

BUILDING TRUST

Led by the duo of Stephen Frank and Derek Brooks, **The Frank Financial Consulting Group of Wells Fargo Advisors** helps high-net-worth families and business owners pursue their long-term financial goals.

by **BILL DONAHUE** | photography by **JODY ROBINSON**

Stephen Frank easily could have chosen a different path.

After all, he owes his surname to the family behind Frank's Beverages, a bottling company founded in 1895 that became one of Philadelphia's most iconic brands. In fact, at one point in time, Frank's was the largest privately owned beverage bottler in the Greater Philadelphia Area.

"I could have gone into the family business, but I wanted to be Stephen Frank, not just someone who worked for Frank's Beverages," he says. "I've always had an interest in finance and a knack for numbers, and I was also fortunate to have grown up in a family with a great work ethic. So I took all of those skills with me and went off to do my own thing."

In 1985, after he earned a bachelor's degree in finance from the University of Florida, Stephen started working for a brokerage firm under the mentorship of a family friend. Today, nearly 35 years later, Stephen leads The Frank Financial Consulting Group of Wells Fargo Advisors, a Conshohocken-based team that works with families and business owners to help plan and save in their high-earning years, preserve and generate income during retirement, and efficiently distribute assets to the next generation as part of their estate plan.

"Our greatest value is that we make every person we work with feel like they are our most important client, because they are," says Stephen, the team's Managing Director – Investment Officer. "Whether a client has half a million dollars or \$20 million or more, we treat everyone with the same level of service and respect."

Derek Brooks, CFP®, joined the Frank Financial Consulting Group of Wells Fargo Advisors in 2011 and now serves the team as First Vice President – Investment Officer. Like Stephen, early experiences shaped Derek's career path. He grew up in Michigan, where his father owned a successful small business. When the recession hit in 2008, market conditions hobbled his father's business—something Derek believes could have been avoided in part if his father had been connected to a team of responsible advisors looking out for his best interests.

"Seeing what my father experienced was a catalyst for me," says Derek, who received a degree in sociology from Princeton University before going on to earn his CERTIFIED FINAN-

cial PLANNER® designation. "I enjoy helping people, and this business allows us the opportunity to support our clients in good times and bad. By consulting us first, we may be able to help them feel more confident and avoid mistakes that could affect their long-term financial goals."

The Frank Financial Consulting Group of Wells Fargo Advisors has continued to invest in its staff and infrastructure as a way to better serve its growing client base. For example, its advisory team has grown to include John ("Jack") Florio. The team of financial advisors has several decades of industry experience among them, assisted by three long-tenured client associates, Stephanie Godlewski, Sean Mahoney, and Monique Williams.

"When you sit down with a member of our team, it's sort of like going to the doctor; the more information you give, the better diagnosis we can make," says Stephen, who has earned Wells Fargo Advisors Premier Advisor honors for the last 20-plus years and Five Star Wealth Manager awards from 2012 to 2019. "We build successful relationships by asking the right questions, listening to what the client has to say, and then taking that information and implementing a strategic plan."

The Frank Financial Consulting Group of Wells Fargo Advisors works with clients around the country. This is due, in part, to the team's different structure. After Derek started working for the firm, his wife was offered a prestigious job in the Boston area. Stephen and Derek decided very quickly that they could stay together as a team and be dually located.

"We prefer the opportunity to have face-to-face meetings when possible, but we're now in a world where someone's physical location doesn't really matter," Stephen says. "Clients just want to know they have access to a team of good advisors who are working on their behalf." ■



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*The Premier Advisor distinction is held by a select group of Financial Advisors within Wells Fargo Advisors as measured by completion of educational components, business production based on either of the past two years, and professionalism. Additional criteria, including length of service, may also be used to determine recipients.

The Five Star Wealth Manager award, administered by Crescendo Business Services, LLC (dba Five Star Professional), is based on 10 objective criteria: 1. Credentialed as a registered investment adviser or a registered investment adviser representative; 2. Active as a credentialed professional in the financial services industry for a minimum of 5 years; 3. Favorable regulatory and complaint history review (unfavorable feedback may have been discovered through a check of complaints registered with a regulatory authority or complaints registered through Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process*); 4. Fulfilled their firm review based on internal standards; 5. Accepting new clients; 6. One-year client retention rate; 7. Five-year client retention rate; 8. Non-institutional discretionary and/or non-discretionary client assets administered; 9. Number of client households served; 10. Education and professional designations. Wealth managers do not pay a fee to be considered or awarded. Once awarded, wealth managers may purchase additional profile ad space or promotional products. The award methodology does not evaluate the quality of services provided and is not indicative of the winner's future performance. For 2012-2020 The Five Star Wealth Managers were considered for the award; 3,576 Philadelphia-area wealth managers. 310 (9% of candidates) were named Five Star Wealth Managers. *To qualify as having a favorable regulatory and complaint history, the person cannot have: 1. been subject to a regulatory action that resulted in a suspended or revoked license, or payment of a fine, 2. had more than three customer complaints filed against them (settled or pending) with any regulatory authority or Five Star Professional's consumer complaint process, 3. Individually contributed to a financial settlement of a customer complaint filed with a regulatory authority, 4. filed for bankruptcy, or 5. been convicted of a felony.

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