



BREAKING GOOD

At some point in our lives, we are all Danny Noonan. Noonan is the protagonist in the 1980 movie comedy *Caddyshack* who, while working as a caddy in the summer following his high school graduation, struggles with his decision to go to college and, more important, how to pay for it. He eventually gets dragged into a golf challenge match in which losing would mean he could receive the club's "caddy scholarship" to attend college. In the end, Danny chooses his integrity over throwing the match, sacrificing the scholarship to sink the winning putt. And then there is the gopher issue and the "Cinderella story," but all that's beside the point.

HE'S ALL RIGHT

You see, John Fagan considers *Caddyshack* among his favorite movies, but for a reason that might surprise you. Because John actually did go to college on a caddy scholarship, and it was one of the biggest and best breaks of his life.

"I am one of the rare people who get to work in the field in which I got my degree," says John, a University of Missouri graduate who is now a President's Club-level advisor in the St. Louis-based Fagan Financial Group of Raymond James. "But that's only because I was able to go to college on an Evans Scholars Foundation scholarship, which awards

caddies with full scholarships, room and board. And yes, the movie was loosely based on the program because a brother of the film's stars Bill and Brian Doyle Murray was himself an Evans Scholar at Northwestern, and all the Murray boys worked as caddies growing up to pay for private school."

John is still heavily involved with the Evans Scholars Foundation, founded by a former amateur golfer, Chick Evans, in the 1930s. Today, it's one of the largest privately funded scholarship programs in the country, providing full academic scholarships to 870 kids with chapter houses in 14 major universities throughout the

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Midwest, including Ohio State, Michigan, Marquette, Colorado, Purdue and Missouri. Western Golf Association in Chicago runs the program, which has more than 10,000 alumni. John organizes and hosts fundraisers for the foundation, sits on the selection committee and is a WGA director.

“The foundation is really a life-changer for most of the kids who receive the scholarships,” says John. “In life you get good breaks and bad breaks, and this scholarship was a great break for me.”

SHARPENING HIS GAME

But even with his new finance degree from Mizzou, John was going to have to work for his next break because none of the firms he interviewed with after graduation would hire him.

“In those days, St. Louis had a lot of investment firms, both very large and very small, and I must’ve knocked on all their doors,” says John. “And they all told me that I basically didn’t know anything or anybody and I certainly didn’t have any assets to invest – oh, and we’re not hiring you. But what can I say, they were right.”

So, like any smart caddy, John went back to his bag and strategized his next move. But

instead of going with his irons or woods, he went with steel.

“I had to get sales experience, so I got a job selling metal for a metal distributor – stainless steel, carbon steel, aluminum and copper,” says John. “The experience taught me a lot about listening to the client and understanding his or her needs. I can trace my current business philosophy to that job because what I do now is listen, advise and keep close contact with my clients. People come to me as prospects, and they become my clients. And my clients become my friends.”

After seven good years in the metal distribution business,

John knew it was time to go back to the investment firms and try again. He started his practice with Thompson McKinnon in St. Louis which, after a series of mergers, ended up moving to A.G. Edwards – another good break, according to John.

“Edwards was a really good firm with a culture similar to what we have here,” says John, who built a business on a diverse clientele with a varied range of account sizes. “What made the place special is that when we worked, we worked hard and helped push each other to become better, more successful advisors. We genuinely enjoyed each other’s company outside of the office, as well. I worked at Edwards for 22 years; I was very happy and thought I would never leave.

Again things happen in life – good breaks and bad breaks – and we got bought out by Wachovia then Wells Fargo, and after a few years I was looking to leave.”



RIGHT DOWN THE FAIRWAY A return to a culture that puts a premium on client service has the Fagan Financial Group on course for growth. From left to right: John Fagan, Senior Vice President, Investments; Charlie Fagan, Financial Advisor; and Linda Rhoades, Senior Registered Sales Associate.



JOHN FAGAN

Senior Vice President, Investments

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Finer points

WHAT IS YOUR MOST GUILTY PLEASURE?

The famous St. Louis Crown Candy shake. You could go into a sugar coma after eating one.

ASIDE FROM CADDYSHACK, WHAT IS YOUR FAVORITE MOVIE OF ALL TIME?

Braveheart.

WHAT WAS THE LAST NON-BUSINESS BOOK YOU READ? *The Wright Brothers*, by David McCullough.

HOW DID YOU SPEND YOUR SUMMER?

It was kind of a quiet summer, meaning a lot of golf, running, spending time at the lake house and playing card games with the grandkids.

A native of St. Louis, John Fagan graduated from the University of Missouri in 1977 with a BSBA in finance and banking. He and Bernadette, his wife of 37 years, have a son (Charlie, married to Catherine) and daughter (Heather, married to Evan Ardoin) and two grandchildren (Matthew, 2, and Norah, 9 months).

THE LONG GAME

John's said his main motivator to find another firm was his clients because with the new firm came new restrictions that would change how he served his clients, and that's not how John wanted to treat his friends. He felt he needed to find a new home for his clients' accounts that would allow him and his team to serve his clients his way.

"I didn't know anything about Raymond James at first, but the more I studied it, the more it reminded me of the Edwards culture," says John. "It's truly client first – and I know that everyone that has appeared in this magazine says that, but it truly is, and I could tell after only a few conversations and a visit to the home office. They were what we had before; they were only interested in helping me help my clients. I joined on November 11, 2011 – 11/11/11."

Not only does that date look awesome on a golf scorecard (if

only six consecutive aces were possible), it pretty much sums up John's experience since joining the firm. He works with his son, Charlie, who joined him in 2008 and looks to transition their practice into the next generation of clients. Assistant Linda Rhoades, whom John calls the brains of the operation, has been with John since the early '90s. Now at Raymond James, submersed in the culture they feel most comfortable in, the Fagan Financial Group is genuinely excited about the prospects of growing their business.

"For us it's all about service, client contact," says John about his team, who enjoy hosting annual barbecues and holiday parties for clients, as well as a series of education seminars on topics of interest to their clients, like identity theft, Social Security, and estate and tax planning issues. "This whole industry, our value, is based on those real relationships.


IT RUNS IN THE FAMILY John is an accomplished marathon runner, having competed in the Boston Marathon a few years ago. His son, Charlie, also runs marathons, as does his daughter, Heather, and, well, a whole flock of Fagans. In fact, the Fagan family is known to plan family vacations around races. So far, the Fagans have run the New York City, Boston, Chicago, New Orleans and Louisville marathons together. And in the fall of 2013, nine Fagans, led by John, went to Dublin, Ireland, to run the marathon there.



And here we have the freedom and resources to deepen those relationships. Take GPM for instance. GPM is a great tool, better than the Envision product at Wells Fargo, for making those connections and starting conversations that reveal what is important to the client. And business is good. I am as excited as I was as a rookie just getting started.”

Still, John admits he is probably closer to the 18th green of his career, and while he still loves his job and talking with clients, he is preparing for a smooth succession to Charlie.

“My manager would probably prefer I work forever. Linda, bless her heart, is content to have me around as long as I want to be here. Charlie is ready and more than capable of taking over tomorrow,” says John. “This industry is as exciting as the day that I joined. It is a completely different industry mind you, but the young people in the business now, well I couldn’t be more excited for them. Charlie will get his good break before long. But I think I have a couple of more rounds in me.”

That’s the spirit, John. See the ball. Be the ball. 



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