

Oakland accountant earns national plaudits

BY LAURIE HUMPHREY
STAFF WRITER

Singer Jerry Lee Lewis said it in 1957: "There's a whole lotta shakin' goin' on." One might wonder if he was predicting the future of William Matthews, managing partner for Plante & Moran in Southfield.

The editors of *Accounting Today*, a national accounting publication, named the Oakland County resident one of the nation's top 100 "movers and shakers" in the accounting industry. Leading the 12th largest certified public accounting firm in the country, Matthews, 55, was the only Michigan resident named to The 100 Most Influential People in Accounting.

"There's no voting, no balloting. It's not a competition," said editor Rick Telberg. "It's done purely at the discretion of the editors."

Telberg said people were selected for the list, which was published for October/November, based on their involvement in the industry.

"It's a list of movers and shakers, a list of who makes what happen in this business," said Telberg.

He called Matthews an influence and backed it up with two consecutive listings to the annual report.

"And there is a good chance I could be named again (in 1996), as long as the firm stays successful," said Matthews, who traces the honor back to Plante &

Moran. "The firm has an outstanding reputation as being in the forefront. My being named to the list is (a result of) the firm."

Matthews, who moved from Livonia to West Bloomfield just a year ago, has a 34-year history with Plante & Moran. He began working for the then-Detroit-based accounting firm in 1961, before he graduated from college. He worked as a proofreader until receiving a Bachelor's of Science degree in business administration from the University of Detroit in 1962.

"I went to night school to finish," Matthews explained. "I only needed 10 hours to graduate and they were all electives. The firm wanted me to work as much as possible during the tax season."

By 1968, Matthews had worked his way up to associate, then audit partner in 1970. Six years later, he became an administrative partner. He was promoted twice after that, in 1981 to partner in charge and 1986 to regional managing partner-eastern region. Finally, in 1993, he was elected by 109 partners to serve as the company's third managing partner, following Edward Parks and Birmingham founder Frank Moran.

That's a far cry from his accounting roots — calculating numbers a teenager for his father's real estate/insurance business operated from the basement of his childhood home in Detroit.

"I liked it," he offered as the motive behind his career choice.

In lieu of the difference between his accounting beginnings and his

current position, his goal has been consistent.

"My goal is to be the best I can be," he said.

That includes being technologically competent, serving the clients in the best way possible, providing opportunities for the outstanding staff members, and allowing them to be all they can be.

"My goals and objectives are very much in line with the firm's," he said.

And he explained why the goals are similar for every staff member of Plante & Moran — they all follow the "golden rule."

Adopting a "we care" philosophy, every staff member is given a golden-colored ruler at the time of their hire emblazoned with the words, WE CARE.

"And if they lose it, we give them another one."

Overseeing more than 16,000 clients and 750 staff members who billed out \$58.3 million in 1994, Matthews admits being the best he can be is a tremendous responsibility as well as a tremendous privilege.

"It's very challenging, but when you represent a firm held in such high regard, and there is such terrific people in the firm, it makes life easier," he said.

In his spare time, Matthews spends time with his wife, Margaret, and their four children, none of whom made accounting their career choice. He is also active with various clubs and charitable associations.



Mover and shaker: William Matthews, managing partner for Plante & Moran, was named one of the 100 most-influential people in accounting by a national trade publication.

O&E Online upgraded to help meet your needs

O&E ONLINE

Quite a few changes have occurred on O&E On-Line's Website and some major changes are in store when the New Year arrives.

A few months ago, I wrote about the RealNet service. Very useful real estate website with powerful search capabilities. Anyone in the new home market can search on-line for purchase possibilities with the greatest of ease. The site also includes articles on new subdivisions written by O&E real estate writer Douglas Funke. If you haven't visited RealNet in recent weeks, return

to <http://oeonline.com/realnet.html>.

There's also the Cyberjail feature. I wrote about a few weeks ago. Other offerings include: 8 Days a Week, a large listing of entertainment events in southeast Michigan; a Birmingham Restaurant & Dining Guide; the chance to place classifieds in O&E Newspapers; system announcements and several other options.

A great deal of content also has been added to our Website at the Newstand, which can be accessed at <http://oeonline.com/news.html>. Surfers with a graphical Web browser will notice a horizontal "Community News" graphic across the top. Click on the graphic and you will be provided with a selection of that week's community news from the

15 Observer & Eccentric Newspapers.

One advantage, of course, is that on-line you can read stories from 15 communities in O&E Land without having to buy 15 separate newspapers. Another is that sometimes you can read related stories from various communities that are grouped together. A recent example was the assassination of Yitzhak Rabin. Stories from four of our O&E newspapers were grouped under one heading for ease of access and comparison. A similar approach was taken on a lighter subject, the Beatles. You also can read a news story on-line and link to a related story from a week or two before for background. "Community News" is refreshed weekly with a new selection of stories, so make a return visit each week.

The Newstand also offers a sports link that includes schedules of upcoming prep athletic events for Wayne and Oakland counties. Al Harrison's bowling column, Bill Parker's outdoors column, an outdoors activities calendar, sometimes prep standings, and season information for hunters. There are some links to national sports sites.

Among the columnists on-line are Philip H. Power, Tim Richard, Jack Gladden, Phil Sherman, Emory Daniels and Sid Mittra with David Mulley being added very soon. Each column is refreshed weekly and has an archive site of past columns.

There's also a discount feature that contains information on area restaurants and reviews of those restaurants by Observer & Eccentric writers. In the near future, the

Newstand will include a recipe Website featuring the weekly Taste Bud columns of chef Larry James, the O&E Recipe Box, which is a collection of recipes that have appeared in our newspapers, and links to recipe sites on the Internet. The discount and recipe sites also are refreshed weekly.

That's really quite a bit of local content that onliner's may be missing out on if they haven't added the O&E Website to their bookmarks. Once you make that trip, return often because the content is changed weekly and so there's much that the casual visitor will miss.

Save yourself some time rummaging through past issues for a particular column, restaurant review, or recipe. And you can print out recipes or save them to a disk

for future use. If there are features you'd like added, or if there are suggestions you'd like to make, send them to newsroom@oeonline.com.

There's some other exciting news I want to share with you in the weeks ahead about special Birmingham and Livonia websites. But it is now after Thanksgiving, so any time now...

You can direct questions to Emory Daniels by e-mail with emoryd@oeonline.com or fax number 591-7279. To sign up for O&E On-Line, dial (313)691-0903, at "log-in" prompt type "new" and at "Key" prompt type GL6NY2. Past columns may be accessed on-line at <http://oeonline.com/tldmark/emoryd/archive.html>.

Edit your resume; monitor references; time job hunt

JOB SEARCH

Q I've done so many different things that I can't list them all on my resume. How do I decide what to omit?

A Ask yourself if the information really advances your objective. For example, if you're seeking an engineering position, any technical course work you've completed will support your cause. The fact that you've obtained a real estate license, however, will not. Don't waste precious space in an attempt to tell your whole story. Employers don't want to read an autobiography; they only want to know if you are qualified for a specific opening.

Very little on a resume can be

considered neutral. If a piece of information doesn't help you, it will probably hurt you. Even data that might seem benign could be considered so much fluff by the reader. Fluff is a turn-off.

Putting personal achievements and activities with limited career relevance on your resume is also risky. You might be darn proud of your bowling trophy, but my eyes glaze over when I read stuff like that.

Scrutinize every statement, every word, to make sure it supports your job objective in a clear and logical way.

■ We save most resumes for years, except those generated from the following schools of thought:

The Knock 'Em Dead School: Graduates of this institution tend to pack their resumes with self-appraisal statements such as: self-starter, hard worker, competitive, goal oriented, aggressive

and people-oriented. This group will also astound you with numbers "... saved the company over \$6 billion in copying costs!"

The Generic School: These folks live in mortal fear of revealing specifics. Their resumes contain broad language. Not a hint regarding actual products or services. Not a clue about what they've been designing, organizing or making. They often work at a place called Current Employer. It's all a great mystery. I hate mysteries.

The Assume He's Stupid School: Now, I won't even notice that you've left off all the dates. Bury your experience on page two and I'll completely miss the fact that you haven't worked since 1967.

The Bore 'Em Big-Time School: These are a local staple of the group that has achieved a kind of perfection. Instead of conventional resumes, members send

long, rambling form letters written in micro type. You can imagine the thrill of getting one of these babies.

The Cognitive Disconnect School: We recently received a resume in response to an ad for a shipping clerk. The person's stated objective: "To pursue criminal justice specializing in law enforcement." I found this somewhat arresting.

Q I think I'm getting a bad reference from a former supervisor. What can I do to make sure my references don't ruin future opportunities?

A Prepare your references. As a courtesy, of course, always ask permission before listing someone as a reference. Then suggest some anecdotes and past accomplishments of yours that the person could talk about in the event of a phone call. Discuss the job itself, why you want it and

how you think you fit. People generally appreciate being armed with the right words when attempting to help you.

Bad references are relatively rare (which is why fewer companies are checking references). They usually come from people other than those you've suggested to the employer. If you want to go to the trouble, have a recruiter or friend in the guise of an employer call the person suspected of bad mouthing you. When you find that someone is giving negative feedback, take a positive approach. A lunch or birthday card can sometimes soften those old feelings.

Q I'm trying to determine the best time to begin a job search in 1996. Is there a seasonal aspect to hiring?

A You bet. Any recruiter will tell you that late summer and, particularly August, is the

worst. People are on vacation, managers are difficult to schedule for interviews and there is a general feeling that serious hiring can wait until after Labor Day. The first quarter is often the hottest time in employment, followed by the second quarter and the short stretch between Labor Day and mid-November. But don't write off the holidays! While fewer deals are concluded during this period, it's a great time to start networking. Managers seem to be more accessible and people are often in a good mood. Plant your seeds in the snow.

Send questions to George Hayes, Job Search, P.O. Box 2487, Southfield, MI 48037. He is president of Emplex Corp., a recruiting and outplacement testing firm in Southfield, and vice president of Proxy Employment Services, also in Southfield.

BUSINESS MILESTONES

■ MICHAEL FORD of Farmington Hills has joined the outside sales force of Exotic Rubber & Plastics Corp., Farmington. He has 22 years of sales and management experience with World Wide TC and Appliance.

■ ROUNDTABLE APPOINTMENT Wayne County Executive Edward MacNamara and Detroit Mayor Dennis Archer appointed David H. Fink of West Bloomfield to the board of directors of the City of Detroit/Wayne County Roundtable on Sustainable Development. Fink is an attorney and managing partner for Cooper, Fink & Zausmer in Detroit.

■ WILLIAM L. ROSEN of Birmingham has joined the Bloomfield Hills law firm Dawda, Mann, Mulcahy & Sandler, P.L.C. He concentrates in corporate and real estate law.

■ DR. MICHAEL S. BENNINGER of Bloomfield Hills, chairman of Henry Ford Hospital's Department of Otolaryngology, was elected chairman-elect of the board of governors of the American Academy of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery.

■ ALAN D. STUART, president of Stuart Communications Group, Farmington Hills, was elected president of the Public Relations Society of America-Detroit Chapter. Stuart is president of Butler Public Relations, Troy, and was elected vice president, and

Dale Jablonski, president of The Dale Corp., Troy, was elected treasurer.

■ GEOFF CAMERON of Keego Harbor has joined Doyle Marketing, Southfield, as an account executive. He had been an assistant account executive for J. Walter Thompson in Detroit. He also managed direct marketing and merchandising for Orthogonally, Inc., Birmingham.

■ CHRISTINE M. GARABOLIA of Farmington Hills has earned the Certified Structured Settlement Consultant designation from the National Structured Settlement Trade Association and University of Notre Dame. She is a settlement consultant for Kenneth H. Wells & Associates, Birmingham.

■ ADAM THORNBURN of Bloomfield Hills was promoted from sales consultant to hard goods department manager for Don Thomas Sportsbars in Bloomfield Hills. He'll oversee hard goods sales and employee training.

■ DEAN LAYTON of Rochester has joined Mari

Public Relations, Southfield, as an account executive assigned to the Unique Concepts International Division. She had been an account coordinator for Kmart, Troy.

■ MIKE TREPPA of Huntington Woods was named associate design director for Bozell Worldwide Advertising, Southfield. He will oversee operations of The Hot Shop, Bozell's independent design studio.

■ KENNETH J. DEWANK of Troy, a personal administrator for General Motors Corp., has joined Upshaw Institute for the Blind's board of directors.

— compiled by Janice Tiger-Kramer