised Andy about his dissertation topic by reminding him about an old class paper on mergers and acquisitions that Andy had written and the professor had saved. But beyond that, Weston established a schedule that required Andy to produce at least one chapter a week for discussion at their Friday standing appointment. Between the Andersen fellowship and Professor Weston’s schedule, Andy completed his dissertation in fewer than four months, earning his Ph.D. from UCLA in May 1963.

Even before he had his degree in hand, Andy received offers to join the faculty at several universities, including UCLA, USC and the University of Illinois. But not knowing he would finish in 1963, he had already accepted a one-year position at Cal State
Northridge. True to his commitment, he taught accounting classes at CSUN for the 1963-64 academic year.

**USC AND THE SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTING — 1964 TO 1993**

Early in 1964, Robert Dockson was dean of the USC School of Business and Walter Meigs was chair of the Accounting Department. Meigs contacted Andy with their offer to join the faculty. Andy remembers how his answer surprised Meigs.

“Walter Meigs told me they wanted me to join the faculty as an associate professor. I agreed immediately. Walter paused and then said to me, ‘But what about money? We haven’t discussed salary!’ He had never had anyone accept a job offer without talking about the money. All I cared about right then was that I was going to be teaching at USC, an associate professor of accounting at the University of Southern California,” Andy said.

‘The Golden Years’ at USC

Andy and Dorothy Mosich carry many great memories of their USC years.

“During my tenure, the School of Business was at its best under the leadership of Robert Dockson (1964-1969). Faculty morale across the School was extremely high, and we had Bob and Kay Dockson to thank for that,” Andy said.

“As far as the students and the fun we had in the accounting school, the ‘golden years’ were from the early 1970s to the mid-1980s. Students were outstanding. They knew how to study hard and have fun. Dorothy and I have wonderful memories of having students over to our house for dinner. Sometimes we would take them to lunch or dinner at Jimmy’s Restaurant in Beverly Hills. Students, other accounting faculty and their wives — even some faculty candidates — would join us for planned or impromptu parties at La Fonda on Wilshire Boulevard, where we enjoyed margaritas and the best mariachi band in the United States,” Andy said.

“During those years, I tossed footballs at several Beta Alpha Psi picnics, was the winner of a university-wide ‘Raft Debate,’ and wrote a ‘Dear Andy’ column for the USC Business School News. Those were truly the best years of my academic career!” Andy said.

In the Raft Debate, four professors represented their fields of study, hypothetically sharing a raft on the ocean with only enough provisions for one professor. The contestants represented the natural sciences, the humanities, the social sciences and business. Based on student responses during the debate, Andy was declared the winner and earned the grand prize certificate for 10 pounds of fish sticks.

Andy was asked by the USC Business School News to comment on his victory and was quoted in the March 27, 1978, edition:

“The win really belongs to the students in the audience who represented the School of Business, accounting in particular, ... for showing such astuteness. After all, what can philosophers, geologists or economists do to improve the world that a good CPA who understands business can’t do?”

To this day, Andy is famous for his strictness and high expectations for the students he taught. He had no patience for students who were unprepared to participate in discussions or who were less than dedicated to learning accounting.

“I wasn’t there to be their friend. I was there to help them learn. Years later, some of my best students told me they didn’t always enjoy their experiences in my classroom, but they learned some of the most important lessons in life by being challenged and being held responsible for their choices,” he said.

Dorothy believes that in some ways, Andy filled a fatherly role for some of the young men. “He wanted them to do their best in school, but they also knew he cared about them. Some would seek his paternal counsel in office hours, lamenting their fears about asking a coed for a date,” she said.

But if anyone needs evidence of the fun and great relationships he had with students, all it takes is one look at the “Dear Andy” columns from Business School News over 25 years ago.

**Those Who Most Influenced Andy Mosich**

Dorothy — My wife and partner because of her values, honesty and generosity. She has always been very supportive of me, including reading my manuscripts for clarity and offering suggestions.

Parents — Always supportive, they taught me values by example — work hard and be honest. And the frequent reminders to “stay away from bad company,” which loses something in translation from Croatian.

Late Professor Harry Simons — The UCLA professor who inspired me to become a teacher.

Late Professor Walter Meigs — He brought me to USC and later invited me to co-author his accounting textbook series.

Ken Krueger of Canterbury Consulting — A USC MBA and my stockbroker of 38 years. For his unwavering professionalism, honesty and friendship.

**DEAR ANDY:** I went to school at UCLA and now I’m here at USC. What can I do to escape from my sordid past?

**REPENTANT BRUIN.**

**DEAR BRUIN:** There’s nothing wrong in being a social climber. Having been a Bruin myself, I would not say that your past is sordid. Just don’t tell anyone about it. A lot of us make mistakes. Just work hard to become a good Trojan. Take Peter Drucker’s advice to managers — forget the past and look ahead where the opportunities lie. (3/29/82)
DEAR ANDY: I am a graduating senior in accounting and I don’t know whether I should take a job or get a master’s in accounting, which would take me about a year. What shall I do? CONFUSED.

DEAR CONFUSED: You really shouldn’t be confused. Taking a job is an attractive short-term alternative, but the fifth year is clearly a better long-term choice. If you are planning a career in accounting, the master’s degree is likely to be one of the best investments of your life. (2/22/82)

DEAR ANDY: I am an accounting student who has been told that I have a promising future in accounting. However, I am in a dilemma because I am considering going to law school. What shall I do? UNCONVINCED.

DEAR UNCONVINCED: Has anyone told you that you have a promising future in law? You don’t really have a dilemma because a dilemma is a choice between equally unattractive alternatives. Only one of your alternatives is unattractive. A lot of lawyers end up in politics, and you need neither a degree nor a license to be a politician. Perhaps that is why politicians are held in such low esteem. Your chances of becoming a politician are less if you choose accounting. (2/22/82)

DEAR ANDY: Recently I was in a wedding and was required to wear a burgundy “pointed sheer cape” over my dress. I haven’t worn it since, but I hate to throw it away. Because you are an accountant, I thought you might have a practical or creative idea as to what I might do with my poncho. J.T.

DEAR JT: Marry a rock singer or a cinema major and perhaps your husband can get a lot of wear out of it. Otherwise, use it to scare away birds from your vegetable garden. (4/26/82)

Legendary Fundraiser

Andy is famous for his world-class teaching, but also attained legendary status for his fundraising efforts. His years dedicated to raising funds for USC and the Leventhal School of Accounting have created an equally positive legacy that will continue to benefit students and accounting education for decades.

In 1997, Andy was featured in a special USC publication related to the Building on Excellence Campaign: “Dr. Mosich guided the creation of the USC Accounting Circle and served on its board of directors. He has … personally raised more than $5 million for USC, including Kenneth Leventhal’s first gift to the School of Accounting.”

Perhaps the greatest gifts he has given to the Leventhal School of Accounting are the hundreds of people he encouraged to become first-time donors. Many former students, now successful in business, remember developing the habit of giving back to their school when “Dr. Mosich” handed them an application to join the USC Accounting Circle for the “bargain price of $50.” Many of those former students continue to contribute — at far higher levels — every year.

Asked about his legendary status, Andy responded quickly, “Others may consider me a legend around USC, but I do not! I’ve never had any reservations about asking people to help me in advancing accounting education. Generally, I start with a gift of my own to reinforce my belief in the cause. It’s easy for me to ask others to contribute because I feel strongly about the value of accounting education and the institution I represent. Besides, I get a kick out of making those connections with people. If it weren’t fun, I wouldn’t have done so much of it.”

Enjoying ‘Retirement’

Many people with a strong work ethic have difficulty retiring. And many of those who know Andy well were surprised by how smoothly he transitioned into the next segment of his life. It took some planning, of course, and he reduced his teaching to half-time before retiring officially in August 1993. At that point, he was co-author of five textbooks, so he gradually transitioned out of that role as well.

Andy’s words say it best: “The years I have been retired have been the best years of my life, the happiest years of my life. Retirement means that I have more — much more — personal freedom; it means a change in lifestyle, a change for the better. Retirement gives you more freedom to choose what you want to do. I have been on several boards of directors, served as an expert witness on occasion and helped USC with fundraising. In many ways, it was just common sense to retire. I was 65 and healthy, and we only get to go around once in life so we better make the most of it. And to those who have difficulty making the transition, I ask the Good Lord to help and have mercy on them.”

Andy and Dorothy credit “good health, financial security and a happy family life” for keeping them youthful. Dorothy remembers: “Even during the busiest years when our three children were
Growing up, we made a point of having a family breakfast, all of us together each morning.”

Overall, they credit their youthful spirit to a positive attitude: “It’s about being happy with what blessings we have, rather than being unhappy over things we don’t have.”

**Words to Live By**

Asked if he had a personal motto or words to live by, Andy responded: “Help others, be generous, drink good champagne, eat moderately and smell the roses.”

And then he produced a well-marked copy of an article by Vance Packard that appeared in the April 1966 Reader’s Digest, titled “Seven Steps to Greater Personal Freedom”:

1. Save Money
2. Build Your Education and Skills
3. Keep Your Honor Clean
4. Keep Your Private Life Private
5. Don’t Give Your Life to One Organization — Unless It Can Be Given Wholeheartedly. (To this one Andy added, “Set up your personal retirement plan independent of your employer…”)
6. Build Your Web of Influence
7. Develop a Passion for Personal Responsibility

Andy pointed out that these words to live by are as relevant today as they were more than 40 years ago.

**The Last Word**

As always, Andy had the last word: “I wish to thank all my former colleagues and students who made my career so rewarding. I thank USC and the Leventhal School of Accounting for being key factors in my personal and professional life, and I thank the hundreds of victims of my USC fundraising efforts who responded so spontaneously and generously for so many years.”

Shirley Maxey wrote this article following an interview with Andy and Dorothy Mosich on May 18, 2006. She is Associate Dean of Leventhal Master’s Programs and Clinical Professor of Management Communication and Accounting.
journals), over 3,000 Google scholar citations and a number of research and teaching awards. He is an editor at The Accounting Review and an associate editor at Contemporary Accounting Research. He is also a member of the editorial board at the Journal of Accounting Research.

His research is primarily in the archival auditing area, and uses economics-based methods of inquiry and analysis. Lennox is widely recognized as one of the world’s leading auditing scholars. He is probably best known for his large portfolio of studies that address a variety of foundational questions regarding the behavior of auditors and audit markets. He is a “first-mover” in the auditing literature that addresses the multitude of fundamental issues that have come to the fore as a result of the SOX legislation. His research is notable for being relevant to both academics and policymakers, particularly his studies examining the intended and unintended consequences of changes in auditing regulation. Lennox is also known for his creativity in exploiting data from unique institutional settings outside of the United States to provide new insights into some of the literature’s most puzzling questions. In addition to his auditing research, Lennox has made several contributions to the literature on research methodology. For example, his recent study on selection models in The Accounting Review is having a substantial influence on the way in which accounting researchers implement these methods. His teaching interests focus exclusively on auditing, and he is an award-winning teacher, which bodes exceptionally well for Leventhal's professional degree programs.

Regina Wittenberg-Moerman will join our faculty this fall as associate professor of accounting, with tenure. She earned her bachelor’s degree magna cum laude in accounting and economics from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem in 1996 and an MBA summa cum laude in finance and accounting in 1999. In 2006, Wittenberg-Moerman received an MBA and a Ph.D. from the University of Chicago Booth School of Business. She then spent two years as an assistant professor at Wharton before returning to Booth in 2008. Since 2011, she has been an associate professor of accounting at Booth.

Wittenberg-Moerman specializes in financial reporting quality, financial contracting and information asymmetry, financial intermediation, and bond analysis. She has published a number of papers in the elite accounting journals, such as The Accounting Review, Journal of Accounting Research and Journal of Accounting and Economics. She is also the recipient of numerous fellowships and awards, including the Best Paper Prize by the Journal of Accounting and Economics in 2008 and the Ernest R. Wish Accounting Research Award in 2011. She is on the editorial board of the Journal of Accounting and Economics and the Journal of Accounting Research and is a referee for numerous journals.

MaryAnne Sabido-Werner will join our faculty in the fall as assistant professor of clinical accounting. She earned both her BS (Accounting) and Master of Business Taxation degrees from USC.

Sabido-Werner is currently a partner in the international tax group in PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP in Los Angeles. She was admitted to the partnership in July of 2011 and has over 21 years of experience in public accounting, 19 of which have been with PwC. She has an array of experience advising large multinational clients in the intricacies of international tax compliance as well as international consulting and structuring matters. She has built an impressive client base where she has earned a reputation of being able to maximize efficiencies in compliance engagements. Sabido-Werner has been responsible for the U.S. reporting of complex cross-border transactions, including Section 367 disclosures, Section 368 reorganization disclosures and cost sharing arrangement reporting.

Julie Suh will join our faculty in the fall as assistant professor of clinical accounting. She earned her Bachelor of Arts degree from Wellesley College and her Ph.D. in business administration (accounting) from Stanford University.

Suh’s research interests include voluntary disclosure, CEO compensation, earnings management and corporate governance. She previously taught financial accounting to undergraduate students at the University of California, Berkeley, and most recently at Loyola Marymount University. While at Berkeley, she was honored with the Outstanding New Instructor Award, as well as the student-nominated Earl F. Cheit Award for Excellence in Teaching. Prior to academia, Suh spent time in the corporate sector as an economic consultant for Cornerstone Research in San Francisco and as an investment banking analyst for Goldman Sachs in New York City.

David Tsui will join our faculty in the fall as assistant professor of accounting. He will receive his Ph.D. in accounting from the Wharton School of the University of Pennsylvania this year. Prior to his doctorate, he worked as an equity analyst covering the automotive industry at Robert W. Baird.

Tsui’s research focuses on corporate governance, with a particular emphasis on the design of executive compensation contracts and how they affect managers’ investment and reporting decisions. His current research examines how firms design equity-based compensation to manage executives’ risk-taking incentives, as well as how debt covenants and other corporate governance mechanisms influence managers’ decision-making.
Leventhal Day with the USC Men’s Tennis Team
Part of our ongoing partnership with USC Sports Properties
One Step at a Time

The military taught David Flores ’14 perseverance that has served him well as a student and a tax associate.

It was hot, unbearably hot, as David Flores ’14 trudged across the Iraq desert with the 82nd Airborne Infantry Division. Carrying his body weight in supplies and ammo, the 210-pound Flores held his machine gun at the ready and tried to push through the pain.

“I am just pouring sweat, and we are running out of water,” Flores recalls. “And our commander says, ‘OK, guys, just a little bit longer,’ and your body just feels horrible. I’m thinking to myself, ‘Just get to the next area and there will be a spot where you can rest to push on to the next one — and the next one.’”

That perseverance — what Flores describes as an innate drive to keep going regardless of past, present or future — got him through two tours of duty. It has also served him well in his life after the military.

While pursuing a bachelor’s degree at the USC Leventhal School of Accounting, Flores sometimes struggled with five challenging courses at a time. He would think back on his Army experience to keep things in perspective.

“That persevereance — what Flores describes as an innate drive to keep going regardless of past, present or future — got him through two tours of duty. It has also served him well in his life after the military.

As an intern at PricewaterhouseCoopers, Flores proved himself to be hardworking and consistent in learning the technical aspects of the job. He quickly got a job offer. Now, Flores is a tax associate in the state and local tax group at the Big Four firm. He had only been on the job for about a week when he talked to us, and, despite feeling flu-like symptoms, he didn’t ask to reschedule.

 Feeling at home
Flores was born and raised in East Los Angeles. “When I was young, I never would have pictured myself at USC at all, never,” he says.

His graduation makes him the first in his family to earn a college degree. Part of
his motivation for working hard is to be a good model for his youngest brother who was only a year old when Flores entered the military. For years, the brothers only knew each other through photographs, and Flores has made it a priority to change that.

“I always try to make sure he has it better than I did,” he says. “A lot of the reason I work hard is because, who am I to tell him to study if he doesn’t see me study? Who am I to tell him to work out and be healthy if I’m not willing to do it myself?”

Flores chose to study accounting because of the opportunities that follow, and he thought USC Leventhal was the most prestigious of all the schools where he was accepted. He knew USC was the right place for him as soon as he stepped on campus for orientation.

“Did you ever just feel like you’re at home?” he asks. “At USC, there’s this sense of pride. It feels right, like I belong here. This is the school I need to represent in whatever career I choose.”

The Trojan Family has been there for Flores every step of the way. Scholarship funds helped make a challenging time more manageable.

“Veterans have limited time and funds on the GI bill,” he says. “Because USC is a private school, we are fortunate that there are donors who give a significant amount of money for veterans. Mr. Schoen [USC trustee William J. Schoen BS ’60, MBA ’63] is one of them, and his scholarship helped me out.”

As a USC alumnus, Flores knows that he’ll have a lifetime of support.

“As long as you work and make yourself noticeable, the Trojan Family takes notice and reaches out to you,” he says. “I’ve had opportunities presented to me and they’ve all been through the USC network. So whatever goals I have, whatever the future holds, I know it’s going to be done through the USC alumni network, specifically Leventhal or Marshall.”

With tax season upon us, Flores is ready and willing for his latest challenge, despite warnings from his peers about the long hours.

“All I have to do is reflect back to my military days,” he says, “and think, ‘I am getting paid so much more. I’m working the same hours, but I’m going home, sleeping in a bed, eating food and working in an air-conditioned office in a comfortable chair.’ What is there to complain about? I have it good.”

---

Accounting for Home

The United States is not immune to what befell Portugal and Greece, he warns. “We’ve got the same problems. The same time bombs.”

“It’s unbelievable that the problems we faced in 2008 are still here — we haven’t made enough progress,” he added. “If anything, we’ve made little progress on transparency both in the banking sector and in municipal and state accounting.”

Soll insists that we need accrual accounting, which involves looking at value over time. “Public pensions are a big Achilles heel for the United States,” Soll said. “Those pensions just can’t be paid. If we used accrual accounting, we’d know that.”

Financial literacy should begin in high school, he said. “I’d like to support a big push for accounting standards and accounting education in this country,” he said. “These are the things I would like to see USC lead on,” Soll said. “We can do it if we want to.”

---

Q&A

For a USC Dornsife Q&A with Jacob Soll, visit http://dornsife.usc.edu/news/stories/1930/achieving-accountability.
June

4 ASA/USC Fair Value Conference
5 SEC and Financial Reporting Institute Conference

July

15 Summer Intensive for Non-Accounting Majors begins, and continues through Aug. 19
25 Special Olympics begins, and continues through Aug. 2

August

19 Fall 2015 Move-in Day
24 Fall 2015 Start Date

An undergraduate student team, led by Faculty Advisor and Assistant Professor of Clinical Accounting Zivia Sweeney, placed second in the National Student Case Study Seminar sponsored by Deloitte in March.