

Next generation

Developing his own niche in the family business, Martin qualified for Top of the Table at age 35.

By Wayne D. Minich, CLU, ChFC

The long-term viability of any business is dependent upon the presence of seasoned veterans to serve as inspiration and provide leadership, as well as young members — stars on the rise — positioned to build upon the legacy of the footsteps in which they follow.

Nine-year MDRT member **Anthony A. Martin, CFP, MBA**, of Savannah, Georgia, is one of the MDRT leaders of the future. His father, 30-year MDRT member **Gean W. Martin, CLU, AEP**, introduced him to the business. In the mid-1990s, the senior Martin asked his son — now 36 — to consider entering the financial services industry. At the time, the junior Martin was studying business at Rhodes College in Memphis, Tennessee, but he was unsure about what career to pursue. He confided in his father, who suggested he explore the idea of working in his Savannah practice.

Course of study

To determine whether financial services was the right fit, the father and son mapped out a course of study designed to expose Martin to a variety of aspects of the insurance business. It included continuing his formal education and gaining experience at a large insurance company. After graduating



Martin (left) with father Gean W. Martin, CLU, AEP, and brother Todd H. Martin, CLU, RFC.

with his bachelor's degree, Martin joined Prudential, working a total of two years in their home office, investment division and financial planning division before joining the family business. Meanwhile, he continued to pursue his education in business, earning two master's degrees by age 31: one in business administration and another in taxation. Eager to increase his industry knowledge, he also earned several financial services designations. Martin said his education allowed him to gain knowledge that would

enable him to provide the best possible advice and boost his credibility among his father's clients.

Martin's course of study took another key factor into account: the importance of developing a niche; his is in investments and tax strategies for business owners. While the firm does not provide tax advice, he explained that taxes are a key area for understanding when it comes to providing financial advice.

"I knew I needed to have an area of expertise my dad didn't already have," he said. "Develop-

ing a niche was also a confidence builder for me because I was adding value to the practice.”

Martin is grateful for the guidance his father provided while working his way into the business. “I was either lucky enough or smart enough to be able to listen to his advice and follow up,” he said. “He’s been my most key mentor, influencing me unbelievably.”

MDRT guidance

Martin’s well-reasoned approach and hard work resulted in his first MDRT qualification in 2003. He attended the 2003 MDRT Annual Meeting in Las Vegas, Nevada. While he admits that he initially attended because of his father’s insistence, his first Annual Meeting experience left an indelible mark beginning with the opening Flag Ceremony. Martin was also struck by the cultural diversity, energy and countless remarks from strangers congratulating him as a first-time attendee.

“MDRT offers everything a young advisor needs to stay in the business — to maintain and grow,” Martin explained. “It’s a place where they can go for encouragement, problem solving and education to help them move forward.”

In addition to his membership in MDRT and several other industry associations, Martin belongs to two study groups.

Team approach

Martin’s proudest accomplishment is working in the family business with his father and his younger brother, six-year MDRT member **Todd H. Martin, CLU, RFC**. The focus of their practice is working with business owners and specialty



Martin and wife Holly in London, England.

physicians to help them leverage their largest assets to make their plans more effective.

Because of their unique blend of business, tax and financial expertise, they often do joint work with other advisors. Using the team approach, one advisor serves as the relationship manager and the other as the expert. He said there is no substitute for the hands-on knowledge he receives through exposure to other advisors and how they operate their businesses. The approach works well: Martin has three Court of the Table qualifications and earned his first Top of the Table qualification in 2010.

The Martin family’s business is adaptive in nature. Because of increasing barriers to entry, such as Financial Industry Regulatory Authority compliance, fewer companies training new advisors, ongoing legal and educational demands, and an aging population of advisors, they feel there is no better time to be in the life insurance business.

“Over the next couple years, there is going to be a transition, as advisors my father’s age move out of the business and clients look for new advisors,” Martin said. “There won’t be as many advisors to replace the existing ones, so there’s a huge opportunity for younger advisors.”

A Whole Person

Martin embraces MDRT’s Whole Person concept. An athlete growing up, he exercises each morning before heading to the office at 8 a.m. His day consists of one hour of creative time to collect his thoughts, work on presentations, and evaluate and solve client problems, followed by dealing with office issues. From noon on, he is usually involved in client meetings and phone work.

He and his wife, Holly, a pharmacist, were married in August 2010. They enjoy exercising, fine dining and traveling together. Their community activities include their church and the United Way. Martin said the couple’s overriding personal goal is to provide for their desired financial future while making certain they create memorable experiences along the way.

Martin attributes his personal and professional success to the support and influence of his parents, who helped him formulate the philosophy: If you can dream it and believe it, then you can achieve it, and to grow, you must have adventures; seek them out. ■

Contact Anthony A. Martin, CFP, MBA, at aamartin@bellsouth.net.