

Our proud moments from 2025

“Without love in the dream it will never come true”

By: Jill Matlow, Feature Writer, Wall Street Dead aHead Family Member



Photo courtesy of pixabay.com

Almost 70 years ago, my mom graduated from Penn State University (“We are”) with the hopes of moving to Greenwich Village in NYC to write poetry. She was extremely creative and longed for a life outside of the small coal-mining town she grew up in. Unfortunately, that dream would never come to fruition, as my grandfather Ruby was adamant about her not moving to the “big city”.

A year later, she would marry my dad and eventually move to another small coal-mining town in Pennsylvania where they would remain until a relocation to Philadelphia decades later.

As a child, I knew my mom never gave up on her dream to write, but she somehow still managed to enjoy the arts, either by running bus trips to Broadway shows in NYC with my aunt or participating locally in theater groups. But I somehow knew that deep down, she harbored so many “what ifs” and “if onlys”.

Eight years ago, my parents moved into a retirement community called “Ann’s Choice” in the suburbs of Philly. They both thrived in that environment, meeting incredible people and remaining active in their golden years. Unfortunately, my dad passed away three years ago, but prior to that, I was thrilled to find out that my mom had joined a film class, short story class, POETRY class and WRITING class! She was finally able to fulfill her dream. It might not have been Greenwich Village, but it was certainly a village of talented, intelligent people sharing their stories and memories through their writing.

My mom recently visited me in NYC for a “girls gone wild” weekend and we enjoyed lots of laughs and reminiscing. This time around, she didn’t run a bus trip to the theater, and instead, we took an Uber to see [“Maybe Happy Ending”](#), a musical I had seen months ago and loved.

But that wasn’t the highlight of the weekend.

While at dinner on our first night together, she proudly handed me a newsletter called “Choice Chatter” which is a newsletter published at her retirement community. Inside they had featured one of her articles entitled “Moving” about creating moving indoor walkways at Ann’s Choice. I was so proud of her and so thrilled that she and her writing were finally getting the recognition they deserved.

Looking back on this incredibly challenging year, I wanted to highlight those proud moments, both personal and professional, shared by our WSDaH Family members. When the chips are down and life is constantly throwing you curve balls, it’s stories like these that remind us of what’s really important in life.

“This year, the thing I’m most proud of isn’t a deal I closed or a milestone at work, it’s my son, Jerome. He’s eight, lives and breathes sports, and would sleep with a football under his pillow if we let him. But for as long as I can remember, he’s been scared of competition. The kid who loves every stat and every team highlight would freeze when it was his turn to play. When he was four, we signed him up for soccer, and he spent the entire season sitting on the sidelines, refusing to go on the field. Not shy, not defiant, just scared.

Over the years, we’ve seen small steps of progress. In football, he finally got out there but didn’t want the ball near him, defense was where he liked to be. In basketball, he would get a pass, start to dribble, and even take a few shots by the end of the season. We never pushed too hard, just encouraged, tried to make it fun, and let him move at his own pace. Last year, he didn’t want to join his soccer team again, so we took him off. But he came to my practices when I coached my daughter’s team and played with the girls every week. He loved it. You could see it in his face, he wanted to be out there for real. He would watch the boys play, all his friends, and technically speaking he was better than most of them. But he could only watch from the sidelines. It was at that point he knew he wanted to play.

This fall, he rejoined his friends on the boys’ team, and something clicked. Not only did he play, he excelled. His coach called him one of the stars. He played center midfield, the most critical position, and even got physical when he needed to. As a parent, you don’t think you’ll ever feel proud watching your kid bump another kid off the ball, but I was. It was progress, and a lot of it. Because for him, that moment meant courage.

Watching him find that confidence has been one of the proudest moments of my year. The same kid who once stood frozen on the sidelines now runs toward the ball without hesitation. Seeing him finally trust himself, finally compete, has reminded me what growth really looks like. It’s slow, it’s imperfect, and sometimes it takes years. But when it comes, it’s beautiful. And as a dad, there’s nothing better than watching your kid find their courage and realize they belong exactly where they are.”

[Cory Fischer](#), AVP Insurance Provider, [Fields Group Insurance Services](#)

“Professionally, I am proud of keeping my clients feeling confident with a decent level of comfort as I continue to help them navigate this year’s uncertainty caused by a new administration, divisiveness at home, geopolitics, inflation and tariff fears to name a few...i.e. the craziness.

I was able to keep my clients in their investment portfolios (earmarked for their hopes, and dreams, and needs and legacies) when lots of noise and negativity were bombarding them from all over. I am proud that because I stuck with my firm’s plan and risk management process with high conviction, my clients were able to hang in

there and take advantage of what the markets were giving us, instead of capitulating, and liquidating their portfolios due to fear and pain. As a result of my continued guidance and care, instead of losing out of the high performing markets, they were rewarded for it, by keeping their exposure in them, no matter how uncomfortable they were/are still feeling.

I'm proud I was able to provide clarity, and a rules-based process, while they were (and still are) feeling a lot of emotional turmoil.

It's easy when markets go straight up. The true test in my opinion, is when they don't, and how one continues to be a good fiduciary and do the right thing for clients, when there's a ton of volatility beating us down. I've strengthened relationships and continue to build trust because of it.

Personally, I'm so proud of our three kids. One is evolving along with his wife into great parents of a one-year-old boy (my grandson, Billy!), one is following in his dad's Wealth Management footsteps; and one is forging her own path on her terms. I'm extremely grateful, lucky, and blessed!"

[Len Meshberg](#), Senior Vice President-Wealth Management, [Blue Square Wealth](#)

*"Over the last few months, my wife Rachel (also a WSDaH Family member) and I launched **Preferred Path Resources**, a boutique career coaching firm dedicated to helping college students successfully launch their career.*

As you've seen in the press, the hiring landscape for early-stage talent has become extremely challenging, and we felt inspired to help. After selling and exiting our NYC recruitment firm in 2023, we were ready to figure out what's next, and as recent empty nesters, the timing was right. Friends and family were asking us to help their college-aged children with internship and job searches, just as we were guiding our own children. What started as casual guidance opened our eyes to the hiring difficulties college students are facing today. With decades of talent acquisition experience, we always felt there was no group more deserving of real-world, professional career coaching than college students, a population historically overlooked by recruiters (due to industry fee structure), and underserved by career services offices on campus.

Preferred Path draws on inspiration from two key sources. First, the inspiration we gained from our prior work and the desire to put that to good use. Second, our children, as well as the families we know who've reached out to us for help as they look to kickstart their ROI.

We are fortunate and proud to be connecting our life experiences with our professional purpose, and we are thrilled to help the next generation overcome this challenge so they can successfully launch and begin carving their own path! Thank you all for your continued support, and a special thanks to Prem Hira for making an intro to our first client! We're extremely grateful for all of you!"

[Greg Feder/Rachel Feder](#), Managing Partners/Founders, [Preferred Path Resources, LLC](#)

"Walking in the tall trees, going where the wind blows...this past year offers many things to reflect on and to consider for this article; what have my personal and professional lives been about, how have they evolved, how have I grown in those areas...and on and on. 2024 was a year of immense change for me. I became a father, I changed jobs and the focal point of my career and, I moved to a completely different town and community way out in the NJ burbs. So, with that context in mind, 2025 was a year of grounding and settling in a bit, in all ways.

Blooming like a red rose...I love my job. I could not have imagined after twenty years focused on Youth Development and Mentoring Programs that a pivot within the nonprofit sector to a Jewish Community organization ([JCP Downtown](#)) would be so rewarding and so fun. It has been stressful and there have been big challenges and a lot to learn, and two consecutive years beating the budget, building reserves and launching

an aspirational Strategic Plan has been the kind of start that any seasoned nonprofit executive would be proud of. I am excited for many years to come and a bright future for JCP!

Now come on over sweetly...I love being a dad! After my daughter's birth one of my first conversations with my two younger brothers, both dads and both inspiring to me, started with me saying: "Why didn't you tell me...?" likely with tears in my eyes. One of them said: "We didn't know if you'd get here". My wife and I went through years of IVF and I appreciated their sensitivity and, any parents reading this know what I mean. Every day is a proud one. Right now it is "rally-moly" when Sophia wants more ravioli, but the list is endless.

Ride out singin'...I am also proud of taking care of myself in the ways we do. I made it to a lot of shows (although "lot" may be defined differently than it used to be) from the end of The Who to real treats from Neil, Bob & Willie, a bunch of Jack White, The Viagra Boys (IYKYK) and full punk treatment at CBGB fest. My favorite show of any given year is almost always Chris Harford and the Band of Changes. This year in Hopewell NJ with Russo, Metzger & Driewitz, Chris is a magical songwriter and a treasure not to be missed. Have a great end to 2025 and always remember 'All Good Things in All Good Time'."

[Peter Retzlaff](#), Executive Director, [Jewish Community Project Downtown](#)

"This year I have had so much to be proud of. Each of my children not only did specific things that are outside of their comfort zone, but excelled at them. I was able to help a Wall Street Dead aHead Family member with a tricky situation finance their dream home. But the pride I feel for my friend Jon for not only creating something that I think is amazing, but something that others are finding amazing too, is immense. I am proud of him and consider myself lucky to be along for the ride.

Here's how it all began...

In 2011 I was introduced by my future wife to one of the most interesting and funny people I've ever met. Jon was a photographer and filmmaker. We talked movies and I told him any time he needed help on a film project I'd be happy to be involved. His first idea was to have me play a bitter and angry man who comes home from work and vents to his cat. We filmed that first short, Advice, together in two days.

Jon's next idea was to take two characters from Advice and pair them together in an almost surreal version of The Odd Couple, centered around their accidental ingestion of peyote and their creeping existential dread. What started as a 12 minute straight forward short shot in a weekend, eventually stretched into a 33 minute absurdist comedy we worked on for 18 months. The Project is a weird, funny, and well-crafted short that ultimately was rejected by every film festival it was submitted to, but that I was extremely proud of.

Fast forward to this year. I got a call from Jon that he was going to make a new short about AI and needed some help with it. He sent me an idea for a song necessary to the story, so I wrote and quickly recorded something that I thought fit his prompt, then filmed a brief scene as a YouTuber trying to bounce a ping pong ball into the mouth of his dead grandmother, which is not at all a surprising thing to be asked to do by Jon.

About two months ago, I received an email with the final copy of his new short, Creator. I would have been amazed at how funny and well made the movie was if not for the fact that I think Jon is the most talented craftsman and artist I've ever met, and I expect anything he makes to be great. The quality of Creator does not surprise me, but what has surprised me is that Jon's work is actually being recognized. So far, Creator has been accepted into five film festivals, and recently took home the Best Narrative Short Film prize at Sugarloaf. Now that's something to be proud of!"

[Eric Hantson](#), Loan Officer, [Embrace Home Loans](#)

"Helping people as a senior wealth adviser in Australia brings me immense satisfaction and purpose. Nothing gives me greater pleasure than guiding clients through the complexities of structuring their investments to help them achieve their financial goals. I take particular pride in advising on superannuation portfolios, where careful selection of shares can deliver an outcome that aligns with their risk profile while providing both capital growth and income. It is incredibly rewarding to see clients' wealth grow steadily and securely over time, knowing that my expertise contributed to their financial well-being."

Superannuation is a critical component of retirement planning in Australia, and I understand how important it is to tailor investment strategies to each client's unique circumstances. By taking into account their risk tolerance and investment objectives, I aim to create a diversified portfolio that balances growth opportunities with reliable income streams. While equity markets have experienced volatility in recent years, the strategies I implement have nonetheless produced more than acceptable returns. Helping clients navigate market fluctuations with confidence is a key part of my role, and it motivates me to stay informed and proactive.

I also find great fulfillment in educating clients about their investment options and the long-term benefits of disciplined portfolio management. Empowering clients with knowledge enables them to make informed decisions and fosters a strong sense of trust. My goal is to build lasting relationships where clients feel supported and assured that their financial future is in capable hands. This personal connection adds meaning to my work beyond the numbers and returns.

Despite the ups and downs in financial markets, I remain committed to adapting strategies to changing conditions and regulatory environments. It is gratifying to witness clients meet and often exceed their financial milestones, thanks to a well-structured investment approach. This success not only brings financial security but also peace of mind, which is invaluable in today's uncertain world. Advising private wealth clients and helping them build a prosperous future is truly a privilege and an endeavour I deeply cherish."

[Paul Kelly](#), Senior Investment Advisor, [Shaw and Partners](#)

The irony is not lost on me that I'm now a writer, living in NYC, but I'd like to think that this is due in large part to the love of writing I inherited from my mom. I'm so proud of her and so fortunate to be able to celebrate her 90th birthday in January. This one's for you mom! Maybe happy ending? I think so!



Wishing everyone a safe, happy and healthy 2026!

***"The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams."
~ Eleanor Roosevelt***