

# ACCOMPLISHED ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

## Randy Warren



**Area of Study:** MBA, Economics and Finance

**Current City:** Downingtown, PA

**Graduation Year:** 1992

**Current Occupation:** Chief Investment Officer at Warren Financial

**Company Website:**

<http://warrenfinancial.com>

**Describe your role and the work that you do.**

"I am the Chief Investment Officer at Warren Financial, which is a wealth management firm. We do financial planning for people, many of whom come to us experiencing some sort of life change. They are either selling a business, inheriting money, or getting ready to retire, and need help planning. We do the planning, but our main thing is managing the assets. We build portfolios of stocks, and bonds."

### Why did you choose WCU and/or CBPM?

"It's a great local school that offers quality education, and grad school opportunities at night. My undergrad is from U of D, and I compared WCU to UD favorably."

### How has the quality of education you received from WCU prepared you for life after graduation?

"Amazing! Everything I learned in MBA school has been 100% applicable in every job that I've had. When I started at WCU, I was an engineer at Unisys Defense Systems, a defense contract that was struggling at the time. I applied my MBA to open up new opportunities, and applications for modified military products in industrial, and foreign navy workplaces. It was a true business case of adapting a struggling division, because in the late 80's/90's military spending was on a steep decline.

When I left Unisys. I wanted some real business experience in the field for a start-up Venture Capital (VC) funded company. My MBA helped me to understand the new business model, and how to fuel a start-up with sales opportunities.

Then, after completing my MBA, I wanted to merge my tech background with my financial background, and I found a new startup, FNX. FNX was derivatives trading straight out of my 'Investment,' and 'Financial Management' textbooks. In the mid-90's, after winning three Inc. 500 awards, the company was sold to VCs, and I got a look at the art-of-the-deal up close, and personal.

Most recently (since the year 2000), running Warren Financial as a wealth management firm, we put those educational principals into motion everyday utilizing investment knowledge."

### **Working full time while going to grad school must have been a difficult combination. How did you do it? What obstacles did it create that you weren't expecting?**

"Travel. Travel is a big thing. All of a sudden, your boss sends you to Cleveland for a week, and you're missing classes. Back then, there was no online. If you missed class, you just missed class, and it wasn't good. Today, there is a little more flexibility."

### **What is a typical day like for you?**

"I get up with my daughter, and get her ready for high school. We read the Bible, and start our day with prayer. Then, I get in a workout, and head off to work. The important thing about getting to work, is to not let other people, whether it be customers, employees, vendors, etc., dictate your agenda. Sure, you have to answer emails, and phone calls, but you simply MUST have a plan for yourself for each day – some things that you really want to improve – and you MUST actually do them. That's how continuous process improvement rubber meets the road."

### **What advice would you give to someone who would like to enter your field?**

"It's a tough field for young people, because it's all based on trust. Trust is far, and away the number one overwhelming virtue that clients site as most important when seeking an advisor. Trust has many aspects, but youth is not usually overly beneficial in generating trust. People want the virtue of pure trustworthiness, but that also means they want to trust that you can, and will do the job necessary. Trust that you know what you're doing, and will keep their best interests at heart, and not your own. So, the #1 thing to think about is, 'how can I portray to every person I meet that I am trustworthy.'"

### **What sort of things do you look for in a potential hire that portrays trustworthiness?**

"Trust is one of those things that you get from looking into someone's eyes across the table. That's what the new person coming into this business would have to realize. People aren't going to invest over the internet. If you have a million-dollar portfolio that you are retiring on, it has to last the rest of your life. You're not just going to not meet the person whose taking care of it. You have to have that ability to be able to sit down with people, and discuss with them how you are going to help them. In the end, you're going to have to meet people, talk to people, and you're going to have to be honest with them, and tell them what you are going to do. Always UPOD (Under Promise and Over Deliver). I learned that from reading CEO notes from quarterly meetings on Wall Street. The CEOs who under promise, and over deliver have stocks that continuously go up, and up."

### **What advice would you give to our graduating seniors?**

"First, let's just assume that you're good, very good. So, now what? Does anyone know you're good? Smart? Ambitious? Be all of those things, but then be something that is rare in today's world. Go a step farther. Look at where your colleagues fall short. Is it in the area of reliability? Professionalism? Do they not only take, but also seek out constructive criticism? Do they learn quickly, and actually put things they learn into immediate practice? Do they pass on knowledge, or

only hoard it for themselves? In other words, be better. Be great! Stand out, and stand above the crowd. Do things others fail to do, because those things might be too hard.

Understand how you, your job, your department, your division, and your company fit into the whole scheme of the business world. Why do you think your job is important? Why did they hire you? What does the company get out of this deal? In other words, stop looking at everything from your own point of view, and start looking at things from your boss' point of view, and even more important, from the CUSTOMER's point of view. Why did your customer engage with your company? What value do you bring that other companies cannot bring?"

### **What's a mistake that you see a lot of recent grads make following graduation?**

"Over expectation. I think you should have dreams, and I think you should dream big. However, plans don't start with the conclusion of your dream, they start at the beginning. If you want to accomplish something, great, but you still have to take the first step. And, the first step might be taking out the trash. I'm all for dreaming big, but you have to be a little bit realistic. Otherwise, you're promising yourself, and under delivering to yourself."

### **What makes our college stand out to you?**

"Growth, and a desire to be MORE than just a local college. A desire to rise above even the bigger state schools. A desire to challenge every other university, no matter how prestigious. Excellence is like wild-fire, once it catches on, and begins to spread, there is no stopping it. I see WCU in this way. The opportunity for truly great things to happen here. To happen here, now."

### **What is your favorite memory of being a student at WCU and/or in our college?**

"It may sound strange to anyone who remembers it, but Anderson Hall. That old building represented something. It represented 'trying harder.' Sure, it was old, and dusty, and tired (even back in 1990), but it represented the determination I had to get an MBA, to finish a long course of study. It literally took 6 years back then, two courses per semester. Plus, since my undergrad was in Computer Science, I had to start out by taking some undergrad business classes to prepare myself for the grad level courses.

The professor of my "Financial Management" class was the current CFO of Astra Zenica. The first day, he grabbed our text book, all 900 pages, and simply said, 'we are going to learn absolutely everything in this book... so get crackin.' And, he was totally serious. I still have tiny mouse-print notes from every chapter stuffed into that text book. It wasn't a burden – it was a challenge."

### **What's the most interesting thing about you that we wouldn't learn from your resume alone?**

"One thing not on my resume...I have something in common with Patriots' quarterback Tom Brady. We're both married to supermodels (sly grin). Honestly, my wife Vicki is a tremendous support to me. And, my three kids constantly astound me with all of their accomplishments. My oldest is finishing up year two of medical school at Wake Forest; my middle son is graduating with honors this spring from Messiah; and my youngest daughter is graduating high school, and heading off to Liberty University where she will play on their D-1 soccer team, and study to be a high school English teacher. How cool is all of that stuff!"

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