



Kimi L. Ellen, CPA

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**Board Member, CEO, CPA | QFE | Private and Public Sectors
|\$10M to \$75B**

Kimi Ellen is an award-winning CEO, managing partner, CPA, and board member with extensive experience in forensic auditing, consulting, and governance. She is a frequent keynote speaker, author, and media contributor and was recently named to Forbes' inaugural Top 200 CPAs in the U.S. She has a significant career advising public and private sector organizations, including start-ups to those in the F500 and government entities. She is an innovative leader who brings a unique perspective combining both accounting and audit backgrounds and excels in financial reporting, internal audits, strategic planning, and business growth. Her leadership has been pivotal in uncovering financial misappropriations and collaborating closely with the FBI.

Kimi currently serves on the board and as Treasurer for Access Community Health Network, the 6th largest in the country with 165K patients with \$223M in annual revenue, and she is a council member at the American Institute of CPAs Council, a nonprofit with 673,000 members and \$750M in revenue. She serves on the Government Accounting Standards Advisory Council, which drives reporting of organizations receiving government funding. She also serves on the boards of NABA Inc., Diverse Organization of Firms, and the Illinois CPA Society. She serves on the advisory boards for Mainstreet Legacy Partners, LLC, a PE firm and Nestment, a startup venture-company. She has served on numerous impactful boards, including at the Southeast Chicago Chamber, the National Society of Black CPAs, and Imani Pearls Community Dev. Foundation.

She co-founded Benford Brown & Associates, LLC. – a full-service Certified Public Accounting firm – where she now serves as Managing Partner and CEO. Under her leadership, the firm has grown to nearly 50 professionals and significantly expanded its services. Kimi has led strategic planning, client engagement, and new client acquisition, quadrupling the firm's revenue in the last three years. As a risk expert, she has spearheaded forensic audits that have uncovered major embezzlement schemes, such as misappropriated HUD funds, and has collaborated with the FBI on high-profile cases. Kimi also led the automation of audit functions for a \$4B public utilities company and played a key role in fraud detection for an Illinois school system that resulted in criminal convictions. Her expertise in board governance and client relations has solidified her reputation as a trusted advisor to Fortune 500 companies, nonprofits, and government entities.

Early in her career, Kimi held positions at Ameritech, Ace Hardware Corporation, and Deloitte, where she honed her expertise in internal and external auditing, developed risk assessment expertise, and supported a client's IPO.

Kimi is affiliated with numerous professional bodies, including Black Women on Boards, the National Association of Corporate Directors, and Private Directors Association. She is also an active volunteer, serving on the City of Chicago's Women Advisory and Business Advisory Committees. She holds a Bachelor of Science in Accountancy from the University of Illinois, CPA licenses in Illinois and New York, and several board readiness and ESG certifications. She is a mother of three, grandmother of one, an avid golfer, traveler, and reader. She is the author of *The Black Woman's Business Bible* and was an associate producer on the 2023 film "Onboard the Film."