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A Client-First Model for  
Financial Planning

## Our 20-Year Story





Allodium turned twenty. That’s reason to celebrate! Just consider all the challenges the financial services field has faced over the past two decades. Through it all, Allodium has served its many clients as a steadfast source of financial advice.

The company has grown throughout the years. Key to this growth has been Allodium’s commitment to core values around fiduciary responsibility—values put in place on day one.

David Bromelkamp founded Allodium in 2005. And like all visionary leaders, he brought his whole self to the organization. His perspective, work ethic, and philosophy are embedded in the company’s DNA, informing how every team member approaches client relationships and investment decisions. There is no doubt that his influence resonates far and wide across the profession.

As Dave would say, a successful company is the sum of its parts. It takes a team to grow a business. Today, Allodium boasts a staff of thirteen who represent the financial planning profession.

On this milestone anniversary, Allodium is proof that principled leadership, process-driven operations, and genuine care for clients can create a legacy that extends beyond any single founder.

David Bromelkamp’s new company garnered early attention as a fee-only firm.



## The Origin Story

The thought of taking a sabbatical doesn’t seem like a crazy idea to many people today. Forty years ago, however, it was a foreign concept. But that’s exactly what David Bromelkamp did—and for good reason.

With his newly minted CPA credentials in hand, Dave joined a public accounting firm. After working 70-80 hours a week through two tax seasons (becoming the second most billable person in a 100-person accounting firm), Dave was notified by his boss that he would be included in a round of layoffs.

“I remember thinking to myself, what a relief. Now I can go on vacation,” said Dave.

Working nonstop had left Dave with little free time, but it gave him the opportunity to consider taking six months off. He spent time traveling to mostly sunny places because, with year-end tax seasons, young CPAs rarely had time to take in sun-soaked vacation spots.

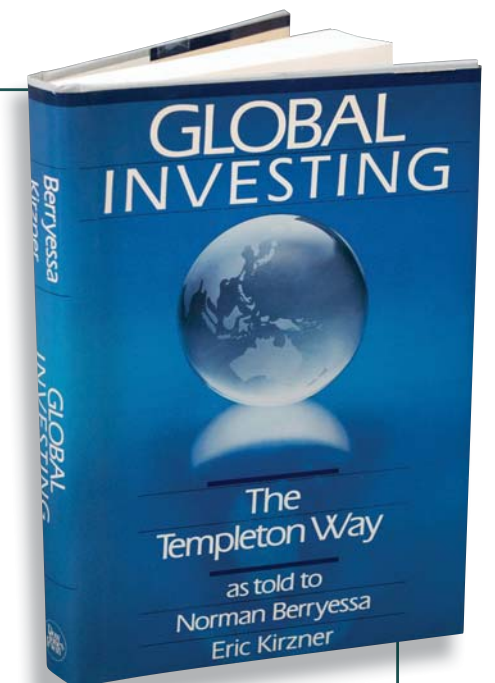
Then, a weeklong visit with a friend in Chicago changed the course of his life. His friend had been working as a trader on the floor of the Chicago Mercantile Exchange and encouraged Dave to join him in business.

The pace of the mercantile exchange did not appeal to Dave (their time frame was fifteen-minute increments: you buy something, and then you are out fifteen minutes later); the investment component, however, interested him greatly. “I thought to myself, I am going to be an investment planner.”

Dave’s sabbatical lasted only thirty days. He was anxious to get back to work, this time with his sights set on entering the investment business.

At one point during this brief but transformative break, Dave had picked up a book by investor and philanthropist John Templeton, titled *Global Investing: The Templeton Way* and also read a book written by Marsha Sinetar, titled *Do What You Love. The Money Will Follow*. In it, the author encouraged readers to look at how they spend their free time as guidance for what they might do professionally.

It was obvious to Dave that the investment business was his path: “I realized I spent much of my free time learning, listening, and reading about investing.” One line from Templeton’s book resonated deeply. “Templeton was just helping people with investments. That’s what I wanted to do, help people with investments, not accounting,” said Dave.



passionately independent advice

# Timing is Everything

Dave’s first job after his sabbatical was as a stockbroker at Dain Bosworth. He joined a small class of brokers in 1988 and quickly realized the path to success had less to do with his luck in picking stocks and more to do with his Rolodex.

He leaned heavily on two groups he knew well: alumni of St. John’s University and Certified Public Accountants (CPAs).

It worked. Dave quickly grew his client portfolio and regularly earned recognition for his progress, joining the ranks of top performers at Dain.

Soon after, the investment world experienced a fundamental shift. Harry Markowitz, William Sharpe, and Merton Miller were awarded the 1990 Nobel Prize in Economics for their work on investment theory. Markowitz’s Modern Portfolio Theory (MPT) introduced the strategy of diversifying investments by asset class and put into motion the underpinnings of evidence-based investing.

This fundamentally changed the way people invested. Using a more academic, evidence-based strategy appealed to Dave. He began applying this new investment theory with his clients, using asset allocations to diversify portfolios and employing long-term strategies.

“I thought, if there is a systematic way to diversify your portfolio and reduce your investment risk, essentially get the same return with less risk, it’s like a free lunch. Let’s do it,” said Dave.

Inside Dain, his small team became thought leaders on asset allocation and rebalancing. This approach would later become the guiding philosophy behind Allodium. “If someone tells you statistically and probability-wise, this is the best approach, well, then, it’s only logical to follow the statistics and the probability.”

Significant changes in the financial services profession were met with some resistance, especially at Dain which, by this time, had become RBC Dain Rauscher.

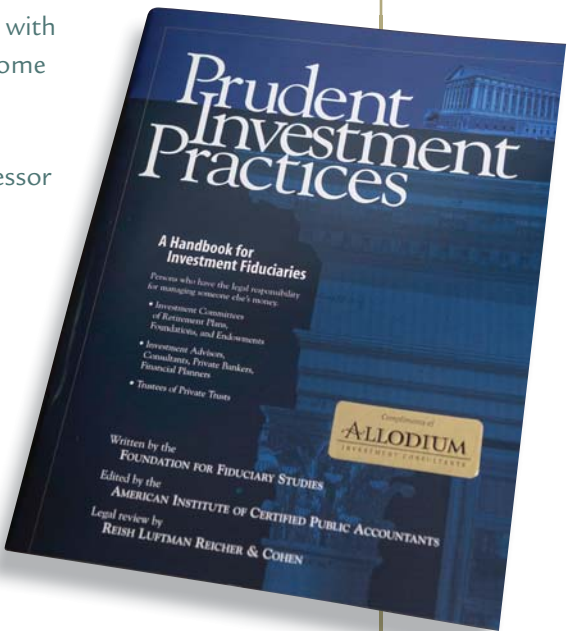
Respected peers, including Keith Loveland, an adjunct law professor at William Mitchell College of Law and a subject matter expert to the North American Securities Administrators Association, introduced Dave to the training offered by The Center for Fiduciary Studies at Fi360, which had established a fiduciary standard of care—a revolutionary concept. The goal of a fiduciary standard of care was to increase transparency, objectivity, and fiduciary responsibility in the investment profession.

Dave took the training and earned the Accredited Investment Fiduciary® (AIF®) designation in 2003. He was one hundred percent on board. “I understood early on in my career that the Wall Street model is not set up to give objective financial advice to the public,” Dave explained. “But if I were to ask 100 investors, ‘Do you want objective financial advice?’ I suspect one hundred out of one hundred would say yes.”

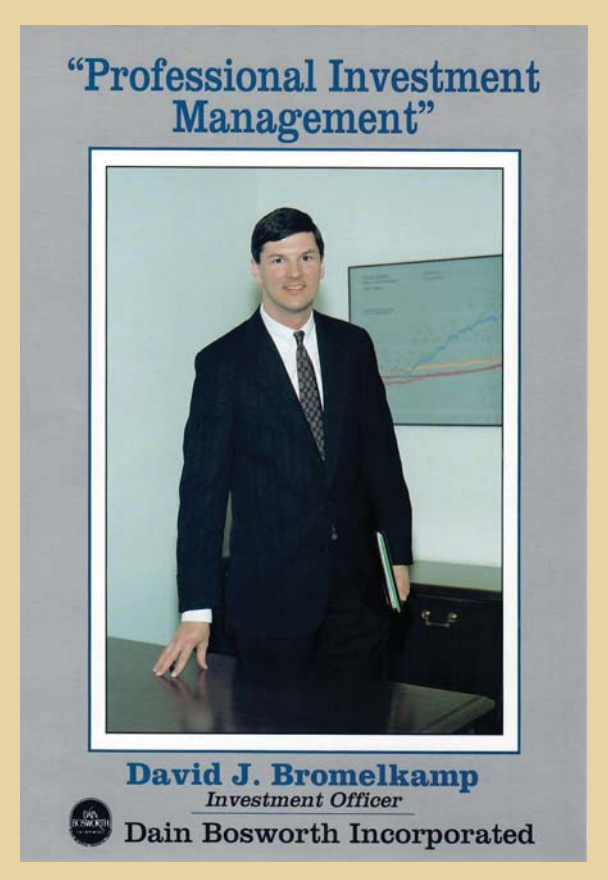
So, Dave began handing out the Fi360 handbook titled, *Prudent Investment Practices*. The pushback within Dain was significant and swift. The firm did not like his use of the word “fiduciary.” In one memo, the legal and compliance department forbade him from distributing the Fi360 materials to his clients, prospective clients, other employees at Dain, or the general public. “Basically, anyone and everyone,” said Dave.

Dave wasn’t even allowed to include the term “fiduciary” on his business card. At the time, brokers did not act as fiduciaries for clients. It wasn’t until Sarbanes-Oxley that the brokerage business began facing regulatory pressure to change its practices.

Dave went through the fiduciary training and encourages all advisors on the Allodium team to complete the same training.



Dave bought and distributed the handbook to other professionals in his network.



Dave adopted Professional Investment Management early in his career.



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*Executives tend to be driven. The best executives are pulled forward by a vision. They take responsibility and they have the initiative and belief in their vision to make it a reality.*

JEFF STAGGS



As an RIA firm, Allodium received national recognition.

“I went into shock,” explained Dave. “I realized I had been working at Dain for eighteen years. I thought I would work there the rest of my career, but I was staring at a memo that said if I color outside the lines here, I would not be here much longer.”

A strong belief in the concept of fiduciary duty brought Dave to an existential crisis. Should he capitulate to the leaders at Dain? Or should he follow his own compass, conducting business the way he thought was best for his clients? His longtime business coach, Jeff Staggs, helped him settle on a resolution.

Dave concluded that he couldn’t work inside a brokerage firm if his primary concern was making a difference for people. The more he reflected on it, the more he realized that if he wanted to help his clients, it wouldn’t be by selling them investment securities, but by working with them on investment planning.

“I realized that what most people need help with is getting organized, so that they can make better plans and have better outcomes,” said Dave.

By this point, starting his own firm felt like the right option—and the only option. Allodium would be an independent, fee-only, registered investment advisory firm that would reduce conflicts of interest for clients. This would give Dave the ability to help clients with their financial investments in such a way that his role model Sir John Templeton would have approved: with integrity and true client focus.

How exactly does one start a firm? By consulting Google in this case. “I typed, ‘How do I start a new RIA firm?’” said Dave. “That’s how I started.”

He brought with him a small team from Dain (known as RBC Dain by now): a financial planner, a client service manager, and an intern. The team grew steadily over the next two years to include an administrative assistant, an additional client services associate, and an operations manager.



Dave remained focused on disciplined investment consulting, even as the firm he worked for kept changing.

With a simple Google search and a lot of hard work and dedication, Allodium was born. Now in its twentieth year, Allodium’s staff of thirteen comprises client services associates, wealth advisors, financial planners, operations and compliance, technology, and marketing specialists.

## Broker Bromelkamp declares independence from Dain



On Business  
Neal St. Anthony  
COLUMNIST

Dave Bromelkamp, a well-known Twin Cities stockbroker, has resigned from RBC Dain Rauscher — and, in an eyebrow-raising move, retired his brokerage license — and started a new firm with former Windsor Financial Management veteran Dave Gutzke.

Gutzke, Bromelkamp and several associates this week opened Touchstone Investment Consultants, targeted at individuals, foundations and small pension funds.

Bromelkamp, who quit picking individual stocks a few years ago to focus on placing client money with independent money managers, left Dain last Friday in a move that wasn't

a huge surprise internally. Bromelkamp is an opinionated guy — as well as a top-quartile revenue producer for 18 years. “We wish Dave well,” said a spokesman for Dain.

But his departure comes as financial services firms and regulators are wrestling with the touchy issue of how a broker who works for a brokerage firm may legally differ from an independent “registered investment adviser” or “financial planner,” who is paid solely by the client. Under the law, the planner is pledged with absolute

fidelity to clients in what’s called a “fiduciary relationship.” The broker is not. In April, the Securities and Exchange

Commission (SEC) announced a half-a-loaf ruling that essentially acknowledged that the broker is first an employee of the firm and that the firm also may get paid by product vendors as well as by clients.

The ruling created a “broker exemption” that essentially keeps a broker out of trouble, for example, if he puts a client in a mutual fund that pays him and his firm a commission vs. a so-called “no-load” fund that invests in the same stocks, such as an S&P 500 index fund.

ST. ANTHONY continues on D2:  
— Twin Cities’ best places to work.



Dave Bromelkamp said that the day he resigned was the toughest of his career.

Dave’s departure from Dain Rauscher captures the attention of Star Tribune business journalist Neal St. Anthony.

Wade Fowler was an intern at Allodium. The first few weeks of business were all-hands-on-deck, according to Wade. “We worked all week, evenings, weekends for the first many weeks to convert client files and set up operations,” said Wade. “We put in such long hours that we would outlast the HVAC of the building.”

In the building where Allodium opened its office, everything was set on timers for regular business hours. “We would be working away, and suddenly you would hear the air conditioning fans just turn off. And it would be silent in the office suite, with no fan operating in the building.” Staff hauled in oscillating fans to help circulate air. “We would just swelter,” said Wade.

Despite the long hours and the less-than-ideal climate control, Wade was excited to be a part of what he knew would be special. “You know that you are doing something when you have those in-the-trenches moments where you are putting in that extra time, rather than clocking in and clocking out. You are in the thick of it, and it’s great.”

TYLER REMEMBERS AN ANALOGY DAVE OFFERED, DESCRIBING HOW ALLODIUM WAS ON THE FOREFRONT OF A WAVE OF CHANGE THE ENTIRE INDUSTRY WOULD FACE:

Dave compared the financial services field to the tobacco industry, and how for decades smoking was just what everyone did. Everyone smoked. And now we come to find out all of the negative impacts smoking has on people’s health. Compare that to the poor financial advice that people were getting. It wasn’t really financial advice at all, they were being sold a product—stocks, bonds, insurance products. Tons of conflicts and zero transparency. This wave of “fiduciary” was like slapping the Surgeon General’s warning on our profession.

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# The CPA: A Foundation for Calculated Risk-Taking

Few people would say that CPAs are born risk takers. But people close to Dave believe that being a CPA was foundational to his decision to start his own firm.

“He was able to analyze and measure the risk of going out on his own,” said Joe Speltz, a fellow St. John’s alum and retired CPA.

CPA skills would prove helpful in advising clients as well. Knowing how a balance sheet or a profit and loss statement work and having a good understanding of cash flow, all have relevance in helping people make sound financial decisions.

“Working with clients, you are analyzing their financial position—where they are and where they need to go and how much they need to retire,” said Joe. A CPA is able to crunch those numbers, understand returns and the future value of money and inflation, and apply that training to deliver comprehensive investment advisory services.

Linda Wedul, president and CEO of the Minnesota Society of Certified Public Accountants, worked with Dave as a member of the MNCPA board. She agreed that a background as a CPA would have been instrumental in starting his firm.

“CPAs are especially good at identifying risk,” she explained. They are looking at that financial scorecard that helps you understand decision-making and the risks associated with different choices. “If I pull lever A, what’s going to happen to levers B, C, and D? If I pull lever B, what happens in the other elements of my business that are crucial to success?” explained Linda.

Linda also noted, “The world of public accounting likes to get to black and white. It’s why we need CPAs, because so much of our world is not black and white and we have to figure out how to navigate that complexity.”



Dave passed the CPA exam in 1986.

## Trust the Process

There’s a quote from Alabama Football Coach Nick Saban that captures Allodium’s commitment to process: “Everybody wants to be a success. Not everybody is willing to do what they have to do to achieve it.” Saban has long preached that process guarantees success—that prioritizing process over outcomes leads to consistent results.

At Allodium, process isn’t just important; it’s everything.

A commitment to process ensures every client receives the same high standard of service. The Allodium team provides each client a consistent experience—from building investment portfolios to establishing meeting cadences, from rebalancing portfolios to handling money movements and updating financial plans. Because of these established processes, there is consistency both for clients and for the team.

This approach underscores Allodium’s client-centered philosophy. “Our processes ensure that every client receives care and attention,” explained Derek Van Calligan, Wealth Advisor and Director of Investment Research at Allodium. “The size of the portfolio doesn’t match the quality of service.”

While the financial planning profession has standard procedures one would expect to find at any firm, Allodium goes above and beyond. Allodium’s process-oriented culture upholds three critical pillars of the fiduciary standard of care and provides financial advice that is independent, comprehensive, and disciplined.

### What Is Evidence-Based Investing?

(Hint: It's the **Evidence** That Counts)

#### EVIDENCE-BASED INVESTING

- Long-term market history
- Peer-reviewed academic evidence
- Practical application
- Patient participation

#### VS.

#### TRADITIONAL ACTIVE INVESTING

- Near-term market forecasting
- "Expert" opinions
- Speculative venture
- Rapid reaction

### How Do Evidence-Based (EB) & Traditional Active (TA) Investors Differ?

EB investors understand near-term market swings are unpredictable; they ignore the "noise."

TA investors believe they can successfully predict when and how to trade on breaking news.

EB investors assume that time is on their side; they give their plan time to grow.

TA investors feel a sense of urgency to make the "right" calls to beat the market.

EB investors are guided by peer-reviewed academic inquiry (for "steady as she goes" resolve).

TA investors act on "expert" opinions (which are vulnerable to biases, blind spots and changeable conditions).

EB investors define success as being able to comfortably fund their personal financial goals.

TA investors define success as outperforming others or making a lot of money.

EB investors manage market risk factors (and their expected returns) and diversify away concentrated risks.

TA investors don't distinguish between market risks (factors that are expected to yield extra returns) and concentrated risks (which just add more risk).

EB investors focus on minimal trading, understanding that the costs involved are among the biggest drags on their end returns.

TA investors focus on cleverly timed trades over the costs, commissions and taxes they incur.

EB investors participate in the market to earn expected long-term returns according to time-tested academic evidence, their personal goals and individual risk tolerances.

TA investors try to beat the market through clever stock-picking and market-timing.

THEY SEE THE FUTURE DIFFERENTLY

THEY WORK ON DIFFERENT TIMELINES

THEY ARE GUIDED BY DIFFERENT DETERMINANTS

THEY DEFINE "SUCCESS" DIFFERENTLY

THEY USE RISK DIFFERENTLY

THEY CONSIDER COSTS DIFFERENTLY

**Bottom Line**

**EVIDENCE-BASED INVESTORS APPROACH INVESTING DIFFERENTLY**

That's why, when it comes to your time, your money, your future AND YOUR FAMILY...  
**WE CHOOSE EVIDENCE-BASED INVESTING**

**ALLODIUM**  
INVESTMENT CONSULTANTS

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WENDY J. COOK COMMUNICATIONS

mineral

Allodium adopted an evidence-based investment approach.

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## Money is Inherently Personal

Working closely with clients to manage their financial future requires an incredible amount of trust. Allodium's comprehensive processes help reduce levels of anxiety for clients and team members alike. This inspires confidence with every client interaction.

The benefits of Allodium's comprehensive processes extends beyond client interactions. For example, Chief Compliance Officer Tyler Chapman said that during their most recent SEC audit, Allodium was happy to provide the required documentation. "When you believe that you have nothing to hide and your processes are sound, regulatory oversight becomes an opportunity to demonstrate your commitment to clients rather than something to fear," Tyler explains.

Key to the company's efforts to prioritize process was the hiring of Kerry Kaluza as Chief Operations Officer in 2007. Having honed his skills in large companies like Ameriprise, Target, and 3M, Kerry saw it as a unique challenge to apply his corporate expertise in (what was then) a business startup. His first task was applying structure to a slightly disjointed core team.

Each partner had wealth advisory experience but limited management expertise. Most entrepreneurs can relate—those who start a business rarely do so because they're excited about the operations side of things. Add in the extensive processes and compliance measures required for a financial services firm, and it would overwhelm any small team. But Kerry excelled at creating systems, and Dave gave Kerry the autonomy to fulfill this critical role.

"I learned early on that one of my greatest skills is delegating," said Dave. "I need to delegate things that I am not good at, and I have surrounded myself with people who have a complementary skill set."

Every successful executive has a clear sense of vision, but a solopreneur must pair their vision with execution. Business coach Jeff Staggs observed: "Dave has always been realistic about what he does well and chooses to focus on that."

Kerry developed the organizational chart and crafted the business plan that would drive quarterly results reviews, budgets, and success metrics. He established the firm's executive committee, which still meets weekly, eighteen years later, to resolve issues as they arise.

Kerry led typical Human Resources initiatives: developing an employee manual, creating benefits packages, and implementing performance reviews—all essential elements of a professionally run organization.

Most importantly, he helped the team establish processes that have become instrumental to Allodium's operations. In 2014, he began training his successor in the role, Tyler Chapman, who now holds the dual titles of Chief Operations Officer and Chief Compliance Officer as the company celebrates its twentieth anniversary.

## Not All Firms Are Created Equal

For the team at Allodium, the meaning of fiduciary is straightforward: we put the client's interest before our own. We eliminate conflicts on behalf of our clients. We have procedural safeguards that ensure this commitment. We are willing to put it in writing.

Many industry professionals acknowledge that founder David Bromelkamp was ahead of his time in recognizing that being a fiduciary would become a differentiator in the field.

Dave was an early advocate of the Centre for Fiduciary Excellence (CEFEX) when it was founded in 2006. Since then, he has built a long history of adhering to and promoting a fiduciary standard of care.

Roger Levy, CEO of Cambridge Fiduciary Services and a Lead Analyst for CEFEX, believes Dave is recognized by many as a standard bearer in the fiduciary movement: "I think Allodium enjoys a reputation that exceeds the size of its client base or the volume of assets which it manages, in great part due to the personal stature of Dave in the field of investment management."

"Dave started Allodium with a purpose: to put its clients' interests first, ahead of the firm," said Kate McBride, Founder and President of FiduciaryPath™, also a CEFEX Analyst. "To become a CEFEX-certified firm, they voluntarily review their fiduciary framework to continuously improve their best practices."

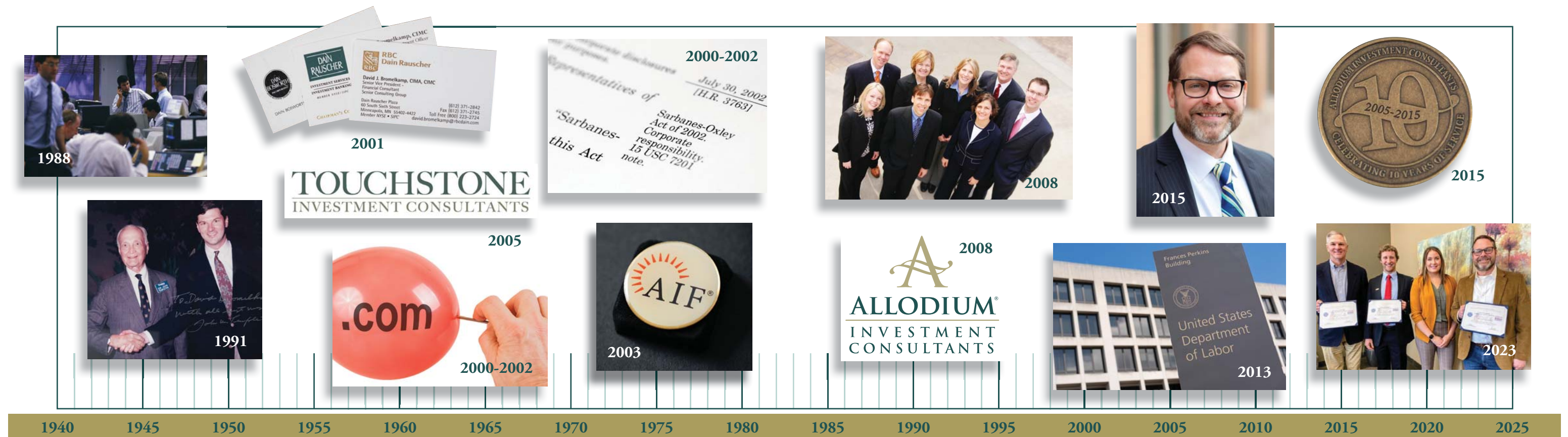
Allodium became the first Minneapolis-based RIA firm to be CEFEX-certified.



*"Fiduciary" is used both as a noun and an adjective. As a noun, it refers to a person or entity entrusted with the responsibility of managing property or assets for another. As an adjective, it describes a duty or relationship based on trust and good faith.*

Kerry Kaluza served as Chief Operating Officer until 2014. Tyler Chapman (pictured at right with David Bromelkamp) now holds the dual titles of Chief Operating Officer & Chief Compliance Officer.





**1940** Investment Advisers Act establishes the regulatory framework for RIAs

**1960s-1970s** Early independent RIA firms begin to emerge

**1979** Financial Planning Association (precursor) founded

**1985** National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA) established, promoting fee-only fiduciary advice

**1986** David Bromelkamp receives his license certificate to practice as a Certified Public Accountant (CPA)

**1987-1988** Aftermath of Black Monday market crash; implementation of circuit breakers and increased SEC oversight

**1988** Dave joins Dain Bosworth training program

**1991** Dave meets John Templeton at an Outstanding Broker trip to the Bahamas

**1993** First Exchange-Traded Fund (ETF) launched in the United States

**1995-1996** Rapid growth of 401(k) plans as corporations shift away from pension plans

**1998** Dain Bosworth merges with Rauscher Pierce Refsnes to form Dain Rauscher

**1999** Mutual fund assets exceed \$5 trillion, up from \$810 billion in 1988

**2001** Royal Bank of Canada acquires Dain Rauscher for approximately \$1.46 billion, creating RBC Dain Rauscher

**2000-2002** Dot-com bubble bursts; NASDAQ loses approximately 78% of its value

**2000-2002** RIAs gain market share during dot-com crash with fiduciary approach

**2002** Sarbanes-Oxley Act implemented following Enron and WorldCom accounting scandals

**2002** Foundation for Fiduciary Studies introduces the Prudent Investment Practices Handbook

**2003** Dave earns the Accredited Investment Fiduciary (AIF) designation from the Center for Fiduciary Studies

**2005** Total mutual fund and ETF assets reach approximately \$8.9 trillion

**2005** Dave launches Touchstone Investment Consultants as an independent, fee-only Registered Investment Adviser (RIA) firm

**2006** RBC Dain Rauscher rebrands to RBC Wealth Management USA

**2007** Breakaway broker movement accelerates as advisors leave wirehouses for RIA model

**2007** SEC increases ADV disclosure requirements regarding conflicts of interest

**2008** Touchstone is renamed Allodium Investment Consultants

**2008** Global financial crisis peaks; Lehman Brothers collapse; government bailouts of financial institutions

**2009** SEC proposes "custody rule" amendments following Madoff scandal

**2012** Allodium is approved for access to the institutional investment management platform at Dimensional Fund Advisors

**2013** Allodium reaches 100 clients

**2013** RIA channel surpasses \$2.5 trillion in AUM

**2013** Department of Labor proposes fiduciary rule for retirement advice

**2014** SEC adopts money market fund reform rules

**2015** Allodium celebrates 10th anniversary

**2015** Eric Hutchens is accepted into the National Association of Personal Financial Advisors (NAPFA)

**2015** Department of Labor proposes fiduciary rule, creating potential competitive advantage for RIAs already operating as fiduciaries

**2016** Allodium is the first CEFEX-certified RIA firm in Minneapolis

**2016** Department of Labor finalizes fiduciary rule (later vacated in 2018)

**2017** First RIA surpasses \$100 billion AUM milestone

**2018** Allodium reaches more than \$250M in discretionary assets under management

**2018** RIA channel growth rate outpaces wirehouse and independent broker-dealer channels

**2019** SEC adopts Regulation Best Interest and Form CRS; creates differentiation requirement between RIAs and broker-dealers

**2019** RIA mergers and acquisitions reach record levels, with 100+ transactions

**2020** RIA industry surpasses \$5 trillion in AUM

**2023** Direct indexing technology becomes widely available to mid-sized RIAs

**2023** Allodium established strategic partnership with Wealthramp

**2023** Allodium signs a United States of America Department of Defense Statement of Support for the Guard and Reserve

**2023** Allodium recognized as a Patriotic Employer by the United States of America Office of the Secretary of Defense

**2024-2025** Industry consolidation continues; emergence of "mega-RIAs" with national footprints



# Why

is CEFEX certification meaningful to a client? “These are the firms that aspire to be the best in the registered investment advisor class of providers of services to clients of all kinds,” explained Kate McBride.

The rigorous annual review of the firm’s processes and documentation ensures a fiduciary investment strategy is properly developed, implemented and monitored. CEFEX identifies what it considers to be “best practices” and helps firms like Allodium establish a process of continual improvement.

If they fall short, the CEFEX analyst issues an OFI—opportunities for improvement—as part of the certification.

The first time the Allodium team went through the CEFEX certification, they had five or six OFIs. The next year, they improved on those. Today, they might receive just one OFI.

“I have been through the audit process several times. At its completion, we have an interview with the analyst and they are always impressed with our process,” said Eric Hutchens, President and Chief Investment Officer at Allodium. “We’ve even heard feedback that we are a role model for a robust investment process.”

Another benefit of the CEFEX process is having an outside resource review what the team is working on and identify things they could be doing better. “It’s not just a pass/fail,” said Eric. “It’s a “you passed, but you could still improve these few things.”

Even that one minor OFI moves them an inch closer to fiduciary best practices related to their investment practice.



All Allodium advisors have obtained the CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® certification. Eric Hutchens has also become a CFA® Charterholder of the CFA Institute.

## Independent Investment Advisor

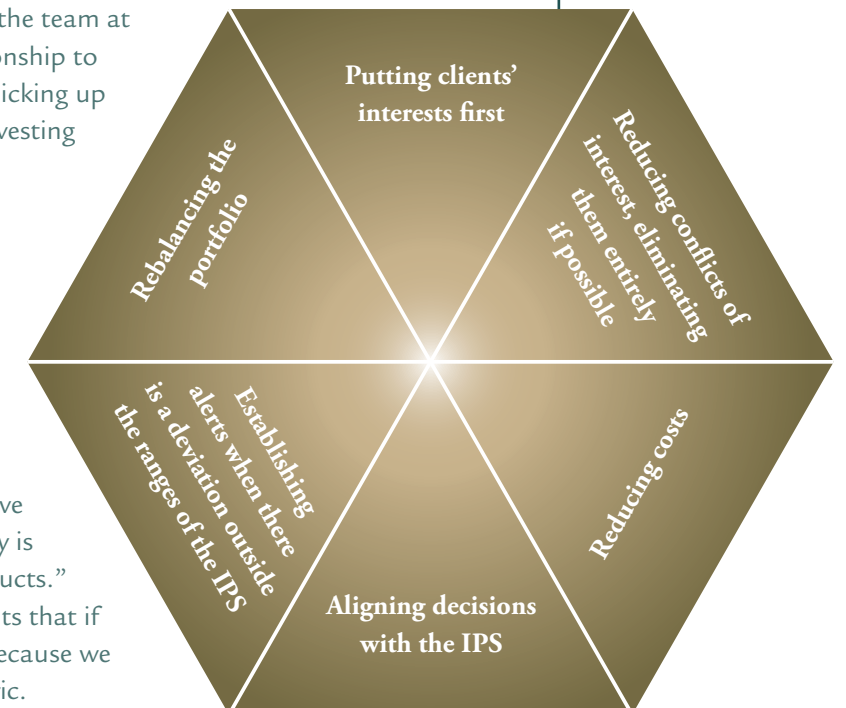
There are plenty of financial advisors who are philosophically aligned with fiduciary principles. Many, however, do not have the discipline to develop operational processes to ensure that they act on these principles. This discipline is evident in the systematic processes Allodium has formalized.

When a client reviews their investments with the team at Allodium, they understand Allodium’s relationship to those investments and that Allodium is not picking up an extra hidden fee from someone else, by investing money with different sources.

Independent investment advice is the goal of the firm. The culture that supports it is pivotal. Everyone on the Allodium team is committed to the client-first model, with transparency.

Financial advisor firms can fall short of the level of client service that Allodium clients have come to expect. Though much of the industry is now fee-based, firms continue to offer “products.” “Our level of fiduciary process reassures clients that if the team is recommending something, it is because we feel it’s in their best interest—period,” said Eric.

“In the end, we are trying to make the best decisions for our clients. We don’t have crystal balls, we can’t predict what’s going to happen,” said Eric. “We are really just trying to stack the odds in favor of our client, and increase their odds of reaching their financial goals.”





# Building a Culture for Future Success

The past twenty years have seen tremendous changes, including the housing market crisis, the intensity of a 24-hour news cycle, the introduction of digital currencies, the rapid expansion of artificial intelligence, and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The non-negotiables that Dave established at Allodium’s founding remain just as important today. Integrity, professionalism, competence, and attention to detail are some of the central tenets the team continues to rely on. These tenets have helped the team navigate challenges within the financial field and serve as a guide for the firm.



The company has adapted over the years. A relatively recent move to a hybrid work model is one example, aided by the use of technology.

With changes in technology come opportunities and challenges. Everything from updated customer relationship management systems to how information is packaged and conveyed to clients at year-end. Technology has evolved, and so has Allodium. “We are always looking for efficiencies and adapting to changes like technology,” said Client Service Manager Carrie Kaestner.



The Allodium team enjoys spending time together for company outings and celebrations.

Another sign of change: shifting demographics. Many of Allodium’s clients are retiring, creating a balance between retired or near-retirement and still-working clients and their families. Older clients will need to navigate financial choices that come with living longer, like healthcare costs and whether or not to stay in their homes. The economy anticipates a huge transfer of wealth from the Baby Boomer generation, impacting everything from investing to housing and even philanthropy. Allodium is ready to respond to these socio-economic changes.

The Allodium team will also face decisions when it comes to growth.

“It would be great if we could serve thousands of clients, as long as we don’t lose who we are in that process,” said Tyler Chapman, Chief Operating Officer and Chief Compliance Officer.

The employee culture at Allodium is built on integrity and respect. To foster this culture, managers at the firm do a cultural deep dive with new employees. “We hope we’ve done the right screening on the front end,” said Carrie, noting that Allodium’s retention rate speaks volumes about how carefully the team selects new members who align with Allodium’s values.

Financial planning is by nature a service-oriented business. “You can have the smartest investment research analyst on staff, the smartest CPA with expertise in taxes or the wisest attorney for estate planning, if they don’t know how to interact with clients or are not customer-service focused, you are not going to get a lot of new clients,” explained Derek Van Calligan, Wealth Advisor and Director of Investment Research.

# fiduciaries at our core

“For the last twenty years, we have been client-focused. We are highly disciplined and professional. We are fiduciaries at our core. And always striving to do the right thing for our clients,” said Tyler.

“We’ve built a deep bench of experience and expertise,” noted Saul Baumann, Wealth Advisor and Financial Planning Specialist. “While we can attract high levels of technical competence, we focus primarily on finding people with the right attitude. Plenty of candidates bring competency, but do they have the right attitude and cultural fit that makes our team special?”



The team contributed their ideas to a word cloud as a visual representation of Allodium’s ethos as they serve clients.





David Bromelkamp, Saul Baumann, and Derek Van Calligan attended the Berkshire Hathaway Annual Meeting in Omaha, Nebraska in 2023.



Allodium team members support local nonprofits like Neighborhood House: Derek Van Calligan, Brianna Olson, Saul Baumann, Eric Hutchens, and Renae Mottaz.



Minnesota Army National Guard Sgt. Brianna Olson presented Employer Support of the Guard and Reserve (ESGR) Patriot Awards to Allodium's David Bromelkamp, Eric Hutchens, and Tyler Chapman.



A day of service with local nonprofits: Renae Mottaz, Eric Hutchens, Tyler Chapman, and Maddie McGinn.

Dave's brother Mike Bromelkamp, also a CPA and a member of Allodium's business advisory board, agrees that the strength of the team reflects Dave's strength as a leader. "He makes a commitment to team members to listen, to act on good advice, and to allow them to do the things they are good at," Mike explained. "Dave has learned that leadership is giving opportunities to the people working with you—opportunities for their own leadership."

The Allodium team's collaborative atmosphere is reflected in their customer service-centered approach. "I think the secret sauce has three ingredients: respecting the clients, respecting the employees, making sure everyone feels they have a voice and that they have influence on the direction of the firm," said Saul. "We feel that we are building something together and we continue to build and improve Allodium together."

As they continue to build on twenty years of steady growth, Allodium's transfer of leadership responsibilities has already begun. Eric Hutchens was named President in 2023 as Dave prepares to step back from day-to-day operations.

The ownership factor at Allodium represents another cornerstone of the firm's sustainability strategy. Unlike many financial advisory firms where founders maintain tight control until retirement forces a succession crisis, Allodium has intentionally created pathways for team members to gain equity early in their careers. This approach not only secures the firm's future beyond its founder but also aligns the team's personal success with the company's long-term prosperity.

"Dave understood that for advisors to truly invest themselves in the firm's mission, they needed a genuine stake in its future," explained Tyler. "By opening ownership opportunities early, we've created deeper commitment and ensured continuity for our clients."

Ownership has helped to provide continuity and guide the future of the firm. "By broadening our ownership, we have increased our sustainability and created a succession plan," Eric explained. "That builds confidence not only for our own team, but for clients as well. They know that we have a succession strategy, and that we are invested in the firm's success ourselves." On the 20th anniversary, there are six owners, with additional owners planned.

## No Cookie Cutter Approach

If Allodium were asked to sum up the company's culture in three words, they would be: service, fiduciary, and trust. The entire Allodium team shares responsibility for delivering on all three, and all three inform how the team works.

Over the years, Allodium has built a holistic approach to client services. Just as in healthcare, where the whole patient is treated, Allodium understands that clients bring more than just money to their investing. They bring a set of personal values, achievements, goals not yet realized, and, not surprisingly, some anxiety.



Saul Baumann, Eric Hutchens and Maddie McGinn discuss investment options and client service procedures.

Listening deeply to clients—getting at what's important to them—has become a best practice at Allodium.

The onboarding process for new clients is extensive. Time is spent getting to know the client beyond the dollar amount they are investing. "Very early on in our client relationship we have a diagnostic meeting," said Eric Hutchens. "It's essentially two to three hours of asking them one hundred different questions, most of which no one has ever asked them before. By the end of that meeting, we have a pretty good understanding of who they are and how we can help them."

The client intake process involves four to six team members (nearly half the Allodium team) who learn about the new client. Everyone has the opportunity to offer ideas on how the team might help the client. When a client formally joins the firm, a primary advisor is identified along with a secondary advisor, both of whom are CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER® professionals. Every member of the team will be fully immersed in the client profile. Everyone has an expectation for client service.



Carrie Kaestner and Renae Mottaz are members of Allodium's client service team.



Naomi Rogness  
and Brianna  
Olson are  
members of  
Allodium's team.



## More Than Just a Portfolio

"It goes beyond traditional good service," said Eric Hutchens. "We develop a connection to what may be going on in a client's life. We know that a client is more than just their investment portfolio."

Allodium's clients aren't simply another investor. At Allodium, clients are invited to join the conversation about their investments, getting as involved as they wish.

"There are some clients who want to delegate the entirety of the investment side to us and don't want to dive any deeper than a high-level review once a year," explained Eric. "Other clients are more engaged and want to know each and every investment, why are we selecting it, what is our process."

Like any client-facing profession, Allodium relies on the client relationship management system, and everyone is expected to document and add their notes to the client record. Like many investment firms, Allodium completes a letter of understanding with each client. It acts as an investment policy statement: everything Allodium knows about the client that will guide the team in making decisions. Reviewed annually, this includes things like if the client has a socially responsible lens to their investment philosophy or wants to focus on certain environmental areas, or other areas that are important to them. All of these details are included in a written document that the client can see.

"When we learn these things, we keep it in written format. So nowhere along the line can that get lost or lost in translation—it's right there and it's reviewed," explained Carrie Kaestner. She says it is kept as an ever-changing document to make sure the team understands the client's values and goals and what the client truly wants. "Because sometimes that changes, especially if their life changes."

Carl Richards, creator of Behavior Gap, helps investors understand complex financial concepts through his insightful designs.

With as much attention to client relationships, the team can refine a client's portfolio as life events change their investing goals or needs. "Over the course of your lifetime of investments, life events change. When you once had a child in college, you now have retirement on the horizon. Or your roadmap for charitable giving changes," explained Saul Baumann.

"We try to ease clients' investing anxieties by helping them focus on what's in their control," Dave explained when discussing Allodium's approach to market volatility. "Elections will come and go. Markets will rise and fall. But a well-designed financial plan, disciplined investment approach, and thoughtful tax strategy—these are areas where we can make meaningful differences. By redirecting clients' attention from the headlines to their personal financial journey, we help them maintain perspective during uncertain times."



Like many advisor firms, Allodium offers education to clients and Allodium's network of "friends and family." These are opportunities to participate in workshops or lectures on a variety of financial topics. "We also spend a good deal of time developing quarterly blog posts and newsletters," said Tyler Chapman, Chief Operations Officer and Chief Compliance Officer. "A member of the team will do a deep dive into a topic that interests our clients but they often would not have time or the resources to research on their own."



Allodium invites national speakers for educational events, like Mike Day, author of *Mike Day Travels*.

*"The team at Allodium has always understood that money isn't just numbers on a statement," said Mike Bromelkamp. "Money represents people's dreams, their anxieties, their family's security. When you're handling someone's investments, you're handling a piece of their life story. That's why the Allodium team takes their fiduciary responsibility so personally—because money is intensely personal."*



*One client shared, “It’s helpful to me to not only improve my own level of financial education, but I recognize that this is a reflection of the depth of what they actually know. And, it gives us an increased level of confidence in what they are doing.”*

Some of Allodium’s clients were asked, “What does the idea of fiduciary mean to you?” and responded with,

“It means that they are like a steward.”

“I like the team approach because I feel like, no matter who I talk to, they know I am a client. If Eric is away, someone else can take care of me and I feel seen and heard.”

“According to any formula, we give too much money away. But they have never said ‘you have to stop doing it.’ They have just shown us how to do it smarter.”

“I never feel like I am ‘just an investor.’ I have always felt that my values were respected and valued as the team made investment decisions on my behalf.”



Minnesota organizations acknowledge Allodium for ethical business practices in 2009.

The new idea of investment management consulting led to Dave being named the “Quintessential Consultant.”

*Allodium has not provided any compensation for, and has not influenced the content of, the testimonials shown. The testimonials shown have been invited, selected from among client feedback, shared with each client’s permission, and are not necessarily representative of the experience of other clients. To our knowledge, no other conflicts of interest exist regarding these testimonials.*

## Mr. Fiduciary

The paradox of the industry is that the people who desperately need world-class integrated advice often have zero access to it.

Dave’s next chapter is a reflection of his own personal evolution.

Even as Dave is phasing out of the day-to-day operations of the firm, instead of taking time off to go golfing or traveling, he is focusing his newly freed time on writing blog posts, writing a book, and accepting speaking engagements to help investors navigate the complex landscape of finding a trustworthy advisor. He’s particularly passionate about educating everyone, but especially the unsophisticated investor who might otherwise fall prey to product-focused advisors.

On the eve of Allodium’s 20th anniversary, Dave’s book *AdvisorSmart® for the Individual Investor* was published. He’s developing a second book tentatively titled “Mr. Fiduciary”—aptly titled because Dave is regularly referred to as Mr. Fiduciary by friends and family.

You might expect to hear the adjective ‘passionate’ for someone involved in art, music, even sports...but passionate about being a fiduciary?

“His passion for doing right by clients isn’t just professional—it’s personal,” noted Spenser Segal, CEO of ActiFi, Inc. and former Allodium business advisory board member. “Dave doesn’t just practice fiduciary principles; he evangelizes them.”

Dave speaks about fiduciary responsibility the way others might describe their favorite hobby. There’s a genuine enthusiasm that’s both unusual and infectious in the financial services field.

Dave’s authenticity comes from his conviction and his depth of knowledge, Carrie Kaestner explained. “When he speaks about fiduciary responsibility or client-centered approaches, you can feel his genuine belief in these principles. It’s never just business jargon—it’s his personal mission.”

David Bromelkamp and his sons Paul and Patrick celebrate the release of *AdvisorSmart® for the Individual Investor*.



David and Kay Bromelkamp

The Allodium team shares in the unboxing of the book.

