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Rep.®

The Source for Investment Professionals

Stephen Joffe thought his cash was parked in safe, liquid investments. But, like scores of other wealthy retail investors, he learned that his money is trapped in the auction-rate securities market ...

FREEZE

PROS WITH HEART

If any industry could use a dose of optimism right now, it's financial services. And for the men and women who toil every day on behalf of their clients, this year's 28th annual Outstanding Advisor Award winners could be exactly what advisors need. (Just read the cover story first, it's a bit of a downer ...)

Every year, *Registered Rep.* receives hundreds of nomination letters from all types of advisors across the country for our annual OAA. Paring the pile down to 10 is never an easy task for the staff. However, reading about the high esteem in which many of your colleagues and clients hold you serves as a rather pleasant tradeoff. And with negative news reports dominating the Wall Street reporting scene, it couldn't be a better time for a reminder of just how many honest, giving and successful people work in this business. They are not only the best at what they do for a living. Many of them have devoted extraordinary amounts of time and effort to giving something back, whether to their own communities or those in far away places. They've got it good, and they want to brighten the lot

**THE 28TH ANNUAL
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of as many others as they can.

As it turns out, kids are a dominant theme among the various causes driven and supported by this year's winners. But there were several other themes as well: Marc Walsh is a volunteer pilot who flies patients to specialized medical care; William Lervaag collects thousands of tons of food surplus and redistributes it to those in need around Peoria, Illinois; Gerry Strid is fighting the uphill battle against homelessness in Philadelphia and his passion is palpable—he's the kind of guy who could get it done.

All 10 of the OAAs serve not only as a reminder of the human capacity for compassion, but also to illuminate the creative and ingenious methods we find to help one another. In many ways it's not surprising that financial advisors can be found leading these kinds of efforts. Organized, energetic, well-connected and accustomed to putting in years of spade work before the fruits of their labor can be seen, advisors make great fundraisers, consultants and volunteers for any cause. So, turn the page and read about this year's 10 winners. We think you'll be inspired.—**John Churchill**

2008

Registered Rep.
**Outstanding
Advisor
Awards**

Gerry Strid has a fairly large brood—5 kids and 8 grandchildren. But you get the feeling his family might also include a number of other troubled kids, as well as large portion of Philadelphia's homeless population.

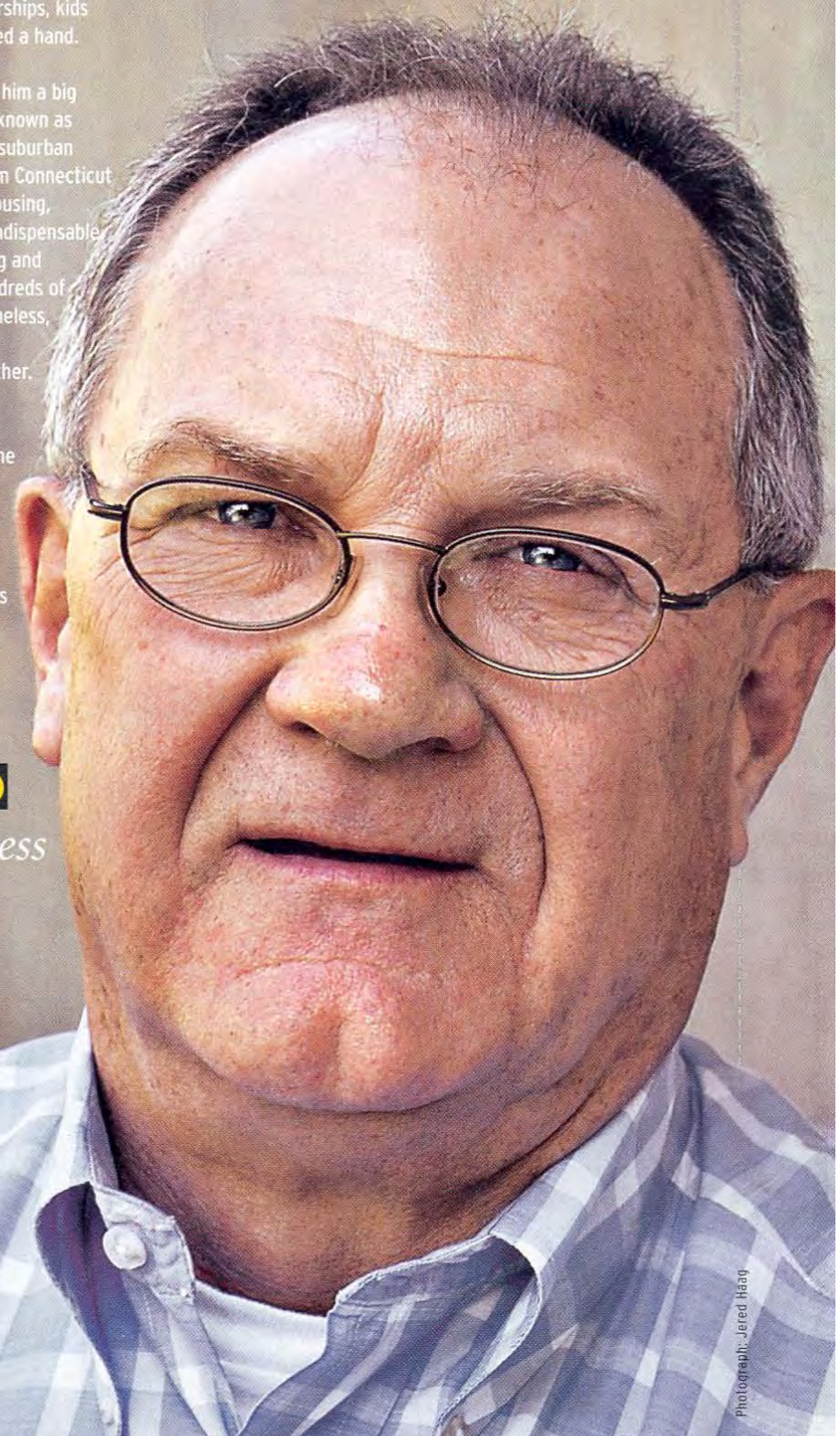
"I've always rooted for the underdog," says Strid, the chief asset gatherer and founder of the Strid Wealth Management Group, a team which includes two of his children, Erik and Paul. Strid, a former defensive tackle for Villanova, lives in a house across the street from his alma mater. Aside from regularly serving as a post-game party spot, his house has, over the years, been home to more than two dozen kids from the area—kids with drug problems, kids that lost scholarships, kids that couldn't pay for housing or just kids that needed a hand. Some stayed for years at a time.

Strid's big heart and open arms have also made him a big name on the roughest streets of Philadelphia. He's known as "Zeke"—the "hick nickname" his mostly urban and suburban Villanova teammates bestowed on the farm boy from Connecticut 40 years ago. To Project H.O.M.E (an acronym for housing, employment, medical care and employment), he's indispensable. He has helped the group with fundraising, marketing and consulting, and regularly engaged directly with hundreds of the people the group looks after. "Kids and the homeless, that's who I'm good with," he says.

Apparently, he's not so bad with his clients, either. Inspired by his own anxiety over the prospect of paying five college tuitions, Strid built an education-planning program that he eventually sold in the 1970s to Merrill Lynch, the firm he worked for at the time. Education planning became a core tenet of his financial-planning and retirement-planning practice, which today serves mostly family owned and run businesses (like his own) and professionals nearing retirement.

Serving people is undoubtedly Strid's passion. And after a four-way bypass surgery briefly put him out of action in 2007—and off the fundraising circuit—he's back with bigger goals than before.

In 2006 he organized a gala that raised \$1 million in a single night. He calls his current effort the "I Care 50," and the goal is to raise \$50 million through \$100,000 multi-year commitments. He can't disclose what he's raised so far, but says it beats his previous effort by a long shot: "So far, the response has been great." The message is powerful, but in this case the messenger surely has something to do with it.—**John Churchill**



GERRY STRID

Tackling Homelessness

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| Name: Gerry Strid |
| Firm: Wachovia Securities |
| City: Berwyn, Pa. |
| Age: 65 |
| Years as a Rep: 40 |
| Years with Current Firm: 6 |
| Production: \$1.85 million |
| AUM: \$265 million |
| Product Mix: insurance, 10%; stocks 10%; managed accounts, 70%; bonds, 10% |
| Specialty: financial and retirement planning |
| Designations: "My sons have those." |
| Licenses: Series 7, 65 |

Photograph: Jared Haag