

Supporting Independence

4301 Anchor Plaza Parkway Suite 450
Tampa, FL 33634

jw-cole.com | jwccommunications@jw-cole.com
Toll Free: (866) JWCOLE1 (592-6531)
(813) 935-6776

1930 Palomar Point Way Suite 104
Carlsbad, CA 92008

Advisor Spotlight - Karen Roberts

J.W. Cole News
08.29.16



Karen Roberts is the owner of The Emerald Financial Group, in Deerfield Beach, Florida. Karen has been in the financial services industry for over 20 years and a J.W. Cole Advisor for almost 4 years. Karen is a Chartered Financial Consultant (ChFC), and a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst (CDFA). She is a past national president and local chapter president of Women in Insurance and Financial Services (WIFS), She has taught for the past 10 years the foster care/adoptive parenting class for JAFCO (Jewish Adoption and foster care agency) and has been featured in numerous magazines, newsletters, radio and TV shows. Karen is very involved in giving back to her community, in big ways and small, including creating a Women's Financial Fitness program delivered to single moms and foster girls in her community, which is why she was named the 2015 Jim Bennick Leadership Award winner at our Symposium in Las Vegas. We sat down with Karen to learn more about what makes this dynamic and successful business professional tick!

How did you get your start in the industry?

I got my start in 1990 as a New England Life career agent in Hawaii. My father was the general agent of the agency that I started in. I had interviewed with what would become Ameriprise (IDS) in Los Angeles because I wanted to do financial planning. Upon learning this, my father told me that I had to come and see his operation and what he does. Of course my first thought was, "No, no. You sell life insurance." I did go out and see what he did, and ended up moving out there and joining his agency. I immediately got my Series 6 license, and then sat for the Series 7 a couple of years later.

What are some of the biggest changes you've witnessed during your time in the industry?

I think the biggest change is the role we play with our clients. When I first started I strictly sold life insurance and dabbled in mutual funds. I did planning, but it was based around the needs of life insurance. Today I am able to focus on planning for everything the client needs regarding holistic financial planning. We have the ability to be solution-focused instead of product-focused. I'm really not sure how anyone can be solely focused on only one area of the industry anymore, i.e. protection, portfolio management, etc. I love that I can help a client with all of their financial needs.

What are some of the biggest changes you've witnessed during your time in the industry?

I think the biggest change is the role we play with our clients. When I first started I strictly sold life insurance and dabbled in mutual funds. I did planning, but it was based around the needs of life insurance. Today I am able to focus on planning for everything the client needs regarding holistic financial planning. We have the ability to be solution-focused instead of product-focused. I'm really not sure how anyone can be solely focused on only one area of the industry anymore, i.e. protection, portfolio management, etc. I love that I can help a client with all of their financial needs.

What is your definition of success and have you achieved it?

Yes! Fourteen years ago I had a vision of my own office and my own practice (at that point I wasn't operating my own practice). It took me 10 years to reach that vision, but I am now living it! At the end of the day, my definition of success is for me to love work AND home. Today I make enough money, doing what I enjoy doing, to support my lifestyle and live my life. I have clients who love and support my balance between work and personal life. As a matter of fact, I've even had clients chastise me for emailing them over the weekend! In my eyes, that is success.

With everything going on in our industry today, the DOL Fiduciary Ruling not the least of which, what do you see the Advisor of the future looking like?

I see the Advisor of the future having more alignment with whatever the client needs. I think that product sales will still exist, but only in the context of what the client needs, versus what earns the Advisor a higher commission. I believe that some of the coming DOL changes making headlines will help to make our industry a professional industry. I think our industry is still associated with being populated by salespeople, versus professionals. I think some of these changes will elevate our profession. We will need to rethink the way in which we recruit new people into our industry as well. It does scare me a bit to think there may be fewer of us in the next few years. I already run what I perceive to be an ethical and fiduciary practice, but I know that there are many who are not. I am looking forward to helping those folks retire by potentially buying some of their practices! I have 20 more years in this industry, so I have to stay ahead of the curve and be willing to adjust to the changes.

Who or what has had the most influence on how you've approached your role as a financial Advisor and business owner?

It's not a person, but the organization WIFS (Women in Insurance and Financial Services) that has had the biggest impact on me in my career. My national group and local chapter have been exceptionally important to me. So, it's really not one mentor, but the entire organization. And I am very thankful for them!

What is a particular event or regular practice that defines you and your business?

I would say that we are defined by the experience our clients receive. We run a very systematized office, including the process for client reviews. We have focused on our brand and how to perfect the client experience; this translates into everything we do. We also focus on the consistency of our message so that our clients always know what they are going to get.

What was the draw to J.W. Cole Financial?

I'm okay with being unloved and unappreciated as long as I'm being overpaid. At my former firm, I felt unloved, unappreciated AND underpaid! That was the line for me. I had to move to a different firm. I was introduced to J.W. Cole through a wholesaler friend, and at first I was hesitant because the firm was a bit smaller than what I thought I wanted it to be. I was also looking into Cambridge during the same time and decided to visit both to help make my decision. J.W. Cole left me feeling impressed with their firm and culture. I liked that the ownership at J.W. Cole was young and seemed very open minded to new ideas and the possibility of change. I like the fact that the home office employees know me and my staff by name, not a number and we feel like we know them too. I'm very happy with my decision to join J.W. Cole.