SOUTH JERSEY CHAPTER Society of FSP™

Financial Service Professionals

SOUTH JERSEY NEWSLETTER
January/February 2021

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A Message from the President: Will Merriken

As you know-our programs are excellent. Beth Walker, our February presenter was top notch–speaking on “Never Pay Retail For College”. A

Dear Members,

Well, well, well!!! 2021 arrived with a hurricane of national trauma. We've all watched it too many times to count. From one end of the spectrum to the other—the storming of The Capital-- to the Majesty and Normalcy of The Inauguration-- to an historic 2nd vote of impeachment from The House of Representatives--and now the Senate Trial has concluded as everyone expected. Where to go from here? Great question—We shall see!! Meanwhile, "Back at the Ranch" here in South Jersey, life goes forward as does our work with our clients.

great discussion ensued after her presentation—always a sign of an excellent session. Next month Mike McGlothlin is speaking on the many lessons he learned as a student manager at Indiana for Bobby Knight's Basketball team. Plan to join us with 2 guests on Tuesday 3/9 at 830. Reminder--Members are FREE; Guests cost $15 and are reimbursed their $15 if they stay on the entire time

- In 2000-01 we had just under 200 members. Today we have 68 down from 90, 2 years ago.
- We are the only SFSP Chapter left in New Jersey. The North Jersey Chapter closed June 2019 and the Monmouth County Chapter closed earlier in 2017-8.
- SFSP National Membership is down substantially nationwide.

First, and most importantly, I want to correct an error I made in our last Newsletter. We recognized and thanked all of our longest standing members—**except one!** I inadvertently left off Dominic "Dom" Firmani and have apologized personally to him via a nice phone call. Dom owns and operates Firmani Benefits and has been a member since 1970 when he attained his CLU. This makes him our 2nd longest standing member at 51 years!! Dom served our chapter as President during the late 1970's. Dom—I'm so glad you brought my omittance to light!! Thank you for your continued loyalty, professionalism, and membership! Continuing with this MEMBERSHIP theme I bring you NEWS. Your Board met on 1/21/21 in a special session with 100% participation to discuss a proposed 1st Stage of a plan for us to grow. Our discussion was lively and exceedingly thoughtful. In the end we voted to

- Your Board is engaged and has implemented the 1st stage of growth initiatives.
- **STAGE 2 depends squarely on you and our other members.** We all know the Amish phrase--"Many hands make light work." We are depending on you to invite AND BRING 2 guests to each of the next 3 meetings. Thank you in advance for doing your part!

In closing, I encourage each of you to extend a note or a call of thanks to your Board Members listed below. They are really doing a great job! There will be a few openings on next year's Board. If you have interest in serving for a 3 year term please contact me directly via text (609.502.0677) OR email—willm@merriken.com. All inquiries will be kept confidential.

Mask up, stay well, sign up for your vaccine shot, and thank you in implement a multiple touch/low key process to contact and educate our guests about SFSP and the importance of being involved in a professional group. Here's where YOU enter the picture—**Please INVITE 2 GUESTS to each one of our next 3 meetings**.

advance for sharing the benefits of our organization with your colleagues.

William S. Merriken, Jr., ChFC, AEP, President

"Opportunity is missed by most people because it is dressed in overalls and looks like hard work." Thomas Edison

We wouldn't be a successful chapter without our dedicated board members. Thank you.

Will Merriken
President
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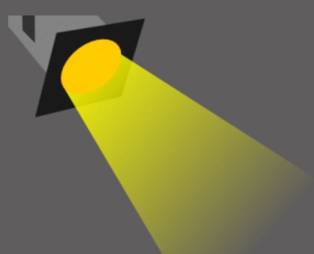
Thank You so much!



In the Spotlight

How Long have you been an SFSP Member and what's your favorite thing about The SFSP?

36 years--I joined in 1985 when I attained my CLU certification. What I like most about The SFSP and specifically this Chapter is the same thing now as when I first joined—THE RELATIONSHIPS! Getting to rub elbows with other "Best Practice" practitioners and hear their

As is the Board's Practice this year we solicit nominations for The Spotlight Article and then select someone we unanimously agree has been a significant role model in our industry and local chapter. We take this issue of "The Spotlight" to acquaint everyone with John M. Natale, CLU, ChFC, AIF, CRES, Regional Vice President Lincoln Investment, FINRA licenses held—7, 24, 63, 65. John is a 36 year member of SFSP-South Jersey! Be sure to read all the way to the end!

stories along with their professional observations/experiences has been key for me to maintain a sense of equilibrium as well as grow as a professional. Since I've always had my own practice to manage, in addition to my management responsibilities, this Chapter and its many great members have been a highly valued resource over the years that enabled me to have a window into how others operate has provided me with stability.

What advice do you have for practitioners in their early years?

Join this chapter!! It will help you "Engage and Grow". The monthly meetings keep us from stagnating and getting "blinders on". Even now under Covid, when we can't meet personally, each of us can still call or Zoom

How and When Did You Get Started in This Business?

I started in this great industry, in 1980, as a trainee in the Karr-Barth/Equitable Agency and was with them until 1997-- first as an Agent - then as a Manager. I had no idea how fulfilling this career would be! I was born and raised in South Philadelphia went to HS at St Joseph’s Prep, and when I graduated I took off one year from school, worked and then enrolled in St Joseph’s University and graduated in 4 years in 1977 with a BS degree, in Accounting. After 3 years in corporate accounting, I decided to give the Life Insurance business a try. So, in 1980, I signed on with The Karr-Barth/Equitable Agency. They had a “crème de la crème” training program - so I had no choice but to succeed!!

with another practitioner to get their ideas and “pick their brain”. We’re all in this business to help people so we’re always happy to lend an ear, share an experience, or share a strategy that worked in XYZ situation with a fellow chapter member. When we get “stuck”, or in a slump (we all have them!) it’s always nice to have someone to lean on—Pick your partners carefully. Other important keys are – Do Planning, it sets you apart and benefits your clients. Practice What You Preach—Believe in all our products and OWN them! Be a good listener-- It’s more important to listen than to talk. Last—Look Successful, we only have 5 seconds to make a 1st impression.

What is a Random Fact about you that you’re especially proud of?

Tell us a little about your practice/career. How has it evolved over the years?

I spent 17 years with the Karr-Barth/Equitable Agency which was, during that era, one of the largest Life Insurance and Employee Benefits operations in the entire Philadelphia metropolitan area with over a 100 agents. I was a producing agent for my 17 years there and transitioned into a management role from 1985-1997. I then moved over to New Jersey to manage the South Jersey office of Lincoln Investment (not to be confused with that other company with Lincoln in their name--Lincoln Financial Group!). I have been managing both my client practice, as well as, the New Jersey office of client advisor practitioners, since then. It's been a terrific experience and

As "The Interviewer," I neglected to ask John this question, I think, because subconsciously I wasn't sure he would feel comfortable answering it. He's just that kind of "humble, happy to work behind the scenes" person. That said, I'm very happy and honored to volunteer a number of "Not So Random" things that set John apart as one of our key members and unabashed supporters. For many years, John has ALWAYS said yes to using their conference rooms for free anytime The Chapter wanted to have a larger group meeting. Not only did he quickly say yes but he also volunteered the use of both of the 2 Lincoln Investment conference rooms ALONG WITH all their technology and tech assistants. He regularly is a highest level sponsor of our Annual Golf tournament. He sponsors a few of our regular monthly meetings every year. In privilege these past 23 years to work with and support all our advisors. Interestingly, one of the differences I noticed right away when I came to Lincoln Investment in 1997, was that all the Lincoln Investment Advisors were Independent Business Owners/Practitioners to which I had to adjust rather quickly. The difference, I realized, was I had to be “Their Business Partner/Member of their Team” and work side by side with them to support their needs as they grew their practices. The days of being their “manager” and “telling them” what to do, according to the Home Office, rules were long gone!!

In 2021, my focus has changed to solely advising and helping my clients as an advisor/independent practitioner. For these first few months, I’m assisting the new management team for the Mid-

the first December I was on the Board, the regular “Board meeting” was scrapped and a before The Holidays gathering for all Chapter members at a local very nice restaurant ensued. The invitation said “Dutch Treat, we’re not spending the members’ money”. So at the end of the night I asked Virginia (the organizer) how much I owed for my food and drink. I was dumbfounded when she said “Nothing”, one of our members picked up the tab. She wouldn’t say who. It was a BIG tab!! Later, I quietly found out who our benefactor was for the night. Yep! None other than John Natale and Lincoln Investment. He has always been true to his beliefs — Relationships Matter!! These are but a few of the things John has done many times over to support our profession and Chapter over the years.

Atlantic Region as they take over the leadership role.

Tell us a little bit about your family—both growing up and now.

As I said earlier, I was born and raised in Philadelphia. I have 2 brothers and 3 sisters so I'm the 2nd oldest in the pecking order. I started working 5-6 days a week in a local "corner" grocery store and butcher shop when I was in 6th grade and have been working ever since. I worked all through high school and college, 12 months a year. After graduating SJU and starting with the controller's office of a local business, I lived in the city for a number of years, got married to my wife, Charlene, of 43 years and started our family. Later we moved to Washington Township to raise our 3 daughters. During their High School days, we

Where have you focused your Practice over the years?

"Knowledge equals confidence. Confidence equals success in this business." In the early years, I felt studying was an important part of how I grew as "A Professional Advisor". So, I got my CLU in 1985, ChFC in 1987, and my AIF (Accredited Investment Fiduciary) in 2015. As I grew in knowledge, I decided to focus my practice activities on Comprehensive Financial Planning because I believe the best outcomes for our clients arise out of a well thought out plan that properly integrates the risk management products with all the best Investment Growth Strategies and Portfolio Management.

Where do you see yourself in

bought a house in Margate because we all loved The Shore. Charlene and I now live full time in Margate. Our oldest daughter is married and we have 2 grandchildren.

Where do you like to vacation?

When the girls were growing up The Shore (Margate) was our “Home Away From Home”!! We spent a lot of time there doing “All Things Jersey Shore!” We began to travel and loved it—first as a family of 5 and then just Charlene and me. We’ve been very fortunate to have visited a lot of places—China, all over Europe, etc. When we can start traveling safely again, we’re hoping to get to Iceland, Ireland, Greece and back to Italy. We love to travel!!

the future?

I plan to concentrate on working with and helping my clients, many have developed into close personal friends over the years. This is such a great business where we can make a real difference in people’s lives. I have no interest in retiring and hope I can continue to make a difference.

What is one of your Favorite Quotes?

“You cannot escape the responsibility of tomorrow by evading it today.” - Abraham Lincoln.

"Any Society that would give up a little liberty to gain a little security, will deserve neither and lose both."
-Benjamin Franklin

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John Hancock

Hey you seniors...

Lost Words From Our Childhood

Mergatroyd! Do you remember that word? Would you believe my spell-checker program did not recognize the word Mergatroyd? Heavens to Mergatroyd!
The other day I overheard a not so elderly (let's say 75) lady say something to her son about driving a Jalopy; and he looked at "Well, I'll be a monkey's uncle!" or, "This is a fine kettle of fish!" We discover that the words we grew up with, the words that seemed omnipresent, like oxygen, have vanished with scarcely a notice from our tongues and our pens and our keyboards.
Poof, go the words of our youth, the words we've left behind. We blink, and they're gone. Where have all those great phrases gone?
Long gone: Pshaw, The milkman

her quizzically and said, "What the heck is a Jalopy?" He had never heard of the word jalopy! She knew she was old ... But not that old.

Well, I hope you are Hunky Dory after you read this and chuckle.

A friend and I recently reminisced about some old expressions that have become obsolete, many because of the inexorable march of technology. These phrases included: Don't touch that dial, Carbon copy, You sound like a broken record, and Hung out to dry.

Back in the olden days we had a lot of moxie . We'd put on our best bib and tucker , to straighten up and fly right.

Heavens to Betsy! Gee whillikers! Jumping Jehosofat! Holy Moley! We were in like Flynn and living the life of Riley ; Back in the olden days, life used to be swell, but when's the last time anything was swell? Swell has gone the way of beehives, pageboys and the D.A.; of spats, knickers, fedoras, poodle skirts, saddle shoes, and pedal did it. Hey! It's your nickel. Don't forget to pull the chain. Knee high to a grasshopper. Well, Fiddlesticks! Going like sixty. I'll see you in the funny papers. Don't take any wooden nickels. Wake up and smell the roses.

It turns out there are more of these lost words and expressions than Carter has liver pills. This can be disturbing stuff! (Carter's Little Liver Pills are gone too!) Leaves us to wonder where Superman will find a phone booth...

See ya later, alligator! Okidoki.

You'll notice they left out "Monkey Business"!!!

WE ARE THE CHILDREN OF THE FABULOUS 50'S ... NO ONE WILL EVER HAVE THAT OPPORTUNITY AGAIN .. WE WERE GIVEN ONE OF OUR MOST PRECIOUS GIFTS: LIVING IN THE PEACEFUL AND COMFORTABLE TIMES, CREATED FOR US BY THE "GREATEST GENERATION.

pushers.
Kilroy was here, but he isn't anymore.
We wake up from what surely has been just a short nap, and before we can say,

What about us, the children of the 40's? Nobody worries about us, they just throw us in with the children of the 50's. Doesn't anyone realize there are plenty of us left!

2021 Upcoming Events:

March 9, 2021 8:30-10:30am:

Virtual Meeting

Topic:

"Free Throws for Financial Professionals: Lessons I Learned as a Student Manager"

Speaker:

Mike McGlothin, ChFC®, CLU®, CFP®, LUTCF®

EVP, Retirement, ASH Brokerage

April 20, 2021 8:30-10:30am:

Virtual Meeting

Topic:

"Planning for LTC Cost and Retirement"

Panel:

Sarah Cranston, ESQ. from Archer Law, Al Sorichetti CLU®, ChFC®, CLTC® with Nationwide & Tricia Hancock CLTC® from UMS

May 11, 2021 8:30-10:30am:

Virtual Meeting

Topic:

"Tax Efficient Investing: Alternatives"

Speaker:

TBD

Visit our Website

For more information regarding our events, members and other resources, please visit our website.

Please click here to download our 20-21 Calendar of Events.