

# WHAT MAKES THE ADVISORS AT THE MIDTOWN FINANCIAL GROUP SPECIAL?

BY MATT RUSSO, MANAGING PARTNER

WITH MORE THAN 100 YEARS OF COMBINED INDUSTRY EXPERIENCE, CHRIS FAICCO, MATT LEOPOLD, LEE RICHARDSON AND KEVIN STEIN OF THE MIDTOWN FINANCIAL GROUP AT NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL HAVE THE QUALIFICATIONS AND CREDENTIALS TO PROVIDE THE ABSOLUTE BEST IN FINANCIAL PLANNING. WHAT SETS THIS TEAM APART IS ITS BREADTH OF COVERAGE, AS EACH PARTNER FOCUSES ON HIS AREA OF EXPERTISE. WHETHER IT'S WITH HIGH NET WORTH CLIENTS, PROFESSIONAL ATHLETES, FAMILIES OR CORPORATIONS, THE MIDTOWN FINANCIAL GROUP PARTNERS HAVE THE EXPERIENCE AND KNOWLEDGE TO PROVIDE A TAILORED APPROACH TO EACH CLIENT BASED ON THE NEEDS. THE TEAM INCLUDES 17 CREDENTIALLED PROFESSIONALS WHO TAKE PRIDE IN PROVIDING A CONCIERGE LEVEL OF CLIENT SERVICE. I'VE KNOWN EACH OF THESE FOUR MEN FOR OVER A DECADE AND CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THEY OFFER THE WHOLE PACKAGE; EACH WEALTH MANAGEMENT ADVISOR IS ATTENTIVE TO DETAIL AND CARES FOR EVERY ONE OF THEIR CLIENTS. THERE'S A REASON WHY OVER 96 PERCENT OF NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL'S CLIENTS HAVE REMAINED WITH THEM FOR FIVE YEARS OR MORE—AND THAT'S BECAUSE THEY'RE TRULY COMMITTED TO THEIR CORE MISSION OF BUILDING WEALTH AND PROTECTING LEGACIES FOR FAMILIES, BUSINESSES AND THOSE MOST IMPORTANT TO THEM.

## MATT LEOPOLD CFP®, RICP®

▶ A note from a widow might seem like an odd source of inspiration. But that's one of many pieces of encouragement that Matt Leopold has pinned to a board in his office as an affirmation. Leopold explains that this particular note is from the surviving widow of the first death claim he paid out. "These notes are my daily reminders of the impact I have on people's lives," he says. In his 18 years as a Wealth Management Advisor at Northwestern Mutual, he has seen a number of changes—most notably in the overwhelming amount of access people can receive through technology and the added stress they have due to that over-information. Leopold says his responsibility to his clients has remained the same. "Taking someone from where they are today to where they want to be. When I walk away from this business, I want to be remembered as someone who touched and improved the lives of the families I worked with." Outside the office, Leopold applies the same passion in his personal life. He runs a non-profit called Bryan's Song, which raises awareness for the need for early colon cancer detection.



## "I'VE KNOWN THESE MEN FOR OVER A DECADE AND CAN CONFIDENTLY SAY THEY OFFER THE WHOLE PACKAGE."

### LEE RICHARDSON

▶ Providing personalized service to clients is of utmost importance to Lee Richardson, who began financial planning after a stint in investment banking. "What attracted me to financial planning, specifically, was the desire to work with people on a very up-close and personal basis as opposed to doing corporate transactions, which left me unsatisfied," Richardson says. He takes his role as financial advisor very seriously and thinks of himself as a "careful steward" of his clients' money. With all of his clients, he wants to "take some anxiety out of the equation." Richardson says much has changed in the 26 years he's been in his role, but what remains the same is his ability to assuage fears: "For my clients to know they have somebody on the other end of the line when they call, who intimately knows their situation and has the judgment, experience and perspective to help them," Richardson says, "that is really the biggest and most rewarding part of my job."

### CHRIS FAICCO CLTC®, RICP®

▶ Although he has worked at Northwestern Mutual since graduating from Fordham University in 1988, Chris Faicco had very different post-collegiate plans in mind. "My goal was to become the second baseman for the LA Dodgers," Faicco explains. "[But] when the June 1988 draft came and my name wasn't called, I decided I have to find a new career." He found his career in financial planning, and when a client became a sports agent for Icon Sports Management, Faicco was able to rekindle his love of baseball by taking on athletes as clients. "The key to working with athletes is to communicate in a clear and concise way," he says. "These are 19-year old kids who suddenly receive a million-dollar signing bonus and it's overwhelming to them." With all of his clients—pro athletes or not—Faicco says that listening to their true concerns and designing tailor-fit solutions is of utmost importance. His competitive streak is what keeps him playing sports to this day—and what keeps him fighting for what's best for his clients.

### KEVIN STEIN CFP®, CLU®, CHFC®

▶ Kevin Stein owes much of his success to his poor bowling abilities. While he was a 24-year-old fledgling advisor in Binghamton, N.Y., a friend encouraged him to join a local club to make professional connections. The club didn't have a golf course or pool, but it had a bowling alley in the basement. "I was probably the worst bowler in the world," Stein says with a laugh. His nearly 100 handicap made him a coveted team member and suddenly he found himself connecting with many business owners. "There's an opportunity here," Stein recalls thinking. That's how he began building a practice primarily comprised of clients who owned companies. He moved his practice to Manhattan in 2009. He explains that successful business owners are often the most in need of help: they've been so focused on building their companies that they haven't devoted the time to create a plan to reach their long term financial goals. Stein—who graduated college with an electrical engineering degree—is there to do the analytical thinking and help clients build a plan that allows them to become financially independent from their business. In the end, Stein hopes that his clients are better off having met him, and that he can help them leverage what they have built to obtain financial independence. He himself has gotten a little something out of this as well: "I'm still not a great bowler, but my handicap is better!"

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