



2021 Lifetime Contribution to Management Accounting Award

**Joan Luft,
Michigan State University**

The following speech was given by Shane Dikolli when Joan Luft was presented with the award:

To the Members of the Management Accounting Section:

As the Chair of the Committee and on behalf of the Management Accounting Section, I'd first like to express my deep gratitude to Ken Witt and the AICPA for their ongoing and unyielding support of the MAS and, specifically, this prestigious award.

I'd also like to thank Annie Farrell and Alan Webb for their thoughtful and constructive contributions to the Committee decision. We had several nominations, some of which had multiple nominators, including one nomination that had the endorsement of dozens of scholars. But the committee unanimously decided this year to recognize just one winner.

It is my great honor to announce that the 2021 winner of the Lifetime Contribution to Management Accounting Award is JOAN LUFT.

Before I ask Joan to accept the award and give a short talk, I want to make three points about her accomplishments:

First, I want to share with you a short excerpt from a nomination submitted by Mike Shields and Jake Birnberg, which captures so eloquently the reasons why Joan is such a worthy winner.

"Joan Luft was a leader in introducing behavioral economics to management accounting research.

*She made two very important contributions ... One is in **developing models of management accounting** ... by bringing in literature from other social sciences, particularly economics, history, and psychology.*

*Joan's other important research contribution is from her **positivist research on management accounting**. In these studies, she develops and experimentally tests hypotheses based on economics and/or psychology theories about causes and/or effects of management accounting practices."*

The second point I'd like to make is to highlight examples of Joan's contributions, by the numbers:

- 30 academic publications across multiple disciplines, including
 - Nine sole-authored publications.
 - 12 dual-authored publications
- Nearly 39,000 reads of her academic work at Research Gate and almost 2700 citations.
- 3 Notable Contribution Awards, a Best *JMAR* paper award, and multiple faculty teaching and research awards.
- She has served on the committees of 19 Ph.D. students, including three for which she was Chair.
- She has given nine plenary presentations both nationally and internationally.
- She has served five times as an Editor or Associate Editor at the *Journal of Management Accounting Research*, *The Accounting Review*, and *Accounting Horizons*.
- She has served on the Editorial Board for eight different journals for a collective total of 85 years of service (most of which she served concurrently).

Third and finally, a personal story related to Joan, which I know *many* of you here also have, and I want to encourage you right now that if you do have a Joan Luft story, please write to Joan to congratulate her on winning the award and tell her your story. In my case, it was about 16 years ago, and I was an assistant professor at the University of Texas. I went through a dark period where I felt like it might have been time just to pack up and go home to Australia. Life was hard in a foreign country, in an academic landscape full of editors who had rather harsh things to say about the work that I was spending most of my waking hours on, and it just didn't seem to be worth it. But right at that time, Karen Sedatole and I received THE most uplifting first-round Editor decision letter I had ever received and ever will receive. It was from Joan Luft at *JMAR*. I remember thinking at the time that finally, someone gets it; they understand the goodness in the work that I was trying to publish. It was a true inflection point for me. But it wasn't that the work we initially submitted was necessarily that good; it was that

Joan had the most insightful suggestions and wisdom about making it *better*. More importantly, she CHOSE to encourage junior scholars like Karen and me by spending so much time on a single decision letter.

Her actions at that time not only gave me new hope, but they redefined what academic mentoring was for me and have directly shaped how I try to interact with more junior scholars from that day on.

More generally, on all the occasions that I've had the benefit of Joan's presence,

- I have learned something about our profession,
- I've been inspired to be a better scholar, and
- I have been in awe at how Joan can see the GOOD in the work of scholars pursuing increments to the stock of management accounting knowledge.

In short, Joan has been a bastion for amplifying what we all know to be true about the importance of management accounting.

Joan, congratulations on the honor of being recognized as the 2021 winner of the Management Accounting Section's most prestigious award. I now invite you to accept the award and share with us some reflections.

Joan's acceptance speech can be found at:

<https://meridian.allenpress.com/jmar/article/33/3/1/473637/Six-Impossible-Things-Before-Breakfast>