



**FINANCIAL ADVISORS**

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# ACCUMULATING INTEREST



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# REMINDERS

## Year End Planning Checklist

For 2026 we ask that all clients forward a copy of their completed tax return to [taxes@bandcfinancial.com](mailto:taxes@bandcfinancial.com).

As always, we recommend coordinating with your tax advisor/CPA on any tax-related matter.




## Requests via Phone

When calling the office to request funds, set up ACH instructions, or for similar matters, we may ask security questions to verify your identity.

## Contact Us



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### Office Hours:

Mon-Thurs 8:30am - 5:00pm  
Friday 8:30am - 4:00pm  
Sat-Sun CLOSED

### Office Closed:

April 3 Good Friday  
May 25 Memorial Day  
June 19 Juneteenth  
July 4 Fourth of July  
September 7 Labor Day



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# FROM OVERWHELMED BORROWER TO FINANCIAL ADVISOR: THE LESSONS I BRING TO EVERY CLIENT

*by Kellie Smith, CAP*

Student loan debt isn't just a financial challenge. For many, it shapes the earliest years of adulthood. Research shows that student loan balances have risen dramatically over the past two decades, leaving many borrowers carrying debt well into their 30s and 40s. Behind every statistic is a real story, and mine began long before I ever became a financial advisor.

I graduated college in mid-2001 at 20 years old, just months before 9/11. I was the first in my family to earn a degree, a milestone that meant everything to all of us. But I had chosen an out-of-state school, and with six figures of student loan debt waiting for me, asking my family to pay for flights and hotels so they could watch me walk across a stage felt impossible. I chose to have my diploma mailed home to Boston.

Instead of a ceremony, we celebrated in my parents' backyard with a simple barbecue. It was meaningful, and I don't regret it. After the party, my parents handed me a thick coupon-style repayment book. They had been making the payments while I was in school, but now that I had a bachelor's degree, it was my turn. We all assumed I'd find a job quickly.

I thought I had. I'd secured what I believed was my dream job, but just weeks after 9/11, the program was eliminated and the funding reallocated. Overnight, I was unemployed in a world that felt completely upside down.

With more than \$100,000 in student loan debt, I didn't have the luxury of waiting for the perfect opportunity. I needed a paycheck. I accepted a management position with an international retail company. It wasn't my dream job, but it allowed me to make my loan payments and avoid forbearance.

During those years, I devoted myself to work, school, and even a second job at times to keep up with my payments. By January 2002, at just 21 years old, I was working full time and back in school pursuing a master's degree. This time, I paid cash. I was determined not to add a single dollar to my debt.

Those choices shaped the way I advise clients today. Student loans aren't just numbers on a page. They influence your choices, your confidence, and your sense of stability. But with the right strategy, you can move forward at any age.

As my career progressed, I stayed disciplined. I budgeted carefully, avoided lifestyle creep, and made every payment on time. By 31, my mortgage payment — including interest — was less than my monthly student loan payment and interest rate. That comparison alone shows how heavy the burden of student debt can be.

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At 34, I finally paid off my student loans. Tearing out that last coupon is a memory I will hold for the rest of my life.

My journey is just one example of how challenging and transformative managing student loans can be. It's also why I'm passionate about helping others navigate their own path. Whether you're just starting out, balancing debt with major life decisions, or working to protect your long-term financial future, the key is having a plan that evolves with you. Student loans may shape your early years, but they don't have to define your entire financial life.

Often people ask me how I did it. Sometimes it's parents worried about the debt their adult children are carrying, and sometimes it's people my own age still paying off their loans decades later. The truth is, there was no secret formula. What worked for me was a commitment to living below my means and refusing to let lifestyle pressure dictate my financial decisions. I didn't drive a fancy car. I didn't buy luxury items for the sake of a brand name. I clipped coupons. I resold items. I thrifted. I worked full time, went to school, and picked up a second job when I needed to. My focus was always on the long-term goal, not the short-term temptation. A wise old man once told me, "Young and frugal is hip, but old and poor is pitiful." That line stayed with me, and it guided every financial choice I made.

## What Worked for Me

- Living below my means and resisting lifestyle creep
- Driving modest cars and avoiding unnecessary upgrades
- Choosing value over labels and skipping luxury purchases
- Clipping coupons and being intentional about everyday spending
- Reselling items I no longer needed and buying secondhand when it made sense
- Working full time while in school and taking on a second job when necessary
- Paying cash for my master's degree to avoid adding to my debt
- Keeping long-term financial goals front and center, even when it meant saying no

The message is simple: don't try to keep up with the Joneses. Focus on your financial future, stay disciplined, and remember that the sacrifices you make when you're young can give you freedom and stability later in life.

If you're navigating student loans and want a strategy that supports both your present and your future, a fiduciary financial advisor can help you chart a path forward.

**SCHEDULE A MEETING  
WITH KELLIE**



# CELEBRATING 31 YEARS OF B&C AND 34 YEARS OF WORKING TOGETHER



When Allan Cohen founded B&C Financial Advisors in 1995, he brought with him a vision for a firm built on trust, discipline, and long term relationships. In those earliest days, one of the first people to help bring that vision to life was Jacqueline Bos.

Jacqueline had worked with Allan even before B&C existed, beginning her career as the assistant to Allan's secretary. When Allan launched the firm, she became his very first hire, setting the foundation for the culture of loyalty, integrity, and client centered service that still defines B&C today.

More than three decades later, Allan and Jacqueline remain at the heart of the firm. Their partnership has grown from those early administrative days into a leadership team that continues to guide B&C with clarity and purpose. Today, Jacqueline serves as Allan's partner and as the firm's Chief Compliance Officer, ensuring that B&C upholds the highest standards of ethics and regulatory excellence.

As we celebrate 31 years of B&C and 34 years of working side by side, we honor the dedication, commitment, and shared vision that have shaped the firm from the beginning. Their long standing partnership is a rare constant in a fast changing industry and a reminder that strong relationships are the foundation of lasting success.

Cheers to Allan, Jacqueline, and the legacy they continue to build together.

# EMPLOYEE SPOTLIGHT

## Ansley Nicholson Investment Manager

Ansley Nicholson joined B&C Financial Advisors in 2024 after graduating from the University of North Florida with a double major in Finance and Financial Planning and a minor in Digital Marketing and Analytics. During her time at UNF she served as president of the FPA student chapter and was active in Zeta Tau Alpha as Treasurer. She enjoys spending time with family, being crafty and going on walks.

**What is your favorite season?**

*Summer!*

**Are you a morning person or a night owl?**

*Definitely a night owl.*

**Do you have any pets?**

*Yes, a 2-year-old Wheaten Terrier. Her name is Ruby. I also have a turtle named Bean. :)*

**What is the strangest food combination you enjoy?**

*String Cheese + Peanut Butter... strange I know but don't knock it until you try it!*

**If you could live in a movie, which one would it be and why?**

*The Grand Budapest Hotel by Wes Anderson, because every moment would move slower, more elegant, and intentional.*



*Ansley and her husband, Jett*

## B&C Family



**THE B&C TEAM ENJOYED SOME TEAM BONDING AT BOWLING, AND ADAM OETHER, VP, TOOK HOME THE TROPHY!**



**THE CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM (CAITLIN HOWARD, ROBIN PHILLIPS, JACQUE BOS, AND GENNY STEPHENSON) ENJOYED A DINNER AT 14 PRIME**



**(LEFT TO RIGHT) THOMAS ELLIS, EVP, JACQUE BOS, CCO, AND ADAM OERTHER, VP CELEBRATED THEIR BIRTHDAY!**

# CLIENT *FOR A CAUSE*

## Judy and Len Elikan, a Legacy of Giving Back



For nearly two decades, the Judy and Len Elikan Promising Leaders Scholarship has done far more than provide financial support—it has nurtured the next generation of leaders. Founded in the early 2000's, the scholarship reflects Mr. Elikan's lifelong passion for helping Jewish teens stay connected, engaged, and grounded in the values that shape strong adults. His vision was simple but profound: when young people feel rooted in their identity and supported by their community, they grow into leaders who carry those values into college, their careers, and eventually their own families.

Mr. Elikan believed deeply in the power of Jewish teens to repair the world and he saw leadership not as a title, but as a responsibility. He understood that when teens are encouraged to lead with compassion, curiosity, and courage, they become adults who uplift others. The scholarship was his way of ensuring that every promising young leader had the opportunity to grow, contribute, and shine.

In 2025, Mr. Elikan reconnected with Kellie Smith, with whom he had worked previously, and approached B&C to help steward the assets that support this meaningful fund. His goal was clear: to ensure the scholarship remains active, sustainable, and impactful for generations to come. As part of this planning, we are utilizing Qualified Charitable Distributions (QCDs) from his IRA—an approach that both reduces taxable income and fuels his passion for giving back through scholarships.

Today, the firm is honored to assist the Elikan family in preserving and strengthening this legacy of leadership. Inspired by his own memories of his teen years attending Camp Tel Yehuda and receiving financial aid from a philanthropist, Mr. Elikan and his wife Judy of blessed memory have provided scholarships to over 60 teens.

This year's Promising Leader Award recipients, Anna Millrood of Jacksonville and Isaac Steinberg of Gainesville, embody everything the Elikan family hoped to inspire. They are thoughtful, committed, and driven by a desire to serve—whether through community programs, youth leadership, or acts of kindness that strengthen Jewish life.

Each recipient carries forward the values Mr. Elikan championed: a dedication to community, a commitment to service, and a belief that leadership begins with showing up for others. Through this scholarship, his impact lives on in every young person who steps into their future with confidence, purpose, and a heart for repairing the world.



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