



## DETERMINED TO SUCCEED

**Fifteen years after graduation, IAP scholar Tiana Wynn '05 rose to partner in an accounting firm**

**SHORTLY AFTER THE BEGINNING** of her freshman year at the University of Maryland, Tiana Wynn lost her mother. It was a time of intense, disorienting grief for her and her six siblings—among whom she's the oldest. But Wynn wasn't going to let her emotional pain derail her intense desire for college and success. So, even as she struggled with the loss, she stayed the course. She had a goal to reach, and she knew her siblings were looking up to her.

This difficult time was also when Wynn realized the strength and depth of the support network she had in UMD's Incentive Awards Program and at the Robert H. Smith School of Business. "I was in the first cohort of the program, and I felt strongly supported, by my IAP peers and the program staff, as well as people at the Smith School," she said. "That personal support meant a lot to me. That was what kept me going. And it has also kept me connected to UMD to this day."

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Wynn's connections to UMD run deep. She's a lifetime member of the UMD Alumni Association. She is also a member of the Association's Board of Governors, and has served as chair of the board's scholarship committee. Wynn is now a donor as well: she gives to the Alumni Association, as well as the Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority, Inc. Incentive Awards Fund, which supports IAP scholars. In a sense, her UMD journey has come full circle—from scholarship beneficiary to donor. It's a commitment anchored on robust gratitude for the pivotal impact her Maryland education has had on her career success.

Wynn has proved herself a trailblazer in several respects. When she set her sights on getting into UMD and succeeding in college, she was a role model for her siblings. In addition to being one of only nine scholars in the first cohort of IAP, Wynn was also the first IAP scholar to pledge for a UMD sorority and the first to study abroad—in Britain—during the spring semester of 2004. Many more IAP scholars have followed her example since.

Born and raised in Baltimore, Md., Wynn always wanted to attend UMD—she was so laser-focused on this goal that she only applied to a couple of other universities just to please her high school guidance counselor. But even as she looked forward to being accepted, she worried about the cost of college. The Incentive Awards Program solved that problem, while providing her with a level of guidance and mentoring that surpassed her expectations.

After graduating in 2005 with bachelor's degrees in accounting and finance, Wynn joined the Baltimore office of the accounting firm Ernst & Young, and spent about five years there, along the way earning an MBA from Loyola University Maryland. Then she went to work as an audit manager for SB & Company, LLC, a certified public accounting and business advisory firm headquartered in Owings Mills, Md. She quickly rose to senior manager and then, in July 2020, she was named a partner at SB & Company.

Wynn's promotion to partner demonstrated the confidence SB & Company's founders and senior management had in her abilities and work ethic. In her new role, she's entrusted with managing a new line of business for the company, to ensure compliance with technical requirements, make decisions that are in the best interest of the firm, and help protect its profitability.

Wynn has been highly motivated for as long as she can remember, but she's also quick to credit the impact of her Maryland education. "UMD pushes you, encourages you to break barriers," she said. "And the IAP provided excellent training in so many ways. I was always trying to see what else was out there, but UMD encouraged me to aim high, to work harder, and to be more inquisitive."