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Millennial switches course to focus more on people

Student of China takes untraditional route to become Sage Ruddy advisor

By NICOLE SHELDON

Undergoing several career changes is expected of the millennial generation. While shifting career paths has become the norm, it is a daunting leap.

Caroline Hill, 29, began her career working for Xerox Corp. She started out as an intern and when she left the company five years later she had ascended to service and solutions executive. Today, she is a financial advisor for Sage Ruddy Co. Inc.

After half a decade with Xerox, Hill decided that she was not getting the fulfillment she desired from her work. She was helping streamline business processes, yet she longed to help people and make an impact on others' lives.

"Xerox is a really traditional company, and I knew I needed to go elsewhere to get that 'other' type of experience," says Hill. "So I changed my entire career path and became an advisor."

Hill admits that veering courses to become a financial advisor was intimidating because she had to build her own business portfolio. She embarked on her journey into financial advising with a training program through Wells Fargo where she became a licensed advisor in 2014.

Hill's previous education includes a bachelor's degree in Chinese studies from St. Lawrence University in 2010 and a master's in business administration from the University of Akron in 2013. Chinese studies may seem like the outlier in Hill's education and career equation, but, in fact, it was an integral in laying the foundation for her work in the business world.

"I knew that China was going to be a huge player in our global econ-



Photo by Kate Melton

Caroline Hill, a 29-year-old financial advisor for Sage Ruddy Co. Inc., left a position with Xerox to pursue more personally fulfilling work.

omy," she says. "So I decided that if I was going to be in the business world in some kind of capacity, I really needed to understand what this global economic power was going to be like and how they worked."

From literature and language to politics and philosophy, Hill immersed herself in Chinese culture. She studied abroad in Shanghai where she lived for four months with a family that spoke no English. Hill gained an appreciation for different perspectives and experiences from being a Chinese studies major, which has influenced her to pursue a diverse client base.

Hill went on to earn her MBA while working full time at Xerox in Ohio. Hill credits her master's de-

gree with providing her the "expertise in the finance and accounting side that I needed to really be able to make this career jump. If I didn't have that, I probably wouldn't have been able to make this career change," she says.

Hill is currently continuing her education through the Yale University School of Management.

"It's an executive program called Investment Management Theory and Practice," she says. "That's a personal investment that I made to better myself as an advisor and to hold myself to one of the highest standards in the industry."

In her free time, Hill enjoys skiing and is an avid runner. She and her husband, Stephen, enjoy trying

out locally owned restaurants in the area. At the moment, her favorite is Nosh.

Hill also divides her time working for three local organizations: Allendale Columbia School, First Presbyterian Church and the Greater Rochester YMCA.

Hill is an Allendale Columbia alumna and she serves as vice president-elect for the alumni association.

"I really believe in what Allendale Columbia is doing to change the landscape of education, but also the community service that they provide," says Hill. "They are so focused on delivering excellent education not only to their students, but to the surrounding Rochester area."

At First Presbyterian, Hill is a trustee on the generosity committee, which is in charge of the church's stewardship, as well as the finance committee, which handles the endowment. Hill admires all of the community service work that the First Presbyterian Church participates in, and says "it's a wonderful experience for me and my family."

As for the YMCA, Hill serves on the investment committee assisting in endowment management.

This spring, Hill is participating in Sage Ruddy University, which are courses that advisors from the firm offer to the public and to clients. The theme of Hill's seminar is "Suddenly Single," and she will focus on mentoring those who are in charge of household finances for the first time due to death, divorce or another type of life transition.

"Sage Ruddy University is a wonderful opportunity to provide value to our clients and to the public," says Hill. "I feel that as an advisor, it's my duty to be able to provide valuable and accurate information to people who are looking for it."

nsheldon@bridgetowermedia.com / (585) 363-7031