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# Financial Planning

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## INFLUENCERS

We celebrated our 40th birthday by honoring advisors who have changed financial planning for the better. See who won our first annual Influencer Awards, and why, on page 60.

Award winners Myra Salzer,  
Ross Levin, Sheryl Garrett

# The Influencers

*The first annual Influencer Awards celebrate financial planners who have changed this industry for the better. Financial Planning magazine threw a party to say thank you.*

By Marion Asnes  
November 1, 2010

On October 10, I had the honor of hosting a party to honor two things: *Financial Planning* magazine's 40th birthday and our first winners of The Influencer Awards, which recognize financial planners who have raised the level of the industry. It was a joyful night, shared with *Financial Planning's* contributors and friends.

*Financial Planning* was published for the first time in 1971. At that time, legend has it, the publication was mimeographed. The price of an ounce of gold was roughly \$40, and a gallon of gas cost 35 cents. The total federal deficit was \$408 billion, an amount that seems absurdly small today, sadly.

But in some areas, what goes around comes around: Once again, the interest rate on a 30-year fixed mortgage is about 4.25%. Who knows what that will be 40 years from now?

## THE AWARDS

When we decided to honor the six Influencers, we thought long and hard about the best way to do it. There are a lot of Top Advisor lists out there, and they tend to rank advisors by easily measurable criteria like assets under management. We wanted to do something different-to celebrate the essence of financial planning, which encourages advisors to act as teachers, mentors and coaches to their clients-to help them clarify and achieve their own financial and life goals. And so, after much discussion, we had a brainstorm: Why not celebrate financial planners who perform this incredibly valuable service for one another? And the Influencer Awards were born.

Please bear in mind that these awards are to advisors, for advisors, and nominated by advisors. You have to be nominated to win! And that means, don't be shy. If you've done something important, nominate yourself next year as an Influencer-or if that bothers you, find a friend to do it. In the future, I hope we have a ton on nominations to consider.

## THE WINNERS

The first award is for Contributor of the Year, an individual who has made extraordinary contributions to the financial planning community. The 2010 winner is: Marilyn Capelli Dimitroff, president of Capelli Financial Services. Her tireless advocacy for financial planners, both on the CFP Board and, as a leader of the Financial Planning Coalition, in lobbying our government and the SEC, was nothing short of remarkable.

The next award is for Practice Management Guru, an advisor who has introduced innovative practice management ideas and shared them with the industry. The 2010 winner is Sheryl Garrett, founder of the Garrett Planning Network. Sheryl has "thought different"-about how to deliver financial planning services in a manner that's practical and affordable for the middle class. She has espoused a fee-oriented model that truly recognizes the value of financial planning as a profession.

The third award is for Technology Wizard, an advisor who has devised ingenious technology best-practices and/or software and shared with the industry. The 2010 Influencer is Myra Salzer, founder of the Wealth Conservancy. Myra's practice focuses on very, very wealthy families for whom estate planning is extremely important. She founded Executor's Resource and Estate Logic, a highly secure suite of online services that help advisors and clients secure the many documents that are essential to maintaining and transferring intergenerational wealth.

The next award is for Wealth Creator, an advisor who has contributed significantly to best practices for portfolio management. The 2010 winner is Louis P. Stanasolovich, founder, CEO and president of

Legend Financial Advisors and Emerging Wealth Investment Management. Lou has developed a unique investment style that has worked for his clients-and he has shared it with the rest of the industry. His Low Volatility portfolio philosophy is controversial-and highly influential.

The fifth award is for Legacy Builder, an advisor who has advanced the industry's training of the next generation of professionals. The 2010 award goes to Michael Kitces, director of financial planning for Pinnacle Advisory Group and editor of The Kitces Report. A founder of NexGen, the interest group for younger advisors, a passionate advocate for defining new career paths for the new generation, a road-warrior speaker at FPA conferences nationwide, a tax expert, portfolio philosopher-what can I say, but that the entire industry probably can say thank you to Michael.

The final award is for Lifetime Achievement. This prestigious award is for an advisor who over the course of his or her career has repeatedly changed financial planning for the better. It gives me great pleasure to announce Ross Levin, founding principal and president of Accredited Investors, as the winner of our first Lifetime Achievement Award.

The colleague who nominated Ross described him as the founder of a "great practice, with happy clients, a happy staff and a happy family." I can think of no finer tribute, but with Ross that's just the beginning. He's served the financial planning industry as a thought leader, a dedicated FPA volunteer and officer, a writer in industry journals and a role model. It gets this incredible: When industry sage Bob Veres was writing an article for Financial Planning on ideal offices, the first one that came to mind was Ross Levin's. He came to Denver specially to accept this award and I am grateful and proud to be able to present it.

Please join me in heartfelt congratulations to all of our 2010 Financial Planning Influencer Award winners. We hope to award you next year.