RAYMOND JAMES

# Developing the next generation of veteran advisors

The Advisor Mastery Program (AMP) is committed to helping change the face of financial services through its recruitment and support of advisors whose traits and distinct experiences will add to the diversity of voices that make our firm stronger.

A 24-month training program, AMP is designed to engage new advisors, educate them, facilitate conversations in the classroom and in their branches with managers and mentors, and hold trainees accountable as they grow into their practices.

Learn how AMP helped three advisors who are military veterans set up their careers as financial advisors for success.

## STACEY KASTEN

Shortly after high school, Stacey spent five years in the U.S. military. After leaving the armed forces and achieving a degree in finance, Stacey began working part time for a boutique financial services firm where, primarily as a sales assistant, she learned the ins and outs of client servicing, compliance and running a financial advisory business. October 2022 marks 15 years since she helped establish the Colorado Springs office for Raymond James.

“Life in the military taught me discipline and the importance of watching out for others. Truly, what matters to me as a financial advisor is making sure my clients – big or small – are taken care of.”

“I always wanted to be a financial advisor, but I knew I needed the right opportunity because I was starting from the ground up,” she said. “AMP helped me out of my comfort zone. And my classmates are a great resource at all times, during and after. In fact, my AMP group is still connected – we try to meet once a month to exchange knowledge. It’s a completely interactive experience.”

While the AMP program plays a vital role in setting financial advisors up for success, it's only one piece of a much bigger puzzle.

"It's clear that Raymond James values its people, and a big part of that experience involves so many opportunities to interact with other advisors – some who are also veterans. But it's a broad network. And my involvement in conferences and events with other peers has undoubtedly been the most valuable thing I've done in the last four years. The trick is not to be afraid to ask questions because other, sometimes more experienced, advisors are always happy to share their stories and advice."

## BRIAN FITZSIMMONS

Once he graduated with a degree in history from Clemson University in South Carolina, Brian joined the U.S. Marine Corps. After serving in the military, Brian followed in his father's footsteps and 25-year legacy by entering financial services.

But it was the focus on planning that sparked Brian's interest.

"It's the foundation of everything," he said. "I got a lot of planning experience in the military. Even though the variables in financial services are different than the armed forces, it's a skill that translated well, and it helps that it's what I enjoy doing."

Also important to Brian's decision to join Raymond James were the programs that equipped him, as a veteran, with the essential tools and resources to thrive as a financial advisor.

"I came in fresh-faced and brand new to the industry," he said. "AMP gave me a solid understanding of where to start my journey. It provided clear direction and an inside look into what the reality of life as a financial advisor is like. Without AMP, there's a very good chance I would have spent several years before realizing I was going down a path that wasn't adding value to how I approached my business."

Another added benefit of the AMP program is how quickly it exposes every participant to a host of different people from a variety of backgrounds and past professions.

"In many ways, the military is a one-dimensional profession, so networking with advisors from all walks of life early on helped me learn and draw from the strengths and experiences of others. Being involved in the Veterans Inclusion Network, Valor, has been an equally valuable resource in connecting with other veterans from around the firm to share experiences, holidays and events together."

## THE PILLARS OF AMP

The AMP curriculum goes remarkably deep into the concepts of advising and growing a business, giving trainees the opportunity to excel in the fundamentals while allowing mentors and managers to identify and help shape potential successors.

### 1. DISCOVERY

Trainees are instructed how to ask clients and prospects the right questions to understand their needs, gaps and goals.

### 2. CREATING A FINANCIAL PLAN

Using Goal Planning & Monitoring software, trainees are taught how to engage the client in creating a financial plan they can own and be active in.

### 3. THE CLIENT EXPERIENCE PROCESS

Trainees learn how to use a series of meetings – connection, clarity, strategy – to build stronger client relationships based on mutual trust.

## DWIGHT EDWARDS

As far back as high school, Dwight had an interest in the stock markets and the inner workings of financial investments. After serving five years in the USAF, Dwight returned to school and achieved a degree in finance and economics. Shortly after graduating, Dwight decided to join Raymond James initially in a home office role and wholesaling prior to becoming a financial advisor.

“There’s so much to learn at first,” he said. “One thing I can say for certain as an advisor who went through AMP is you can’t learn everything about every aspect of the business all at once, and – like in the military – you need to rely on a team comprised of different specialties to be your support network. Thanks to networks like AMP, not only can I receive help from those specialists, but I can also give that support to other advisors with my own skill set.”

As someone who has experienced the benefits of AMP and the Valor Network firsthand, Dwight is no stranger to paying forward.

“During my time at Raymond James, I’ve volunteered at charity events and other veteran support groups around the firm. One of the things I’ve found great satisfaction in is helping military veterans onboard as financial advisors because it’s a shared experience that not everyone gets or goes through.

“Being a veteran, I feel you owe it to yourself and to others who have served to help encourage and give guidance. The firm has a culture of sharing knowledge and helping others at different stages of their careers – for advisors and more broadly.”

To learn more about AMP, visit **raymondjamesAMP.com**
or contact one of our AMP recruiters at **AMPrecruiting@raymondjames.com**.

RAYMOND JAMES®

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