

Executive/Manager Category	
Nominee	
Name:	Angela Dotson
Title:	Partner
Organization:	Habif, Arogeti & Wynne, LLP
Nominator	
Name:	Bob Greenberger
Organization:	Habif, Arogeti & Wynne, LLP

Give up to three examples of how this person demonstrates Integrity:

According to James Leggett, “Reputation is made in a moment. Character is built in a lifetime,” and in her first 36-years Angela Dotson, partner at Habif, Arogeti & Wynne, LLP (HA&W), the largest Georgia-headquartered tax, accounting and business advisory firm, has developed more character and leadership skills than most professionals her age.

As the youngest female to be named partner at the Firm and first African American to make partner at HA&W, Angela is a trail-blazer. She is forging her own path as a female African American CPA with a concentrated focus on women-owned businesses. Each day Angela demonstrates the three pillars of the Leadership Character Model of Integrity, Respect and Responsibility. These characteristics have enabled her professional success over the past 14 years.

Angela understands the importance of doing the right thing, rather than doing things right, and the value this mentality can bring to a professional organization. Angela takes on each day with a courageous spirit and go-getter attitude that is contagious and motivates others on her team. Within the Firm, Angela is viewed as fully trustworthy and honest. This characteristic runs through her approach to client service as well. For example, several years ago a client of Angela’s was faced with an underpayment penalty due to a miscalculation on Angela’s part. Rather than pass the blame or downplay the situation, Angela called the client, explained the situation and laid out a plan to correct the issue all with no additional fees. All of us make mistakes from time to time, and good leaders demonstrate their character best in the face of a mistake. Angela owned up to the error, and then fixed it and today we have a very happy client.

Give up to three examples of how this person demonstrates Respect:

Having started her career as an intern at the Firm a mere 14 years ago, Angela has successfully worked her way up the corporate ladder. The experience of starting at the bottom and working her way up enables her to effectively communicate and lead her team consisting of staff at all levels. She understands others’ points of view and serves as a mentor to her team and a

sounding board for partners. According to Sam Tuck, partner-in-charge of the Advisory Business Services group at HA&W, “Angela has the unique ability to view issues and conflicts from various perspectives, both as a partner sees it and as a staff member sees it; a characteristic that makes her an invaluable asset to HA&W.”

And when a mistake is made, or the blame needs to be accepted for a problem, Angela takes ownership, as demonstrated in the underpayment penalty example above. In this case, Angela took immediate action to fix the problem at hand, offering up solutions to the client that would ultimately remove the burden of the underpayment penalty from the client’s expenses.

To be taken seriously as a leader you must stay calm and not quickly anger. Angela’s emotional mastery is akin to that of Babe Ruth. When Ruth would walk into the dugout after an at-bat, it was said that the expression on his face wouldn’t tell you whether he just hit a homerun or struck out. This is how Angela handles herself professionally. Whether she just landed a multi-million dollar client, or lost one, she does not let the emotion get in the way of her work at hand. She stays calm in all situations and makes it a point to accentuate the positive and show enthusiasm for the future in conversations. Everyone within the Firm knows where they stand with her; there are no hidden agendas or double-meanings. She communicates directly, which has gained her respect by colleagues at all levels.

Give up to three examples of how this person demonstrates Responsibility:

Professionally, Angela is a rock star, as demonstrated by her successes and promotion to partner before the age of 40. When reviewing which senior managers within the Firm were mature enough in their career to transition to partner in early 2012, the partner group considered Angela because of the level of responsibility that she demonstrates within the Firm. This is one of the greatest strengths they saw within her. You never have to follow up with Angela; she will always follow up with you. She takes pride in her personal successes and the success of the Firm as a whole. She brings to the table an air of professionalism that clients and colleagues like to work with.

Angela is very actively involved in HA&W’s captive insurance group and this year she and one other colleague have been assigned the daunting task of handling and reviewing all tax returns for the Firm’s 60 captive insurance clients. Angela has taken the bull by the horns from a procedural standpoint to ensure that all of the tax returns are completed and submitted timely. She has developed new processes and set up schedules to keep her team on time, on track and accountable to their deadlines.

Since becoming partner in January 2013, Angela has not had any issues gaining the respect she deserves from staff or her fellow partners, despite her age. At the same time, she is able to make the HA&W team members that she frequently works with feel comfortable and confident. For example, Angela shares the responsibility of the captive insurance tax returns with a senior manager. Throughout this process she hasn’t treated the senior manager like he is underneath her, instead she treats him as an equal and he respects her for that. On her way up

the ladder Angela made a lot of friends in the Firm. When she became a partner and her close friends did not, Angela had to learn how to separate good friendships from being a leader. According to Greenberger, "Angela receives the respect that she deserves from her close friends in the Firm and has been able to maintain the separation between friend and leader. She leads when she needs to lead and is a friend when she should be a friend."

Angela leads her life with a courageous spirit. At 32 years old Angela heard the words that very few women her age hear..."You have breast cancer." Though this is a statement that could shake the foundation of a weaker woman, Angela took the diagnosis in stride, becoming an inspiration to everyone at HA&W. It was during the busiest part of the year for an accounting firm that Angela got the news, but her willingness to persevere through her personal setbacks inspired others within the Firm to work even harder. Angela's attitude never floundered and even in the midst of one of the hardest periods in her life she kept perspective, according to Greenberger. "Angela always looked at her battle and said there are people who are going through things far worse than me. I can do this."

Angela isn't afraid to step outside of her comfort zone. This willingness to be uncomfortable has allowed her to perform beyond her professional level and successfully bring in new clients, based on what she's continually built through the years. She is a strong advocate of the Firm, with a willingness to take on any projects sent her way. She is a team player and demonstrates the highest levels of integrity, respect and responsibility in her professional career.

Please relate an incident or tell a story that shows how this person demonstrates Leadership Character. Examples may include professional or community involvement:

Angela's greatest passion in life is to give back to those who are less fortunate than she, a passion engrained in her early by her parents who were dedicated to a number of causes, and was revived in the years since her breast cancer diagnosis. As Angela will tell you, her first inclination is to want to get involved in volunteer opportunities and figure out later how she is going to manage her time to accomplish all her goals and ensure she lets no balls drop.

Today, Angela serves on the Board for Turning Point, a healthcare facility for women with breast cancer. Angela became actively involved with the organization four years ago when she herself was undergoing treatments for breast cancer. Turning Point helped Angela get back to normal as she experienced one of the most difficult times in her life and she was determined to ensure that other women in a similar situation were aware of the quality care and loving support available to them as they dealt with the realities of breast cancer.

Angela's passion doesn't only lie in helping women recovering from breast cancer; it extends to helping at-risk youth through the C5 Youth Foundation Georgia, a college readiness program. Today Angela serves on the Board as a member of the finance committee, hosting Leadership Lunches to introduce C5 students to the world of accounting. Her motivation? Growing up she met many kids in her hometown who would have been very successful with some guidance and support like C5 provides. She is dedicated to helping students rise above their circumstances to

become successful people who can give back to their community. C5 is a cause that she says has a “trickle down affect” to the siblings and parents of those children in the program. It is obvious that this program deeply impacts the lives of the youth involved. In fact, a C5 student recently sent Angela an email saying “When I first met you, being able to see how successful you are has inspired and pushed me to keep striving to my best, and it’s given me confidence that everything really is possible, that dreams do really come true. You’re a wonderful role model to look up to.”