



Center for Financial Security Appoints Director

by Erin Gazica



Sharen L. King, MSM, officiates the ribbon-cutting ceremony on the Northwestern Mutual Granum Center for Financial Security, with Chairman of The American College Board of Trustees, Todd M. Schoon, JD, CLU®, ChFC® and President and CEO, Dr. Larry Barton, CAP®.

THE NORTHWESTERN MUTUAL GRANUM Center for Financial Security at The American College has made its first major step since the recent announcement of its \$4.2 million foundational gift from Northwestern Mutual.

The American College appointed as Executive Director of the Center Sharen L. King, MSM, a 15-year veteran of Northwestern Mutual with experience in the field and at corporate headquarters. During her time with the company she held several key leadership positions, including more recently director – Field Vertical Growth and director – Practice Management and Field Training.

King, who received her MSM degree from The American College in 2007, has been a featured platform speaker at numerous company and industry events, and has authored a variety of training and program materials for field leaders and representatives that are still in use today. She is known

for bold idea generation, her ability to articulate a compelling vision, identifying success metrics, inspiring action, and attracting and developing emerging leaders.

In June, King facilitated the first meeting of the Center’s board of advisors and has begun working on the direction and focus areas of the Center. She also organized a formal ribbon-cutting ceremony at The College, complete with an address via Skype from the Center’s namesake, Al Granum, CLU®, the legendary Northwestern Mutual field leader and creator of the One Card System. The ceremony revealed a new modern tribute wall to honor Granum, showcasing some of his most memorable teachings

and visually capturing his signature coaching methodologies.

“While the work of the Center is future-focused, we seek to embody the unique attributes of Al Granum in all that we do. His game-changing contributions to this industry, his abundant ‘share everything’ approach, and his passion for the gift of financial security help guide us in defining our purpose,” said King.

Ironically, when she became a financial representative in Chicago, King worked out of Al Granum’s former office. Although Granum had retired many years prior, she said his presence permeated the halls and guided daily activity and coaching meetings for all the leaders and representatives. “Al’s teachings and philosophies were entrenched in the office culture and throughout the entire NM field system. Having never met Al, I still considered myself a disciple of his teachings.”



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King has since spent time with Granum and said she feels blessed to understand more clearly who he is and how passionate he is about people, planning and our profession. She, along with her highly capable board members, several of whom have known and worked with Granum for many years, made it a point to keep his perspectives and beliefs in mind during their first meeting in June.

While there were many topics of interest, the board agreed that at the heart of the Center is the desire to create a place of inquiry, a center for cutting-edge research, a roundtable where producers and company leaders can debate and discuss where the industry is going and must go. The Center acts as a catalyst to boldly engage around opportunities to strengthen the profession.

The Center will focus on three key objectives:

- **Engagement:** To energize the profession's leaders in ongoing roundtables that explore emerging trends and identify potential disrupters, helping participants prepare for future market opportunities and meet changing consumer needs.
- **Awareness:** To create educational and networking opportunities for producers, leaders, consumers, legislators and regulators to learn more about the value and principles of sustainable financial security.
- **Influence:** To become a recognized thought leader, positively influencing the national financial security landscape. The Center will conduct groundbreaking, practical research on relevant topics, impacting the national conversation on insurance issues and the financial security of Americans.

With an eye to the future, King will be instrumental in shaping an agenda that allows the Northwestern Mutual Granum Center for Financial Security to achieve these objectives.

"The true impact of the Granum Center hinges on the willingness of our profession to work together to identify, discuss and ultimately solve the tough issues," said King. ■■■

Northwestern Mutual Granum Center for Financial Security

Executive Director

Sharen L. King, MSM

Executive Director, The American College
Northwestern Mutual Granum Center for
Financial Security

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