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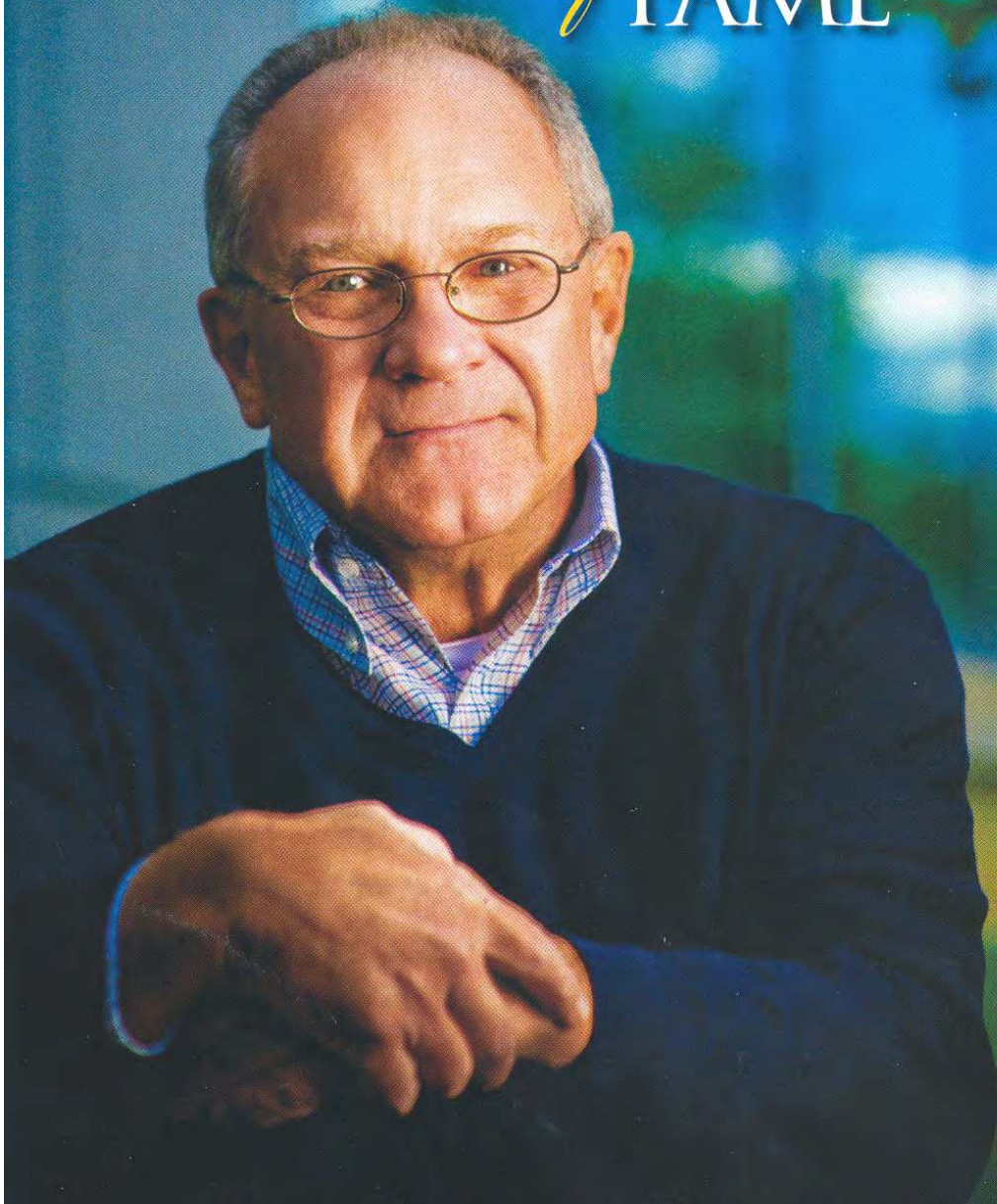


**GERALD "ZEKE" STRID**  
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**IRA A. WALKER**  
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# GERALD "ZEKE" STRID

*Managing Director  
Strid Wealth Management Group of  
Wachovia Securities  
Career Began: 1968  
Home Base: Berwyn, Pa.  
Civic Affiliations:  
Project H.O.M.E., Siloam*

**W**HEN ERIK STRID WAS A BOY, HE REMEMBERS his father disembarking from a Philadelphia commuter train after work wearing no socks. Asked why, his dad replied: "Someone needed them more than I did."

The story is signature Zeke Strid, a man who has been an indefatigable advocate for Philadelphia's homeless for 40 years. For the 65-year-old Strid, it's not just about writing checks but delivering clothing, blankets, water — and hugs.



"The thing that would amaze you, if you came with me for a day, is the intelligence level of people on the street. They all have a story, some trigger in their life that put them in this position. When you sit down, you can't fool them and when you walk away, you think: 'Holy mackerel. I just had a good conversation.' The only difference is that the person behind the teeth is dirty," says Strid. "Everyone has a right to human dignity, a right not to sleep out in the cold, a right to have someone give them a hug. We give dogs more human contact. These are human beings. Can't we just show them some human decency?"

It's a question that has helped define this financial advisor's life. His passion is so well known that clients and friends routinely leave clothing and blankets in Strid's car or garage in anticipation of his next visit to the streets. In 2006, he organized a gala that raised \$1.7 million for Project H.O.M.E. in a single night. Earlier this year, Strid was given the Heart of Siloam award for his work with an organization that serves street people who have AIDS.

Strid's heart is so big, in fact, that he and his wife, Kris, have provided a home to 23 students from Villanova University over the years. Some simply couldn't find on-campus housing. Others had more serious problems — substance abuse or academic and financial challenges. Most stayed a year; one student lived with the Strids for four.

"We have five kids of our own, nine grandchildren and two on the way," says Strid, a former defensive tackle for Villanova who lives across the street from the campus. "What the hell is the difference? One more face at the party doesn't change the stew."

A natural storyteller, Strid lives by example — a fact that's not lost on the families and business owners that make up his client base. While many advisors have kept a low profile during the market meltdown, for example, Strid has been actively contacting clients, even if they don't own stocks, and dispatching a weekly commentary on market volatility. And here's a real measure of the man: Between August and October, the wealth management group Strid operates in Berwyn, Pa., with his two sons, Erik and Paul, took in \$30 million in new client assets.

"People don't leave their advisors because of perfor-

mance in most cases. They leave because of a lack of service or they feel they've been left in the dark and no one cares about them," says Strid, who manages \$300 million in assets. "We care."

An advisor since 1968, Strid got his start at several Philadelphia brokerages, then spent 23 years with Merrill Lynch. As a young parent concerned about how he was going to finance the college educations of his five children, Strid developed an education planning program — based on Treasury-insured zero-coupon bonds — that went firm-wide.

Strid joined Wachovia Securities in 2003. His son

Erik, 39, serves as the firm's managing director/investment officer, and Paul, 33, is managing director/financial consultant. During the market's recent travails, no one has appreciated Strid's long view of investing more than his sons.

"It's been great to lean on him, sitting at lunch, and saying: 'Take me back to 1987, what was it like? What were you going through? What were clients saying? How did you handle it?' He's not

only been through this before but he's been through this with our clients before," notes Paul Strid. "The experience of him having lived through various markets over time has been invaluable."

As for the elder Strid, he says the most important thing right now is to successfully manage client behavior. "We're down like everybody else. Nobody saw this thing coming," he says. "But we keep a pretty balanced portfolio, depending on age. We'll weather the storm."

Strid also worries about the psychological toll the market tumult is having on some advisors.

"What we have tried to do, and I have always told my boys: You run toward the problem, you do not run away from it. Our job right now is to manage people so they don't go crazy and make an irrational move in an irrational time. You only take a loss when you sell. Personally, in my heart, I think we'll come through this — like everything," Strid adds. "Initially, we were calling clients weekly, if not daily. Now we're at the point where they are saying to us: 'How are you guys holding up?' That's the turn I was waiting to see." ■

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