

College of Business News

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Defying the Odds: From the Projects of Baltimore to CPA

January 31, 2018

By Caroline Nimnicht, Marketing minor ('18)



The College of Business proudly welcomed Kimberly Ellison-Taylor, the 2018 Executive-in-Residence and Distinguished Forensic Lecturer, to the Georgia Southern University Performing Arts Center on Tuesday, January 23, 2018.

Ms. Ellison-Taylor explained how she had a rough start in life, growing up in inner city Baltimore; however, despite her disadvantaged environment, Ellison-Taylor's parents were determined she attend school and have a successful career. Originally, her parents wanted her to become a doctor, but she knew that the only career she wanted to pursue was that of a Certified Public Accountant (CPA).

The Georgia Southern College of Business was very privileged to have Ellison-Taylor, as she is a sought-after speaker who has received numerous awards, being recognized by *Accounting Today* as one of the 100 Most Influential People in Accounting in 2016 and also by *CPA Practice Advisor* as one of the Most Powerful Women in Accounting for 2016.

In her powerful speech, Ellison-Taylor explained how to thrive in the age of technological innovation, specifically aimed towards college students about to enter the workforce. "With college students being the future leaders of the world, creating things that haven't even been thought of yet, everyone should seek and explore the highest credentials that can possibly be attained," she said.

Lowell Mooney, Ph.D., professor of accounting, had this to say about Ellison-Taylor, "Just as I do with my own kids, I encourage my students to dream big! Sometimes, I think our students underestimate their potential. In addition, they sometimes assume that, because they don't go to the state's flagship schools, that they won't experience some incredible opportunities." He went on to say, "[Ellison-Taylor] delivered a powerful message that went something like this: 'If I can grow up in the projects of Baltimore and still go on to become the leader of the world's premier professional association of accountants with over 675,000 CPAs and CGMAs scattered across the planet, then you can too! That's the power of education and hard work.' Based on student feedback, I'd say that [Ellison-Taylor] was a game changer for many students who were inspired, challenged, awed and affirmed by her message. One student wrote, 'What an amazing woman!' I agree!"

Carlyn Smith, a senior accounting major, really enjoyed Ellison-Taylor's lecture, stating, "Ms. Kimberly Ellison-Taylor was an amazing speaker. Her advice, 'How to Thrive in the Age of Technological Innovation,' was extremely helpful to me as I continue my studies to one day become an accountant. Due to people like Ms. Ellison-Taylor helping us anticipate and prepare for the changing future of business, we are able to take her tips and advice and learn to thrive in these dynamic environments."

Kimberly Ellison-Taylor's coming as a guest of the College of Business is so important; having guest speakers share their own experiences helps students with their future career endeavors because they learn from failures and successes of people who were once in their shoes.