

The Balance Between Prosperity and Happiness: Mary Hagerman's Unique Vision

She is a recipient in the Distinguished Advisor category.

By Carole Le Hirez | February 11, 2025



For 35 years, Mary Hagerman has combined innovation, expertise and humanity to redefine the standards of her profession. As a senior portfolio manager, investment advisor and financial planner, she leads the Mary Hagerman Group at Raymond James, a multidisciplinary team that reflects her forward-thinking approach and vision.

Mary Hagerman did not take a traditional path to becoming an advisor. A graduate of the Université du Québec à Chicoutimi, she got her start in the stock market by investing small amounts while she was still a student. “I was fascinated by the dynamics of financial markets, even though I didn’t have much money at the time. This curiosity led me to take courses in securities and pursue a career in finance,” she says.

Before launching her career, Mary Hagerman explored various fields, including marketing and media, while working for CBC/Radio-Canada. Her ambition to become an entrepreneur and build her own vision quickly led her to open her own shop. “One day, I said to myself: ‘You can write about the people who make the news or you can make the news yourself by doing your job,’” she recalls.

After a few years spent in an independent firm, she joined Desjardins Wealth Management and worked there for 22 years. She became the first female portfolio manager at the firm to create discretionary exchange-traded fund (ETF) portfolios for its clients.

“ETFs offer flexibility and cost-benefit efficiency that align perfectly with my investment strategy,” she says.

Seeking new challenges, Mary Hagerman joined Raymond James in 2019 to “feed her entrepreneurial side.” Her ETF-based portfolio models have earned her multiple accolades as a “Canadian ETF Champion” by Wealth Management Professional.

A HUMAN-CENTRED APPROACH

While Mary Hagerman excels in the art of building high-performance portfolios, what really motivates her is her humanistic approach. “What I’m passionate about in my profession is the human touch. Money is intrinsically linked to emotions, and understanding this dynamic allows me to support my clients beyond simple numbers,” she explains. This vision inspired her to write her book *The Black Belt Investor*, in which she compares financial mastery to the art of karate, a discipline she has practiced for over 30 years.

Her wealth management philosophy is based on a strong belief: “You can’t be truly happy without a healthy relationship with money.” This idea led to the creation of her “Prosperous and Happy” brand, which guides her initiatives, whether it be portfolio management, speaking engagements, her podcast “The Prosperous and Happy Life” or her columns published in *Finance et Investissement* and *Investment Executive*.

ACHIEVEMENTS THAT INSPIRE

Among her proudest achievements, Mary Hagerman cites the recognition and success of the philosophy that has guided her practice for many years. “During COVID-19, people have become aware that wealth alone does not guarantee happiness. This period has been an opportunity to deepen our approach and encourage honest discussions with our clients about their values and goals,” she says.

Her team at Raymond James, made up of internal and external specialists, exemplifies this holistic vision. Whether it’s estate planning, insurance or even personal support services like finding homes for loved ones, she strives to meet all of her clients’ needs.

At the same time, as a meditator, she wants to continue promoting mindfulness in the financial industry, an aspect she develops through meditation sessions for Raymond James employees. “Mindfulness helps you listen better and develop empathy, two essential skills to succeed as an advisor,” she says.

A VISION FOR THE FUTURE

Mary Hagerman believes that the future of the profession lies, among other things, in increased collaboration between different experts. “Since COVID-19, we have learned to work differently. [Now,] teams must integrate more specialists to offer an enriched client experience. We must go beyond simple portfolio management and listen to our clients to support them in all aspects of their lives,” she predicts.

She also believes that it will be crucial for teams to ensure that they integrate common values and a consistent approach from all members, from the administrative assistant to the estate planning expert.

She believes that financial management is about more than just maximizing returns. “We’re not psychologists, but we have a duty to listen to our clients carefully,” she says. “It’s often this listening that opens the door to holistic solutions that go well beyond portfolio management.”

WORTHY RECOGNITION

The jury of the Advisors in the Spotlight competition highlights Mary Hagerman’s impressive career and deep commitment. “When we reviewed Mary Hagerman’s application, we were blown away by the breadth of her accomplishments. Not only does she run an influential podcast, but she is also actively engaged in society. An ETF pioneer, passionate about environmental, social and governance issues, and with a 35-year career, Mary Hagerman embodies the spirit of innovation and leadership.” Her ability to give back to society is a testament to her deep commitment and lasting impact on the sector.”

As Canadians’ financial challenges intensify and uncertainty taints markets, Mary Hagerman stands out for her expertise, determination and human approach guided by the ambition to make prosperity and happiness accessible to all.