

PROSPERUS

THE MAGAZINE FOR WOMEN WHO ADVISE, PLAN, SPEND, SAVE AND GIVE

More Than a Mentor

Women guiding women on their career paths



BEACH READS
SUCCESSION PLANNING PROS
SUMMER ESSENTIALS

PRESENTED BY



Wealth Management



Encouraging growth and opportunity

Empowering women is one of the hallmarks of RBC Wealth Management's culture. By cultivating an inclusive work environment, we create opportunities that empower our colleagues to collaborate, develop and inspire positive change. When our employees grow, so does our ability to help our clients reach their goals. If you're looking for a workplace that values mentorship and celebrates unique career paths, consider RBC Wealth Management.

Your path can lead to RBC Wealth Management.
Learn more at www.rbcwm.com/yourpath.



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Lifting Each Other Up

Spring has finally sprung here in the Midwest, and I am already looking ahead to summer. For those of us living in parts of the country where warm weather is fleeting, we pack a lot into the short summer months.

Trying to do so much in a short period of time can get my head spinning—whether it's shuttling kids to camps and activities, organizing family vacations, or just trying to eat healthy at the neighborhood barbecue when the s'mores are calling my name.

When I start to feel anxious about everything on my summer to-do list, I remind myself that I don't have to say yes to everything. In fact, I *shouldn't*. Often, the best part of summer is enjoying the simple pleasures, like a sunny patio, a walk with a friend or an impromptu family picnic in the yard.

Sometimes just recalibrating expectations and reminding myself of what is most important helps me enjoy the moment.

Another way I'm looking forward to enjoying summer is following some of the great suggestions shared here in *Prosper•US*. With tips on summer essentials and beach reads, I'll be ready to make the most of the sunny days ahead!

We've been publishing *Prosper•US* for three years now, and we've told some amazing stories by and for women in wealth management. And there are still so many more stories to tell! I am continually awestruck by the many talented women at RBC Wealth Management who readily take time to share their brilliant ideas, life lessons and business tips—in the pages of *Prosper•US* and elsewhere.

That's the beauty of the #WomenofRBC—they love to share. That collaborative spirit creates an environment that is supportive and inspires us all to greater heights. We foster a culture of belonging at RBC Wealth Management that is so critical to success, both personally and professionally.

As you'll read in this edition's cover feature, uplifting each other is at the heart of our firm. Mentoring and sponsorship are essential to growth and building our businesses for the future.

That future lies with our next-generation advisors, which is why our firm recently held a summit specifically designed to bring together our millennial advisors for learning, growth and sharing opportunities.



One sign of summer is the RBC Race for the Kids. Here are my sons at last year's event.



“SOMETIMES JUST RECALIBRATING EXPECTATIONS AND REMINDING MYSELF OF WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT HELPS ME ENJOY THE MOMENT.”

Our women advisors also share advice on planning for our own futures and how to fit exercise into our busy schedules to boost our physical *and* mental health.

I'm proud to share this issue of *Prosper•US* with you, and I hope you enjoy these stories as much as I do. Feel free to drop me a line—I'd love to hear what you think.

Sharen Luze

SHAREN LUZE

Head of Culture and Field Experience
RBC Wealth Management-U.S.

PEER PICKS

BEACHY KEEN

This summer, unwind with these page-turners recommended by RBC insiders.*

Bella Figura: How to Live, Love, and Eat the Italian Way

by Kamin Mohammadi

“Excellent read, beautifully descriptive.”

–**Anne Kiefer**
Financial Advisor
Wayzata, MN

Lessons in Chemistry

By Bonnie Garmus

–**Barbara Letvinchuk**
Financial Advisor, Nashua, NH
–**Leksi Kovalerchik**
Financial Advisor, Baltimore, MD
–**Joanne Yecies**
Financial Advisor, Washington, D.C.

It Starts with Us

By Colleen Hoover

“Fun and easy read.”

–**Julie Asher**
Branch Director
Billings, MT

The Beartown Trilogy

By Fredrik Backman

“I’m currently loving anything by Fredrik Backman. His trilogy—*Beartown*, *Us against You*, *The Winners*—is especially amazing.”

–**Katie Mueller**
Financial Advisor
Billings, MT

Tracy Flick Can’t Win

By Tom Perrotta

“It’s his sequel to *Election*, which was made into a movie starring Reese Witherspoon.”

–**Darla Kashian**
Financial Advisor
Minneapolis, MN

Flying Angels

By Danielle Steele

“Even though our mother was a stateside nurse in the army during World War II, we never recall her talking very much about her experiences of treating the injured when they came back.”

This book was an eye-opener for me and my siblings.”

–**Maureen Kerrigan**
Financial Advisor
Providence, RI

Verity

By Colleen Hoover

“Colleen Hoover’s books tackle a lot of topics like relationships, personal growth, tragedy, romance and more. These aren’t your ‘normal’ romances with Fabio on the cover. *Verity* is the absolute best, but I only recommend it to close friends. It can be risqué in some places. ☺”

–**Heather Hardee**
Senior Financial Associate
Houston, TX

“*Verity* is slightly twisted, slightly smutty, but a quick and engaging read.”

–**Rebecca Stephens**
Financial Advisor
Seattle, WA

Apples Never Fall

By Liane Moriarty

“An engaging, entertaining, insightful book.”

–**Karen English**
Financial Advisor
Spokane, WA



*This activity involves risks, including disconnecting from work and emails. These recommendations do not protect against possible sand between pages.

AMERICA'S GOT TALENT

Two New Programs Aim to Expand Recruitment

Women and people of color remain underrepresented in the financial services industry, but two programs at RBC Wealth Management are underway to change those numbers.

1 Recognizing the power of personal connection, the Women's Association of Financial Advisors (WAFA) launched a new ambassador program and enlisted some of its members to support branch leaders in their efforts to recruit more women across the country. WAFA ambassadors speak directly with recruits to share firsthand experiences and highlight the resources and support the firm has to offer.

2 RBC Wealth Management's Washington, D.C., complex has a history of recruiting racially diverse talent. This year, financial advisors from the D.C. area are partnering with the firm's Culture and Field Experience team to specifically recruit internship applicants from historically Black colleges and universities (HBCUs), along with other institutions across the U.S. The opportunity will give students an inside look at the financial services industry, the space to network and connect with professionals at all levels of the firm, and the chance to pursue the SIE and Series 7 license. RBC Wealth Management hopes to hire some of the interns upon graduation for full-time entry-level roles.



Some of the organizers of the event included (from left) Jordan Williams, Dana McDonald, Courtney Duphorne, Judi Rana, and Jill McEntee.

EVENTFUL

Up Next

At the G2 Summit, millennial advisors met to share ideas.

It's not often that a group of next-gen financial advisors gather for two days of learning, connection and idea sharing. So when 68 financial advisors attended RBC Wealth Management's G2 Summit earlier this year, they were eager to share best practices and learn from one another.

The conference, named to represent the next generation of advisors, was held in the firm's West Division. Courtney Duphorne, a wealth management consultant in Texas, organized the event after seeing similar success last year with the first G2 Summit that she planned in her region.

"I kept thinking, 'All these financial advisors need to get to know each other,'" she says. "There are often multiple opportunities for the firm's established top producers to

get to meet, but not specifically the next generation."

Luna Xu, who attended the conference, works in the San Francisco office, where many of her clients work in the tech field and want to connect with financial advisors who share those same priorities. The G2 Summit gave her a chance to network with other financial advisors who are also tech savvy.

"It gave us an opportunity to get to know one another and meet peers who could be future business partners," she says. "We have a similar mindset in that we grew up in the same generation and are implementing new and innovative ways to invest and plan holistically for the clients. We're providing clients with a wide range of services and using technology to help improve their experiences."

PRO TIPS

Four Ways to Help Clients Invest with a Racial Equity Lens

BY FARRALON UDOM

When investing, many clients may *want* to include companies with policies that promote inclusion and diversity, but they don't know where to start. Our team in RBC Wealth Management's San Francisco branch is committed to creating portfolios that integrate environmental, social and governance (ESG) data, a practice known as responsible investing.

Here are four ways we help clients align their investments with their values.



→ **Screen investments.**

I frequently look at certain company characteristics and history to understand if the company is likely to be contributing to healthy outcomes for various racial demographics or if it may be perpetuating biases and disparate outcomes. Clients can easily request the addition of a racial justice lens, for example, to help them add

or subtract certain aspects to or from their investments.

→ **Evaluate management and governance.**

Governance is the behind-the-scenes infrastructure of a company—how it makes decisions; how it treats employees, clients and communities; how diverse and independent its board of directors is; and how ethically it behaves in avoiding corruption and scandal.

→ **Consider a company's DEI initiatives.**

Clients often want to invest in companies

that work toward hiring, promoting and retaining people of color, but this can be a challenge as companies often don't report this data.

→ **Watch out for systemic biases.** Through direct shareholder dialogue with a company's management as well as proxy voting, asset managers can interact with companies and nudge them in the direction of improved diversity, independent audits and justifiable executive pay.

The good news is that investing responsibly doesn't mean sacrificing returns. We can educate, counsel and guide clients to create impact through their portfolios while still working toward their retirement goals.



Farralon Udom is a financial advisor based in the San Francisco Bay Area.

WIN-WIN

RBC Wealth Management Kicks Off Major League Soccer Sponsorship

As soccer's popularity grows in the United States, the firm will connect with the league's multigenerational and multicultural fan base and reach out to the next generation of investors. And with a focus on shared values, RBC Wealth Management is teaming up with MLS Works—the league's social responsibility platform—to strengthen communities and enrich the lives of those in need.



BY THE NUMBERS

THE SCOOP ON GROUPS

RBC Wealth Management currently has five employee resource groups that offer connection to the firm's many vibrant and diverse communities. They include PRIDE (LGBTQ+), MEA (multicultural), VETS (veterans), WAFA (female financial advisors) and, the largest of all, WE (women).



 **120%**

Increase in Women Empowered (WE) membership since 2020



MEA book club organizers (from left) Deepa Nirmal, Jae Flandermeier and Vinnie Becker

BOOK SMART

Multicultural Employee Resource Group Book Club Delves into Diverse Stories

Books offer a portal to another world, another dimension, another time and—for the firm's Multicultural Employee Alliance (MEA)—another perspective. Led by Deepa Nirmal, senior training and development consultant at RBC Wealth Management, this diversity-focused book club invites employees to discuss often complex themes revolving around identity. Past selections have included *The Hate U Give* by Angie Thomas, *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* by Benjamin Alire Sáenz and *Hood Feminism* by Mikki Kendall. For Asian American and Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Month, book club members will dive into *The Latecomer* by Twin Cities author Kao Kalia Yang, a Hmong American writer who shares her family's journey fleeing the war in Laos to a refugee camp in Thailand, eventually settling in Minnesota.

WORD UP

Advisor Authors Book on Divorce and Finances

Financial advisor Gabrielle Clemens's new book, *Marriage Is about Love, Divorce Is about Money*, can help anyone going through a divorce understand and navigate the high-stakes situation. Through her time as a divorce and estate planning attorney and her current role as an advisor in RBC Wealth Management's Boston branch, Clemens has gained a wealth of experience guiding clients through the complexities of divorce. Her book offers practical advice on finding the right attorney, negotiating, documenting finances and building an emotional support system—all essential elements for making it through the grief to a brighter future, both emotionally and financially. (Available from Amazon and Barnes and Noble.)



7



Essential Summer

As the sun lingers in our skies, we embrace the warmth with pastel-hued glassware, extra SPF, snazzy shades and the banishment of socks.

BY NATALIE LARSEN

6



5



2



4



1



You're getting warmer! With the onset of summer comes a shift in wardrobe and tableware, a migration outdoors, and a general lifting of spirits (both cocktails and moods!). To fortify your color-filled season, we've scouted products from BIPOC- and women-owned brands—because support for these communities shouldn't be relegated to a single month.

1 Pastel, Present and Future

Whether you're pouring fruit-infused water or something with an ABV, set the scene with pastel glassware and floral coasters. *Estelle Colored Glass decanter* in Blush Pink (\$160), from Anthropologie, anthropologie.com; *pressed flower plaque coasters* (\$14), from Magnolia, magnolia.com

2 Carry On

Nineties fanny packs, you've been upgraded: Belt bags are

the trending carryall essential. *Grande Fanny in Mist Woven Checker* (\$385), from Clare V., clarev.com

3 Bye-Bye, Buckles!

We're sliding into summer in slip-on sandals—no hands needed. *"Off Grid" sandals* in Full Spectrum (\$160), from Isleñías, lasislenas.com

4 Change Your Perspective

Who needs rosy lenses? Slip on these sunny shades for a

brighter outlook. *"Stunning" sunglasses* (\$249), from Coco and Breezy, cocoandbreezy.com

5 Plush Up Your Patio

Oh-so-trendy checkerboard and punchy pillows lend a pinch of posh to your outdoor living room. *Checkerboard bath towels* in Pop Pink (\$75, set of two), from Brooklinen, brooklinen.com; *"Ayo" hook pillow* (\$59) and *yellow shag pillow* (\$79), both from Jungalow, jungalow.com

6 Sunny C

Besides SPF, this skin-loving serum is boosted with vitamin C, which protects against sun exposure and blue light—and helps to brighten skin and promote collagen production. *Daily Dose Vitamin C +*

SPF 40 serum (\$46), from Supergoop!, supergoop.com

7 All Natural

This season is all about texture. *Guanabana embroidered hat* (\$165), from Evereve, evereve.com



3

Busy Body

Three ways to incorporate movement into your everyday routine.

BY BROOKE MCGEEHAN

Growing up, I was always involved in sports. With three brothers, sports were a way for our family to bond and spend time together.

Whether it was soccer, softball, basketball or lacrosse, I was always heading off to practice or a game. I loved the balance of teamwork and competition. And in hindsight, I see how playing sports helped me learn to be a leader, work as a team and even lose gracefully.

With fewer options to play team sports as an adult, I focused on running and set a goal to run the New York City Marathon. I accomplished that goal in 2006 after training hard and getting in the best shape of my life. Ultimately, I decided one marathon was enough for me.

I still enjoy shorter-distance runs and have found ways to incorporate exercise into my daily routine. I firmly believe regular workouts keep me happy as well as healthy, but like it is for everyone, it can be hard to incorporate good exercise into a busy workday, especially with kids, pets and other responsibilities.

Here are three tips that help me stick to my workout plan.

1

Establish a routine.

It helps to have a set schedule when it comes to exercise. For me, it's morning or bust. Most weekdays, I head to the gym for a 6 a.m. HIIT class. Working



Brooke McGeehan (center) with friends Danielle Ferrigno and Rachel Lamb

“

GETTING TO START MY DAY WITH THESE INSPIRING WOMEN IS A HUGE REASON WHY I NEVER WANT TO MISS A WORKOUT.”

out in the morning sets me up for the day. I feel accomplished and ready to tackle anything that comes my way.

Working out in the morning also fits best in my family's schedule. I feel like work and other commitments take away from time I can spend with my two children, so working out while they are still asleep gives me time for myself without feeling like I'm sacrificing time with my family.

2

Find your “pack.”

I am fortunate to have a close group of friends that I meet at the gym each morning. We are all driven professional women with families, so we relate to each other in so many ways. Getting to start my day with these inspiring women is a huge reason why I never want to miss a workout. We motivate each other, support one another and—most importantly—have fun together.

3

Enjoy the psychological benefits as much as the physical.

Working out has a positive impact on my mental well-being as well as on my physical health. It can take time to see the physical impact of exercise, but I've found the mental effects are immediate. Post-workout, I feel like I can do anything! That optimistic mindset carries me through the day and positively influences my interactions with others.

Life is short, and I want to make the most of it. Working out helps me feel ready to take advantage of all that life has to offer.



Brooke McGeehan is a branch director and financial advisor in Princeton, NJ.

MORE THAN



BY
SHARON S.
KESSLER

KIRSTIN TURNER
& VALERIE RAMO

A

MENT

Fierce advocacy *by* women *for* women, coupled with RBC Wealth Management's development programs, is cultivating more female energy, wisdom and leadership in the industry—and that's proving to be good for business.

Early in her career after obtaining her CPA and master's, Valerie Ramo worked in auditing, tax and controller positions. Then she took a detour to teach honors geometry and calculus at a private school to pay her kids' tuition while being able to spend more quality time with them.

When she left teaching to nurse her daughter back to health after a sudden illness, she wasn't sure she would ever work again. But then life presented another detour. Her financial advisor husband also fell temporarily ill, so she reentered financial services, along with passing her Series 7, 66 exams and obtaining her insurance license, to help keep his business going.

After his recovery in 2016, they both went to work at RBC Wealth Management's branch in Fort Lauderdale, Florida—he as a financial advisor, she in a marketing position.

But Ramo's heart wasn't in marketing. Her true passion and interests were in wealth planning, so she made it a goal to become well versed in the details of the company's wealth planning services and software.

It was also her good fortune to find a mentor in Kirstin Turner, now branch director at RBC Wealth Management in West Palm Beach, Florida, who encouraged Ramo to pursue her dream.

Ramo loves working with clients, and Turner saw her as a great candidate for RBC's nascent Wealth Planning Associate (WPA) Program—one of the firm's career training and mentoring programs designed to encourage more women to join the industry.

Ramo was one of the first three people to graduate from the WPA program. In that first training group, Ramo says, "we were right in the thick of it, creating the role as we went along." Making the experience richer, Turner sent Ramo to work with advisors in other offices to create wealth plans.

"The next thing you know, I was presenting all the wealth plans for the clients and having a lot of access to many client issues along with how different advisors solved them with time-tested strategies," Ramo says. "It was an unbelievable experience." And she says her regular check-ins with Turner helped refine her thinking and improve her processes.

BUILDING CONFIDENCE

Turner says she has had mentors as well, and she has also mentored and sponsored others in the field. The key to a good mentorship is a mentee with talent, she says. "Valerie has the talent. Valerie has always had the talent. Valerie just didn't have the confidence to lean into her talent."

Turner helped build her confidence, nudging her out of her comfort zone and giving her constructive criticism that was sometimes tough and sometimes soft. "Being an authentic mentor is really about helping Valerie excel to the full ability that she had inside herself the whole time."

Those check-ins led Ramo to realize that she wanted to move beyond being a wealth planning associate and become a comprehensive financial advisor.

"Kirstin always told me that she thought I would be a good financial advisor," Ramo says. "She saw that value in me before anyone did."

Now Ramo is a financial advisor, and Turner has sponsored and supported her at every turn, including helping her create a team with an experienced advisor, Howard Smith, and registered client associate, Jessica Fattori. The matchup has been successful because Smith and Fattori help in mentoring on a daily basis. Plus, the new role brought Ramo back to teaching in a way.

"I feel like I'm learning all the time, but I'm also teaching real life lessons that have financial implications,"

OR



“Being an authentic mentor is really about helping Valerie excel to the full ability that she had inside herself the whole time.” – KIRSTIN TURNER

“Kirstin always told me that she thought I would be a good financial advisor. She saw that value in me before anyone did.” – VALERIE RAMO

Ramo says. “I’m helping people with their lives, whether it’s about Social Security, how to set up their investments, college savings—I just feel every day is something new for me, and I still have that ability to teach.”

Ramo was one of 11 women who joined the 2023 cohort of the Mentoring Circle program sponsored by RBC’s Women’s Association of Financial Advisors (WAFA). The women participate in a yearlong process of networking, education and professional support as they share ideas and experiences to help them grow in their work, solve problems and prosper in their roles.

She found out at the introductory session that her mentor is one of the women who founded the Mentoring Circle about a decade ago. Ramo is eager for the insights and support the Mentoring Circle will provide.

“We’re already asking questions and learning things,” she says. “Everybody in this circle wants to help each other. So I think here, I could help others with things I’ve learned, but I’m also lucky enough to get to learn some of the things that they’re doing.”

MORE THAN OPENING A DOOR

Sarah Jackson knew what it was like to be on the outside looking in. At home with a 1-year-old and a 4-year-old, she wanted to get back into the financial services industry.

She had the necessary education, credentials and experience. She had worked as a trader, fund analyst and associate financial advisor. But what she wanted—a *part-time job*—was hard to come by in the industry.

Jackson’s journey is familiar in an industry where women make up only about 15 percent of financial

advisors. The profession has long been perceived as one that is only for go-getters who start early, work late, and don’t have to meet the school bus or make dinner. It’s something that RBC is working to change by creating more than one career path for women in financial services.

She eventually did find a position that accommodated a part-time schedule with the RBC Wealth Management branch in Wayzata, Minnesota. Her mentor and sponsor, financial advisor Anne Kiefer, recognized Jackson’s talent and experience could be put to greater use and advocated on her behalf to move Jackson into the position that matched her expertise.

“I wouldn’t have had doors open for me if Anne didn’t cut the door out of the wall,” Jackson says. “She was the one that made everything happen.”

At the time Kiefer met Jackson, her business partner had just retired, and she was “overwhelmed with everything that needed to be done,” says Kiefer. “Sarah was already licensed, already knew asset management and research. It’s really hard to find somebody that can actually hit the ground running these days.” It was like finding a “mini me,” she says.

CREATING THE RIGHT FIT

Although Jackson was a perfect fit for the work, a part-time role with a job title that matched her skills was something that hadn’t previously been available.

That’s when Kiefer began pushing for change. “At that point in time, it was not very common to have any part-time registered roles,” she says. “I just lobbied really, really hard.”

So, every time Jackson came up for review and

when her work hours increased, Kiefer pushed for a title change. Eventually, Jackson's title became business analyst, and then senior financial associate. She has been officially in that role for two years.

For Jackson, who wanted to find a job that could accommodate her family responsibilities and allow her to pursue her career ambitions, too, connecting with Kiefer was a dream come true.

"Anne and I hit it off right away. Our vision for how to take care of clients was very much in sync," Jackson says. "It was too good of a fit to just give up because part time wasn't initially an option. What I didn't realize was how incredibly persistent Anne could be. It's her persistence that created this change."

Kiefer acknowledges that she had to be a bit of a bulldog to advocate for Jackson. She frames her mindset in terms made popular in her favorite book, *SalesDogs* by Blair Singer, which helps salespeople identify their "breed" and the "breeds" around them to leverage their strengths.

"My temperament is usually a golden retriever," Kiefer says, "yet there is a little bit of bulldog in me, in that when I've made a commitment to something and there isn't really a good reason to say no, I just keep at it.

"For me it was chicken or the egg, because I was already doing a planning-style business, which is more work intensive than just brokering stocks," she says. "And I was willing to put my money where my mouth was and value Sarah's skills."

Kiefer was 19 when she took her first job in the industry, and over 40-plus years, she has advanced to lead a successful practice. She welcomes RBC's efforts to create

programs to bring more women into the industry and support them once they're here. She continues to advocate for women when she sees a need—like enhanced training opportunities in the Associate Financial Advisor program and increased schedule flexibility.

HER AMERICAN DREAM

Angelika Caulford says her career is her "little American dream." She arrived in the United States as an exchange student from Poland and then bounced around the country in a series of jobs, eventually landing an entry-level position in 2008 at RBC Wealth Management in Stamford, Connecticut.

Hired as a client associate, she fell in love with the work, especially being able to help clients with planning, she says. "I decided this is what I want to do for a living."

From the beginning, her branch manager, Skip Morton, saw her potential and supported and encouraged her.

"He was my mentor. He was my boss. He was my best friend," Caulford says. "He would give me stuff to do and say, 'Angelika, you run with it, and if you get stuck, just come to me.'"

From her first role, she advanced to being an investment associate, and within a couple of years, her complex manager encouraged her to become a financial advisor.

"It felt amazing that people thought so highly of me, but I was terrified that I wasn't good enough," Caulford says. "I'm a woman in this business; I speak with an accent—all these things kind of just hit me."

But with Morton's encouragement, she accepted the



SARAH JACKSON AND ANNE KIEFER



I wouldn't have had
doors open for me if Anne
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made everything happen."

— SARAH JACKSON



“Skip was my mentor. He was my boss.
He was my best friend. He would give me stuff
to do and say, ‘Angelika, you run with it, and
if you get stuck, just come to me.’” – ANGELIKA CAULFORD

challenge, saying she knew that if she didn’t take the opportunity, she would “regret it forever.”

Once she was a financial advisor, Caulford’s partnership with Morton improved and grew the business. “The chemistry is perfect,” she says about how Morton works well with older clients and she relates well to their children and grandkids.

In January 2022, she accepted the position of branch director. She and Morton still work together with clients, but she has also taken on branch management duties. “I know that I can call him, and he will always be there to support me,” she says.

Caulford applauds RBC’s efforts to put more women into leadership roles in a business that “is still very much male-dominated,” she says. “It’s good to see that RBC is trying to change that.”

She is participating in RBC’s Branch Leadership Vantage Program, which helps participants grow and enhance their leadership skills, and she takes seriously her responsibility to support and encourage others in their career journeys.

FROM MENTEE TO MENTOR

Caulford was the first person that Dominika Lawecki met when she arrived to interview for a receptionist position about a decade ago.

“I will never forget this. I walked in, and I was very terrified. It was one of my first real interviews,” says Lawecki, who was then a college student. “Angelika introduced herself; as she grabbed my jacket, she looked at me and said, ‘Don’t worry, you’ll be just fine.’”

Lawecki, who is also originally from Poland, refers to Caulford as “my big sister” because of the support and friendship she offered from day one. After several years as a receptionist, Lawecki became a client associate and, in the past year, advanced to branch service manager.

“Angelika has been so helpful with everything since I first stepped in the game here,” Lawecki says. One of the important lessons Caulford taught her was to stick up for herself—to say no politely and firmly.

“Being the branch service manager, it’s part of my job to guide people and help them solve problems,” Lawecki

says. “I’m the person who will never say no.” But Caulford coached her on providing support without taking on tasks that weren’t hers to do.

“Angelika sometimes thinks she’s not really the mentor, but she’s always been the type of person I was looking up to as a sister, as a coworker,” Lawecki says. “We have a great relationship at work and outside of work.”

When Lawecki hits a rough spot, Caulford will take her to coffee or on a walk so they can sort it out and Lawecki can clear her head and move on.

“I like how she has a fresh perspective on being the branch director. And she’s also a mother of three,” Lawecki says. “She’s my hero, because sometimes I don’t know how she manages to do both jobs—being a great mother and a great branch director.”

Caulford is also setting a great example for Lawecki about the possibilities that exist in the industry. Even though she enjoys her current role, Lawecki is considering a new challenge and an ambitious career path.

“I’m a go-getter,” she says. “I always look for new ideas. I always look for new experiences, and I would like to advance in this field. I see myself taking the same steps that Angelika took in becoming a financial advisor.”

If she does, she has a great mentor in Caulford, who is passing along what she learned from her own mentor. “At the very beginning, I didn’t believe in myself,” Caulford

says. “I didn’t know what I was doing. And little by little, I realized that you can accomplish anything. You just have to keep on pushing.”

BRAGGING RIGHTS

The benefits of having an advocate in your corner are clear, especially for women in the male-dominated financial industry. Sponsors and mentors help create space for the talented women the industry needs. Whether an advocate is male or female, the little extra boost they provide can make all the difference in creating a more diverse and inclusive industry.

Kirstin Turner says she has had multiple sponsors and advocates in her career—mostly male. And even as she sponsors others, Turner has someone who is advocating for her.

“Our divisional director, Pat Vaughan, is always looking out for ways to say, ‘Hey, look at her, she’s shining,’” Turner says.

“Sometimes women are just not seen,” she adds. “I don’t think that it’s malicious intent. People promote people that look like them—people that they hang out with, people they golf with. Sometimes you have to make sure that talent is put up on a pedestal, because women also are not as good at bragging about ourselves.” ■



DEVOTED TO DEVELOPMENT

How RBC Wealth Management is investing in programs that promote career growth from the inside.

The Wafa Mentoring Circle was established a decade ago to support female financial advisors early in their career and help them advance with practical advice on their day-to-day work and how to deal with challenges, obstacles and setbacks—and to inspire them to become leaders in the field.

The Associate Financial Advisor (AFA) Program is designed to coach people new to the industry or career changers to pass the license exams and develop the skills to work in an AFA role. Participants receive one-on-one coaching based on their needs over three to six months. The coaching can continue after the AFA is licensed and working.

The Wealth Planning Associate Program is a two-year program providing a learning track for those who want to become financial advisors. Wealth planning associates assist financial advisors in preparing and delivering wealth plans to their clients, gaining valuable relationship management skills and insight into what it takes to be an advisor.

RBC’s In-House CFP Program is tailored specifically for RBC and provides a rigorous schedule of instructor-led sessions to help with CFP exam prep. The CFP certification is the industry benchmark for financial credentials. Having the CFP designation boosts credibility and instills confidence in the advisors and their clients.

TRANSITION TIME

Financial advisors practice what they preach and plan ahead for retirement. BY SUZY FRISCH



More than 40 years into her career as a financial advisor, Pat Thorpe is still energized by her work helping clients create a solid financial foundation for generations to come, whether she's meeting with families, creating wealth plans or fostering growth at RBC Wealth Management's Edmonds, Washington, branch.

Having a solid team in place—along with a well-designed succession plan—makes all the difference to Thorpe. Though she has no plans yet to retire, Thorpe's assurance that her clients will be taken care of means she can focus on doing the things she loves best. And the fact that her own family will be helping her client families makes it even better.



Pat Thorpe

Though financial advisors devote significant time talking to clients about retirement, many find it hard to turn that lens on themselves. But no matter when they plan to retire, advisors should be thinking about how to transition their clients and book of business to a trusted partner.

In 2009, Thorpe and her daughter Heather Krause started setting such plans in motion when Krause joined the team. Her mom had frequently pitched Krause on the idea of switching careers, confident in her talents and touting the job satisfaction she could attain. Another selling point was work-life balance for the wife and mother of two children, who frequently traveled the world as a Fortune 500 business leader.

"Heather was a good fit for us with her math background," says Thorpe. "One of the biggest concerns with having a partner is finding someone you can trust with your clients, and I knew that I could trust Heather with mine."

During her first five years, Krause learned the industry and worked alongside Thorpe, soaking up her institutional knowledge. The pair spent significant time fleshing out their team's new structure, including each person's role and responsibilities, with Krause eventually becoming the leader and primary advisor. "Part of that is taking pieces off of Mom's plate that don't bring her joy," Krause says. "She lights up when she's talking about the markets or doing research on positions. And that's a big help to me."

The Key to Succession

Mary Ann Heeren, a financial advisor in Seattle, Washington, has been on a similar path. About eight years ago, she started putting the pieces in place for her retirement. She wanted transition plans set for whenever she decided to wrap up her more-than-four-decade career—even though that future seemed far off.

Heeren and her husband, Larry, created a team with Neil McDevitt, a former coworker of Larry's. They also signed a succession agreement with McDevitt and began introducing him to their clients. The McDevitt Heeren Group used retirement planning as the main vehicle for providing value to its clients when introducing them to McDevitt.

"If you're really thinking about your clients' best interest, you want someone who will serve them well," says Heeren. "You want someone who will take over and who will handle your clients with integrity and consideration and really come to love them like you do."

Heeren likes that the five-member team format allows her the flexibility to work Monday through Wednesday. That gives her ample time to pursue her varied interests, from growing flowers and herbs to cooking, bird watching, exercising and traveling. Serving in the Peace Corps in Afghanistan while they were making a contribution as English teachers sparked the Heerens' lifelong passion for seeing the world.

Heeren has served on the board of an organization committed to developing future leaders of Afghanistan. She and her husband continue to enjoy meeting people from all over the world and collecting beautiful local objects—pursuits they aim to engage in more in the future.

With an abiding enthusiasm for her work, Heeren is nonetheless getting closer to a retirement date. Plus, staying on the job has allowed her to meet other life goals, such as making significant donations to her favorite causes without having to draw down her own retirement funds.

All in the Family

Amy Sturtevant, a financial advisor in Washington, D.C., was so busy growing her business and serving as branch manager for 11 years that she hadn't spent much time planning for her own retirement. She decided to bring on a junior partner in 2020 with two objectives: to continue fostering growth in her practice and to expand her wealth planning services.



Mary Ann Heeren

It's a decision that has worked out well, allowing Sturtevant to meet her goals while also starting to think more concretely about her future. Her junior partner, son Edward Sturtevant, has taken quickly to the industry and is capitalizing on Amy Sturtevant's vision to engage more clients on retirement planning. It also gives her a line of sight to the future as she works to transition the practice to the next generation.

"The only way your retirement is going to be a success is if the business continues to grow when you walk out the door and there are no obstacles to prevent your junior partner from taking off," Sturtevant says. "You want your clients to continue to thrive, and the only way to do that is to make sure that the team taking over for you is thriving also."

To that end, Sturtevant stepped away from branch management in 2021 so she could focus on mentoring and training team members. They have been building deeper relationships with clients, who often want to help their children and grandchildren prepare for the future. This connection with the next generation helps the practice continue to grow.

Putting her plans into action and seeing them bear fruit has bolstered Sturtevant's passion for her work and the future it provides. She is eager to continue investing in her business so that eventually she can spend more time staying at the family's home in Maine, visiting her other children on the West Coast, golfing with her husband and perhaps realizing that dream of a bigger boat.

"The minute you start planning for retirement, it gets very exciting," Sturtevant says.

"I get motivation from thinking about what we'll need to grow this business for the next five to 10 years."

And that's the thing about making retirement plans. It doesn't mean a hard stop once next steps are put down on paper. There is still plenty of time to continue serving clients, engage in a beloved profession and grow a business that has meant so much.

Thorpe finds it hard to walk away from her four decades' worth of clients, but she's glad to know she can do so with peace of mind when the time is right. "When the market is up, it's too much fun and you don't want to leave," she says. "And when the market is down, you don't want to leave because your clients need you. I still feel like I'm contributing and an intrinsic part of the team. At some point, when I'm ready to retire, I know our clients are in good hands." ■



Amy Sturtevant

Family Matters

I found the firm that celebrates everyone's unique gifts.

BY TERRI EDWARDS

When I had my first child, I was so conflicted about how I'd be able to “do it all” that I drafted up a resignation letter when she was two weeks old. I was ready to leave the workforce to become a full-time stay-at-home mom.

But I never sent that letter. I stuck it out for two more years.

The same concerns resurfaced when I had my second child: I wrote another letter but never had the heart to send it to my boss. I cared deeply about my work, enjoyed my role in the organization and worried about losing part of my identity.

Ultimately, I did decide to leave and give my kids 100 percent of my attention.

Many moms can relate to the fact that juggling a 3- and 5-year-old while working full time is not easy. There is a tremendous amount of guilt both at home and at work when one role outweighs the other, and finding balance can seem impossible. While walking away from a lengthy, successful career was tough and emotional, it seemed like the only option at the time.

When you have kids, you're forever changed. Your empathy for others increases, and you look at situations through a completely different lens. You become an amateur psychologist, an expert in understanding the nuances of your “people.”

Several years later, I was ready to come back to work. I wanted to work for a company

that had a great culture—one that would support my transition back into the workforce and understand that family comes first. I was fortunate to find all of this at RBC Wealth Management. I quickly realized that the culture of the company was even better than I expected. From day one, I was surrounded by some of the most supportive

received an award as one of RBC's Outstanding Branches in 2022. I am extremely grateful for the opportunity to serve and partner with everyone in my branch. Trust, mutual respect and genuinely caring for one another are what make this branch truly successful.

My children are now in junior high and college, and I've been with RBC for almost

“

I WANTED TO WORK FOR A COMPANY THAT HAD A GREAT CULTURE—ONE THAT WOULD SUPPORT MY TRANSITION BACK INTO THE WORKFORCE AND UNDERSTAND THAT FAMILY COMES FIRST.”

and generous colleagues, who appreciated the skills I brought to my new role. Their positive feedback gave me the confidence I needed, especially after staying at home for so long. It was clear to me that senior leadership understood the demands and challenges of being a working mother, which significantly helped reduce my self-imposed stress.

Within two years at the firm, I was promoted to branch director of the Houston Memorial office in Texas. This meant taking six different licensing tests back-to-back to assume the position. I am honored to work with some of the finest financial advisors in the business, and our team

six years. After so much time away from the workforce, I was up for the challenge that leadership entrusted me with.

Many companies claim that they care, but when push comes to shove, the true character of a culture comes through. There is a saying from the university I attended about its culture: “From the outside looking in, you can't understand it, and from the inside looking out, you can't explain it.” That rings true here at RBC.



Terri Edwards is branch director of RBC's Houston Memorial office.

#WomenofRBC Take Home Coveted Awards

FORBES

TOP 100 WOMEN WEALTH ADVISORS

Ann Marie Etergino, Chevy Chase, MD

TOP WOMEN WEALTH ADVISORS BEST-IN-STATE

Lizbeth Arendt Baker, Wayzata, MN
 Patricia Baum, Annapolis, MD
 Shea Boulware-Creed, Phoenix, AZ
 Catherine Chen, San Francisco, CA
 Gabrielle Clemens, Boston, MA
 Mary Elizabeth Dale, Atlanta, GA
 Hilary Doherty, Kirkland, WA
 Karen English, Spokane, WA
 Ann Marie Etergino, Chevy Chase, MD
 Melanie Folstad, Chevy Chase, MD
 Elisabeth Brooke Hawley, Seattle, WA
 Mary Ann Heeren, Seattle, WA
 Laura Herrera, Hagerstown, MD
 Susan Hovanec, Washington, D.C.
 Margaret Jackson, Annapolis, MD
 Darla Kashian, Minneapolis, MN
 Lori Keller, Rapid City, SD
 Maureen Kerrigan, Providence, RI
 Kelly Kilkeny Hale, Portland, OR
 Heather Krause, Seattle, WA
 Tania Kvacic, Phoenix, AZ
 Jeri Larrinaga, Pueblo, CO
 Jacqueline Larson, Minnetonka, MN
 Barbara Letvinchuk, Nashua, NH
 Eden Lopez-Robles, New York, NY

Brooke McGeehan, Princeton, NJ
 Sanya Mulhern, Palm Desert, CA
 Tonya Nichols, Portland, OR
 Elizabeth Norman, Madison, WI
 Beth Rosenwald, Baltimore, MD
 Jaime Sahlstrom, Minneapolis, MN
 Diane Schaefer, Washington, D.C.
 Tara Seegers, Midland, TX
 Reva Shakkottai, Los Angeles, CA
 Kimberly Shappee, Missoula, MT
 Paula Steinberg, New York, NY
 Kylie Strum, Rochester, MN
 Amy Sturtevant, Washington, D.C.
 Deborah Sullivan, Canonsburg, PA
 Kristie Svejda, Leawood, KS
 Holli Terry, Frisco, TX
 Kirstin Turner, Palm Beach Gardens, FL
 Beth Webb, Clive, IA
 Carol Wilshire, El Segundo, CA
 Nora Yousif, South Easton, MA

BEST-IN-STATE WEALTH ADVISORS

Patricia Baum, Annapolis, MD
 Shea Boulware-Creed, Phoenix, AZ
 Catherine Chen, San Francisco, CA
 Gabrielle Clemens, Boston, MA
 Mary Elizabeth Dale, Atlanta, GA
 Hilary Doherty, Kirkland, WA
 Ann Marie Etergino, Chevy Chase, MD
 Melanie Folstad, Chevy Chase, MD
 Mary Ann Heeren, Seattle, WA
 Laura Herrera, Hagerstown, MD

Susan Hovanec, Washington, D.C.
 Margaret Jackson, Annapolis, MD
 Lori Keller, Rapid City, SD
 Kelly Kilkeny Hale, Portland, OR
 Heather Krause, Seattle, WA
 Tania Kvacic, Phoenix, AZ
 Jeri Larrinaga, Pueblo, CO
 Jacqueline Larson, Minnetonka, MN
 Barbara Letvinchuk, Nashua, NH
 Eden Lopez-Robles, New York, NY
 Brooke McGeehan, Princeton, NJ
 Tonya Nichols, Portland, OR
 Elizabeth Norman, Madison, WI
 Beth Rosenwald, Baltimore, MD
 Jaime Sahlstrom, Minneapolis, MN
 Diane Schaefer, Washington, D.C.
 Reva Shakkottai, Los Angeles, CA
 Amy Sturtevant, Washington, D.C.
 Deborah Sullivan, Canonsburg, PA
 Holli Terry, Frisco, TX
 Carol Wilshire, El Segundo, CA

FINANCIAL PLANNING

TOP 40 REGIONAL BROKERS UNDER 40

Hilary Doherty, Kirkland, WA

BARRON'S

TOP 1,200 FINANCIAL ADVISORS

Ann Marie Etergino, Chevy Chase, MD

Forbes "Top Women Wealth Advisors" and "Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State" The 2023 Forbes "Top Women Wealth Advisors" and "Top Women Wealth Advisors Best-in-State" award was announced February 2023. Data as of 9/30/2022. The award was developed by SHOOK Research and is based on in-person and telephone due diligence meetings to evaluate each advisor qualitatively, a major component of a ranking algorithm that includes: client retention, industry experience, review of compliance records, firm nominations; and quantitative criteria, including: assets under management and revenue generated for their firms. Investment performance is not a criterion because client objectives and risk tolerances vary, and advisors rarely have audited performance reports. Rankings are based on the opinions of SHOOK Research, LLC and not indicative of future performance or representative of any one client's experience. The financial advisor does not pay a fee to be considered for or to receive this award. This award does not evaluate the quality of services provided to clients. This is not indicative of this financial advisor's future performance. For more information: www.SHOOKresearch.com. **Forbes/Shook "Best-in-State Wealth Advisors"** The 2023 Forbes "Best-In-State Wealth Advisors" award was announced April 2023. Data as of 6/30/2022. The award was developed by SHOOK Research and is based on in-person and telephone due diligence meetings to evaluate each advisor qualitatively, a major component of a ranking algorithm that includes: client retention, industry experience, review of compliance records, firm nominations; and quantitative criteria, including: assets under management and revenue generated for their firms. Investment performance is not a criterion because client objectives and risk tolerances vary, and advisors rarely have audited performance reports. Rankings are based on the opinions of SHOOK Research, LLC and not indicative of future performance or representative of any one client's experience. Neither Forbes nor SHOOK Research receive compensation in exchange for placement on the ranking. The financial advisor does not pay a fee to be considered for or to receive this award. This award does not evaluate the quality of services provided to clients. This is not indicative of this financial advisor's future performance. For more information: www.SHOOKresearch.com. **Financial Planning's "Top 40 Regional Brokers Under 40"** The 2023 Financial Planning "Top 40 Brokers Under 40" and "Top 40 Regional Brokers Under 40" award was announced February 2023. Data as of 9/30/22. Financial Planning annually ranks the industry's top producers under 40. Nominations were received from advisors and managers and ranked according to production totals. This award does not evaluate the quality of services provided to clients and is not indicative of the advisor's future performance. The financial advisor does not pay a fee to be considered for or to receive this award. **Barron's "Top 1,200 Financial Advisors"** The 2023 Barron's "Top 1,200 Financial Advisors" award was announced March 2023. Data as of 9/30/2022. The award is based on the following criteria: The individual is credentialed as a FINRA registered representative, assets under management, revenue produced for the firm, regulatory and compliance record. The financial advisor does not pay a fee to be considered for or to receive this award. This award does not evaluate the quality of services provided to clients. This is not indicative of this financial advisor's future performance.

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The next step in your career path— RBC Wealth Management

Life is a journey—RBC Wealth Management can be your destination.

Our team of financial advisors is known for their passion for helping people and a desire to have a positive impact in the communities where they live and work. We welcome women with diverse backgrounds to join our team. If you are looking to take your career to the next level, RBC Wealth Management is where you want to be.

To learn more about how your path can
lead you here, visit www.rbcwm.com/yourpath.



Wealth
Management

Investment and insurance products offered through RBC Wealth Management are not insured by the FDIC or any other federal government agency, are not deposits or other obligations of, or guaranteed by, a bank or any bank affiliate, and are subject to investment risks, including possible loss of the principal amount invested.

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