



Q&A With
2026-27
CalCPA Chair
**Miklos
Ringbauer**

All Roads Lead to Accounting



Photography by Richard Morgenstein

Accounting is Awesome

Like many, 2026-27 CalCPA Chair Miklos Ringbauer's career hasn't been a linear path. The CPA, educator and founder of MiklosCPA, an accounting and tax strategy firm, is actually in his second career. After more than 12 years in investment and finance, he realized that all roads kept leading to accounting, so he made the switch to the profession and has never looked back.

And his passion for the profession is clear and runs deep.

Ringbauer has been active in CalCPA leadership for more than a decade, serving at both the local and state levels, including past president of the CalCPA Los Angeles Chapter, and has been involved with local CalCPA scholarship committees. As an educator, he teaches federal taxation at Orange Coast College, and he considers it most rewarding when former students return to share the strides they've made in their careers.

To Ringbauer, CPAs are a critical resource and subject matter experts who support the public and private economic environments with trustworthy information, analysis and accountability. During his career, he's been recognized by the *Los Angeles Business Journal* as a Top 100 Accountant (2025), *Forbes* Best in State List, written for *TaxNotes* and interviewed by *CNBC* and *The Wall Street Journal*, to name a few, on tax and accounting topics.

All this combined, he says, is why accounting is awesome!

Q: What or who inspired you to become a CPA, and when did you first know that it was the right career for you?

When I began my education, an Accounting 101 professor encouraged me to consider becoming a CPA and even helped open the door to a five-year scholarship opportunity. As an educator, she saw something in me that I did not yet recognize in myself. At the time, however, I chose to pursue a different direction in investment and finance. Over the next 12-plus years, I came to realize that nearly every role I held consistently led me back to accounting. That realization prompted me to reconnect with her for advice about pursuing the CPA Exam, and her encouragement reaffirmed my decision. The defining moment came when I helped my first client—seeing the relief in their eyes when they learned they would not have to give up their business. That moment cemented for me that I had found the right path.

Q: What do you enjoy most about being a CPA?



What first drew me to CalCPA was the genuine sense of welcome and support I experienced early in my career.

The opportunity to connect with people in meaningful and diverse ways. Every client brings a unique story and a new set of challenges, which makes the work both personal and rewarding. I also value the constant learning that comes with the profession—no two days are the same, and there is always something new to

understand or master. At its core, accounting is about solving puzzles, and I find great satisfaction in analyzing complex situations and working toward the right solutions that truly make a difference for those I serve.

Q: What's one thing about accounting that people might not be aware of?

One thing people often don't realize about accounting is how many doors it can open. It offers a unique vantage point into how businesses and individuals operate, grow and make decisions over time. More than just numbers, it's a journey—each outcome creates clarity that often leads



to new opportunities, smarter choices and continued growth.

Q: What attracted you to CalCPA and then CalCPA leadership?

What first drew me to CalCPA was the genuine sense of welcome and support I experienced early in my career. One of the first events I attended was a Young &

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Hometown: Budapest, Hungary | **College:** UC Irvine, USC

If you weren't a CPA, what career would you see yourself in?

Most likely a principal of a middle school. I can see myself shaping minds.

What one word describes you best?

dream

Favorite subject in school:

Economics

You control the accounting profession. What's your first move?

Strengthen the profession's future by building a more visible, coordinated presence in the education sector so students and educators clearly understand the exciting opportunities and

Biggest learning experience?

Never stop being curious. An answer will always present itself if you keep digging.

real-world influence of accounting and finance. We need a clearer development pathway that goes beyond internships and consistently helps turn students into professionals and professionals into leaders. At the same time, I would unify the full spectrum of our membership by pairing the wisdom of seasoned CPAs with the fresh perspective and technical fluency of



emerging professionals. By embracing tools like AI, automation and advanced analytics, we build stronger bridges, develop talent faster, identify future leaders sooner and ensure every CPA can thrive with confidence.

Most recently binged-watched show?

The Diplomat

Favorite app and why?

SiriusXM. Love my music.

How do you re-energize?

Spending time with family.

Most used emoji?

Don't really use them. Ask anyone—I am terrible at texting. :-P

First job?

Helping a local family at a festival in Lebanon, Ohio, selling apples. It was about seeing folks smile for an entire day.

What can we find you doing in your spare time?

Hanging out at the beach or being on

Best leadership advice you've received?

The value of mentorship creates a path to success for everyone, including yourself.

a trail of discovering something new. One of my favorite places is Muir Woods just outside of San Francisco.

Favorite cuisine?

Pretty open-minded. For me, food is a window into a culture and its heritage.

What's your

secret talent?

Interior design. But please don't tell anyone—it's a secret!

What superpower would you like to possess and why?

AccountaVision: I immediately see what's missing, what's misclassified and what doesn't tie out, like X-ray vision for controls and fraud.

Guilty pleasure?

Durian. Specifically, Musang King. IYKYK.

What are three things you can't live without?

Morning kiss.
Grandma's chicken paprikash.
My gadgets.





Q: What do you see as the most pressing issues facing the profession? Facing CalCPA?

One of the most pressing issues facing the accounting profession today is that we have not done a strong enough job showcasing just how vital and influential we CPAs truly are. Without us, the engines of finance, business and even government accountability would not run with the same integrity or confidence—yet the profession is too often viewed narrowly, rather than as a powerful pathway to leadership and impact.

For CalCPA, the challenge—and the opportunity—is to remain a driving force in members' careers while also helping ignite excitement about the profession for the next generation. That means supporting new licensees and building intentional bridges to universities and, critically, to accounting professors—equipping them to help tell our story: why this work matters, what a CPA career can unlock and how CalCPA supports that journey.

If we want a healthy pipeline of future CPAs, we need visible ambassadors—rockstars who can light up the room, inspire other accounting professionals and clearly map the road to success for those coming next.

Q: What advice do you have for younger professionals or those thinking of entering the CPA profession?

My advice is this: you are only limited by your imagination of what you can become in this profession. A CPA license can be a foundation for far more than traditional accounting. It can lead to roles in leadership, strategy, entrepreneurship and public service if you allow yourself to think broadly. Along the way, listen closely to the people around you—mentors, colleagues, instructors and peers—because they often

see strengths and possibilities in you that you may not yet recognize in the moment. And above all, never stop being curious. The professionals who grow the fastest and make the greatest impact are the ones who keep asking questions, keep learning and stay open to where that curiosity can take them.

Q: What were some of the biggest challenges you faced on your path to becoming a CPA, and how did you overcome them?

Fear of something new. I think that's instinctual for everyone and that first feeling can be scary. But I have been working on it. Now, I treat it as a puzzle, and I know there is a solution in there. It may take a little more grit, effort and research, but it's there for sure.

Q: What do you consider to be your greatest accomplishment or proudest moment as a CPA?

When former students reach out and I get to see the success they've achieved. Watching them



grow into confident professionals—and knowing I played even a small role in that journey—is incredibly fulfilling.

Q: What do you find most rewarding about the CPA profession?

The opportunity it gives me to lean into the educator side of who I am. I love

sharing knowledge with students using real-life examples—bringing the concepts off the page and into situations they can picture and apply. It also allows me to teach differently: not just focusing on rules, but on how to think, how to ask better questions and how to connect accounting to real decisions people and businesses make every day.

Q: What motivates you to do what you do?

The belief that anyone can be a difference maker—no title required. Small choices create big ripple effects: checking in, offering encouragement, sharing what you know or simply listening. Those moments can shift someone's confidence, expand

I love sharing knowledge with *students* using real-life examples

what they believe is possible and set new opportunities in motion. I try to show up that way every day, because the impact rarely stops with one person—it spreads through the community we build together. After all, a single random act of empathy and kindness created a lasting friendship and a pathway for me to become chair of the organization we all love and cherish.

Q: Who have been the strongest influences in your life?

The strongest influences in my life have been the people who showed up at the right time—teachers who challenged me, mentors who guided me and peers who supported me through transitions. What stands out most is their willingness to invest in someone they didn't have to. That example has stayed with me and continues to shape how I lead and serve others.

Emerging Professionals gathering, where I met Scott Donnelly. Even though he didn't know me, his openness and warmth—offering encouragement and support with no agenda—left a lasting impression and made CalCPA feel like a community with open arms. Not long after, I attended an ABC (Attorneys, Bankers and CPAs) event and met more than 300 professionals, including Vee Cristobal, who extended that same spirit of inclusion. What began as a short lunch conversation turned into a three-hour discussion, and she encouraged me to get involved locally. Through those experiences, I realized CalCPA wasn't just a professional association—it was a place to grow, contribute, develop and hone my skills—something that ultimately inspired me to pursue leadership within the organization so I can pay it forward and show how bright our future is to the next generation of accounting professionals.

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