



Noel Brown, Financial Advisor and Senior Investment Management Consultant at The Pacarro Group, champions women's roles in financial services and beyond.

Noel Pacarro Brown lives her days in two-minute increments. As a mother of two young children and Financial Advisor and Senior Investment Management Consultant, she divides her time between family and clients, who she considers her extended family. Her dedication to both is no surprise given her mom—and role model—Gwen Pacarro is also her partner at [The Pacarro Group at Morgan Stanley](#) in Honolulu, Hawaii.

"She started at Dean Witter in 1983, when I was three and would watch her tromp off to work in pumps and shoulder pads vying to establish herself," says Noel, proudly reflecting on her mom's work ethic and drive.

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Recently named one of Forbes' Top Millennial Advisors,¹ one of Forbe's Best-in-State Wealth Advisors² and a [Morgan Stanley Maker](#), Noel appreciates the recognition she's earned while mastering motherhood. "Women are dedicated to our families but can also have really awesome careers and make a difference," she points out.

Noel already had a track record of hard work in often male-dominated fields. She grew up on Oahu, attended Brown University, played water polo on the men's team and was part of the first-ever Women's Final Four. "I was a little bit of a trailblazer, but that was normal because that's what my mom did," she says. "Management meetings and boardrooms are still pretty weighted toward a boys team, but I'm just not intimidated."

She certainly wasn't intimidated when asked to become a Financial Advisor in 2007 at age 26. Her mom had been propelled into management, and with a sense of duty to the family business, Noel said yes. "Even though I was filling the shoes of someone with 25 years of experience, my clients—some of whom have known me since I was three—gave me a chance," she says. Noel feels lucky that her husband was willing to be a stay-at-home father, like her dad, who worked nights

Women & Wealth workshop, and another millennial client who had inherited stocks incompatible with the client's environmental values. " 'I wear recycled clothes, I'm vegan, and I don't even own a car,' the client said to me. 'This investment is the one thing in my life that's not aligned, and I don't know how to fix that.' " Noel recounts.

So she and the client spent hours together in coffee shops and on the beach talking through the basics of finance, then developed a plan to evolve the portfolio over several years. Now, the client is one of Noel's best referral sources and speaks at workshops about rites of passage.

Having those important conversations about money and finance within families is crucially important to The Pacarro Group. In fact, her mom is a Family Wealth Director, and Noel has earned the Family Wealth Advisor designation and is an Investing with Impact Director. Also on the team are Michael Laconsay and Lindsay Mist. Among the four of them, they can serve any type of client with their multigenerational perspective. Often, Noel and her mom Gwen conduct joint wealth-planning conversations with families.

"I'm so blessed to be working with my mom and the team," says Noel. "I believe we're on the cusp of some really important growth."

She recently was invited to speak about impact investing with students enrolled in the Asia Pacific Leadership Program of the East West Center, a local nonprofit founded by Congress in 1960 to promote better relations among the U.S., Asia and the Pacific. "We had a healthy debate around faith-based investing in the Philippines and powerful conversations around taking culturally appropriate routes to get to a goal," she says.

Filipino Family Roots

In fact, she's quite familiar with, and proud of, that Filipino culture. Her great grandparents came to Hawaii from the Philippines in the days of plantations and had seven children, who all worked on the land. She grew up close with all of her family, which is why at her wedding there were over 400 guests. "Having this close

so he could stay home during the day with Noel and her brother.

A Quest for Purpose

Shortly after taking the job, the financial crisis hit, challenging even the most seasoned Financial Advisor. She was able to steer her clients through, and is proud that more than 90% stayed invested. "I believe it was because of my approach to treat clients as I would my own family," she says. With that comes honest and open communication about "what I could—and couldn't—do for them. Like the family doctor, when someone has an illness, they want to know the truth, what they can and cannot control, and their treatment options."

Five years in, Noel had her first child. After learning from her mom that she missed client conversations and longed to be a Financial Advisor again, Noel was quick to bring her on the team. That same year, Noel decided to gather the most important women in her career, including clients, business owners, even a judge, to form a personal advisory board. "This group became my guiding light in my quest to have more purpose," she says. "Doing a really good job for my clients is fulfilling, but I kept asking, 'how can we do more?'"

The advisory board helped Noel understand what women wanted and were lacking. She soon developed her own series of events emphasizing women and wealth and decided to focus her business on [Investing with Impact](#). Through word of mouth, the series, as well as her clientele, has expanded across the U.S., to places such as Portland, Chicago and New York. In fact, her most recent clients have all been women, most of them business owners, she says. "They all want to have conversations around purpose and values alignment, how to lead the lives they want to lead, and to have someone they can call on when they have questions," says Noel.

Human Services Industry

Her mantra is to turn the financial services industry into a "human services industry," particularly with millennials, who want to collaborate, rather than be told what to do. She tells of a millennial who became a client last year after coming to a

connection to family helps me as a Financial Advisor, being a relatable person to Asian-American clients, some of them first generation, whose parents might know little about the markets but everything about discipline, grit and family values—all hugely advantageous in growing wealth,” she explains.

For Noel, being Filipino means being extremely committed to hard work. “There’s not a single person in my family that isn’t super hardworking and committed to doing whatever they can to help their families,” she says. Yet they know how to have fun, too. “I was raised singing Karaoke, which has come in handy as public speaking is not as scary when you are used to fighting for the mic.”

She is also proud of her half-German heritage and being able to “code switch” between the two cultures with an “undying foundational understanding of family first, always,” she says. As a result, for Noel it has come naturally to treat everyone as if they are family: “I think it comes when your heart and your spirit are so entrenched in what you do.”

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Sources:

1. Forbes Magazine (July, 2017). Data provided by SHOOK™ Research, LLC. Data as of 3/31/17. SHOOK considered Financial Advisors born in 1980 or later with a minimum 4 years relevant experience, who have built their own practices and lead their teams, joined teams and are viewed as future leadership; or a combination of both. Ranking algorithm is based on qualitative measures: telephone and in-person interviews, client retention, industry experience, credentials, review of compliance records, firm nominations; and quantitative criteria, such as: assets under management and revenue generated for their firms. Investment performance is not a criterion because client objectives and risk tolerances vary, and advisors rarely have audited performance reports. Rankings are based on the opinions of SHOOK Research, LLC, which does not receive compensation from the advisors or their firms in exchange for placement on a ranking. The rating may not be representative of any one client's experience and is not indicative of the Financial Advisor's future performance. Neither Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC nor its Financial Advisors or Private Wealth Advisors pays a fee to Forbes or SHOOK Research in exchange for the ranking. For more information see www.SHOOKresearch.com.

2. Forbes.com (February 2018). Best-in-State Wealth Advisors ranking was developed by SHOOK Research and is based on in-person and telephone due diligence meetings and a ranking algorithm that includes: client retention, industry experience, review of compliance records, firm nominations; and quantitative criteria, including: assets under management and revenue generated for their firms. Investment performance is not a criterion. Rankings are based on the opinions of SHOOK Research, LLC and are not indicative of future performance or representative of any one client's experience. Neither Morgan Stanley Smith Barney LLC nor its Financial Advisors or Private Wealth Advisors pay a fee to Forbes or SHOOK Research in exchange for the ranking. For more information: www.SHOOKresearch.com.

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CRC 2045810 4/2018

CRC 1751942 (6/17)