

# Knowledge and determination keep Francis Financial in business as a multi generational company



In 1986, John Francis did not let the downturn in the oil industry defeat him. Instead, he saw the need to diversify and followed through. The result is two long-time, successful Great Bend businesses – Francis Financial Services (FFS) and Corrosion DC, both at 1015 McKinley.

“I worked for Francis Casing Crews in several capacities,” Francis recalled about his years at the business his dad acquired in 1973. “I started there after high school graduation. I did jobs on oil drilling rigs, paid the bills, did the payroll – whatever it took to help Dad build the business.”

He later earned his bachelor’s in business at Fort Hays State University with degrees in finance and economics, and a minor in accounting. In 1986 oil prices crashed, and Francis got his insurance license and in 1987 his securities license.

During the 1980s, times were good in the oil patch, but as soon as the crash came, Francis saw people who previously looked wealthy – nice trucks, boats, motorcycles – were soon broke. He set out to help the everyday worker by employing his skills as an investment

representative. “It bothered me to see people not having any savings for their future,” Francis said.

In 1988, Francis, along with his Dad and Jim Adams acquired Corrosion DC from its founder Harvey Fanshier. Francis was elected president and put in charge of running the newly acquired company. “I didn’t know a thing about the cathodic protection business but Harvey was an excellent mentor,” Francis said. “I used to tell customers, ‘Harvey has the knowledge and will to help me learn and I have the determination to work hard.’

“For much of the 90s, I worked in the two oilfield businesses and as a financial representative,” said Francis, investment professional. “The kids were young, we were in debt, so I, along with, Nancy, my wife and the first female partner of Adams, Brown, Beran, and Ball, worked, worked and worked. In time, we added to the teams of all businesses to allow for growth.”

At our peak in 2006, we employed over 60 people in Great Bend, Colby, Garden City and Liberal.

Just as Francis worked with his dad, his daughter, Leslie Francis Klug, works in the family business as a financial advisor. The financial services firm took a leap forward when Rae Ann Brack joined as office manager and customer service representative. She has been in that role for 19 years.

This team is the backbone of the financial services firm that provides a wide range of investment and insurance strategies. These include: individual retirement accounts; college savings plans; small and large business retirement plans, including SEP, Simple IRA, 401(k) and 403(b) plans; pension, profit-sharing and defined-benefit plans; non-retirement investment accounts; life insurance, including all lines of term and permanent insurance; and long-term-care insurance.

“Francis Financial Services has offered investment and retirement solutions for more than 30 years, with personal service as a top priority,” John said. “We provide financial education because it leads to better

decision-making and better outcomes. Leslie and I help many clients as a team. She is much savvier than I at technical analysis, and our clients recognize that our combination of experience and analysis is a valuable proposition.”

John relies on his extensive industry and investment knowledge; Leslie brings her finance and analytical skills to the table. She has been a licensed representative for six years and advances her knowledge of investing. Leslie earned a bachelor’s in accounting and finance from Kanas State University and a master’s in business administration from the University of Denver. She moved back to her hometown in 2013. Leslie obtained her insurance and securities licenses in 2014 and registered investment advisor license in 2016.

Most FFS clients live in Kansas and the Francis family travels to visit annually with as many as possible. Technology allows them to maintain solid relationships with clients in eight states.

No matter where clients live, “it is imperative we get to know them so we can provide sound advice,” John commented. “There are three main questions we ask: What is your timeline? What is your goal? What is your risk tolerance? From there, we listen and learn about clients’ personal and financial situations.”

FFS uses the DARIM approach – Discover, Analyze, Recommend, Implement and Monitor. Each step is crucial to the process and allows Francis Financial to better help clients during their financial lifecycle.

During the current global public-health crisis, clients have asked questions about what they should do.

“We refer back to the three questions we ask about timeline, goals and risk tolerance,” Leslie said. “Clients often say their risk tolerance has changed. Markets go down, they go up. One day alone in March, it rose 10 percent after declining 17 percent last week.

“Reacting to daily news can be costly to long-term objectives. In the long term, the market has provided returns well in excess of inflation. It overcame the crash of 1987, the 2001 terrorist attacks and the recession that followed, and the Great Recession. The market will overcome the COVID-19 crisis too.”

Of course, Leslie added, clients are encouraged to save three to six months of income for emergencies. “This is why we advise that a good long-term plan should contain a short-term plan.”

A big part of the success of FFS is “Great Bend provides a great place to grow our families and businesses,” Leslie commented. “There is a true sense of community and appreciation for personal service.

“Our main source of marketing has been positive word-of-mouth

and referrals from pleased clients; that is the biggest compliment we can receive. It demonstrates that our commitment to clients is paying off; it speaks volumes.”

To further illustrate the far-reaching experience of the Francis family, John spent his childhood and high school years in South America, Texas and Louisiana as his dad worked in the oilfield.

This background played a role in John acquiring Corrosion DC, the oil and gas service company. It installs and maintains cathodic protection systems in Kansas, Colorado, Nebraska, Oklahoma, Texas and Wyoming. Material sales and consulting surveys also are offered.

“We have gained the reputation as being a long-term partner,” said General Manager Nick Klug, Leslie’s husband. “We use state-of-the-art technology and provide on-going service after installation. Corrosion DC has been an industry leader since 1974.”

Cathodic protection: lengthens the economic life of a well; reduces long-term operating costs; provides environmental protection; and reduces overall risk exposure.

“Our unique system is stronger and more durable than others,” Nick noted. “Our team works with customers to provide the best possible service. The staff is exceptionally trained and certified by equipment suppliers and manufacturers unique to the cathodic protection industry.”

Corrosion DC, Inc. believes in “Prevention that Pays.”

