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NABCAP PREMIER ADVISOR 2011
Full list: 14C & 15C

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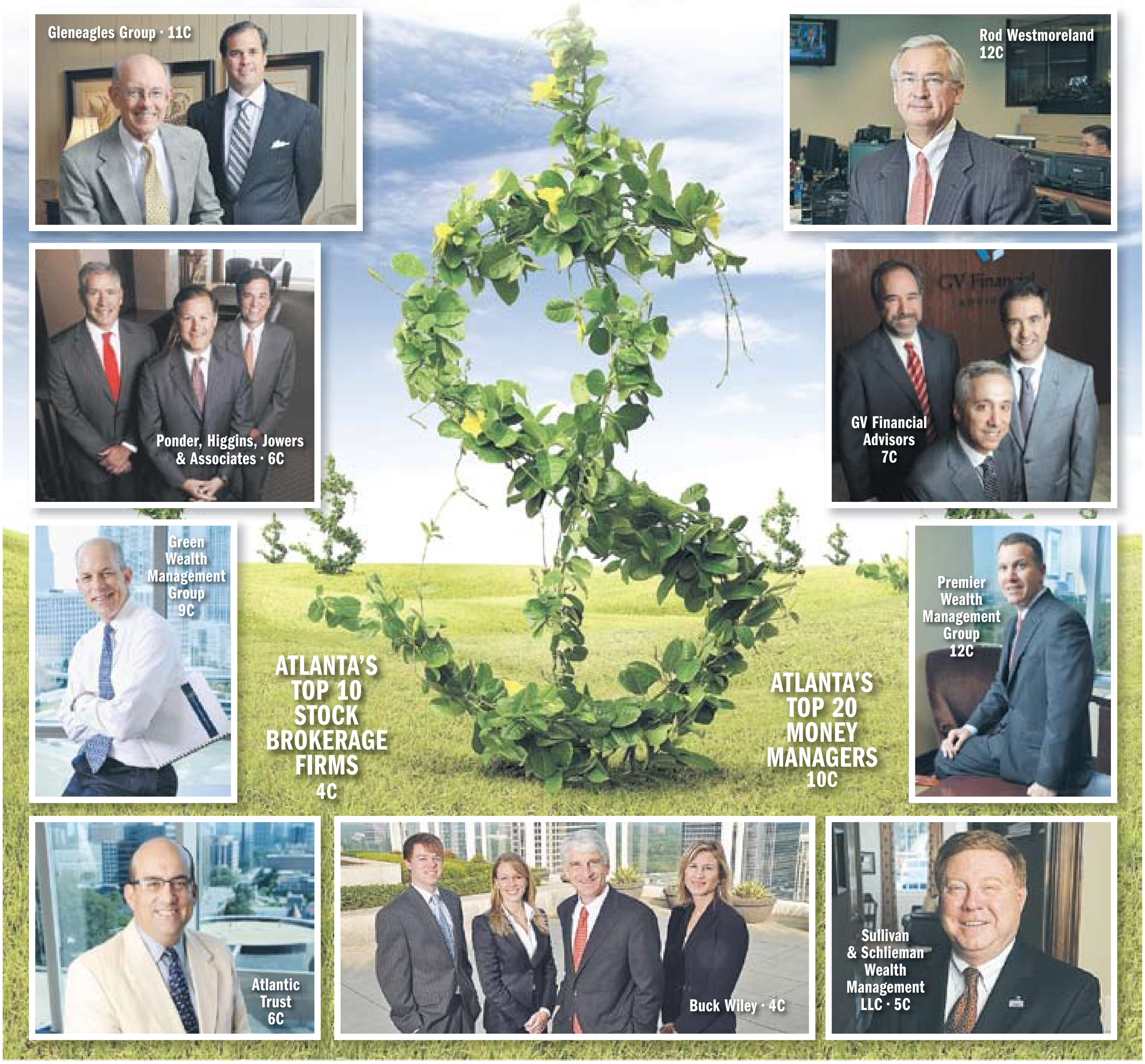
Atlanta's Top Wealth Managers

How area investment managers set the bar



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Highlighting Atlanta's top wealth managers

Welcome to Atlanta Business Chronicle's first-ever Top Wealth Managers special section.

To bring you a glimpse of some of the city's best and brightest in the wealth management industry, we partnered with The National Association of Board Certified Advisory Practices (NABCAP) to select the top practices in our area.

The nonprofit, along with its board of directors, has developed a formula designed to identify the best practices as determined by NABCAP. You will hear more about their methodology for selecting these practices on the following pages. Through exhaustive surveys and the use of their proprietary formula, NABCAP separated out the strongest practitioners from the Atlanta area industry's pool of advisers. You will find, inside, a full listing of 82 of these practices.

NABCAP also selected a Top 9 from among Atlanta's best wealth managers. These bar-setters were recognized in certain categories of excellence, including: Client Education & Customer Service Model; Financial Planning; and Risk Management. We bring you profiles of these exemplary practitioners. You will see the listing for these practices below.

These top industry veterans vary in their techniques and specialties, as you will see in reading their stories. Some have honed their practices by focusing on how to help their clients navigate the turbulent economy. Others have developed a unique approach to asset management and others have focused on a team approach that brings a variety of skills to the table to deliver the best results to clients.

While this section in no way covers all of Atlanta's robust wealth management industry, it does provide a snapshot of the best the industry has to offer.

Top 10 advantages NABCAP provides investors

1. Separation of advisory practices
2. Creating an industry standard
3. Objective and unbiased review of advisory practices
4. Bridging the gap between investors and advisory practices
5. Becoming a reliable and trusted resource
6. Independently certified process
7. Objective verification system
8. Black-box approach
9. Investors viewpoint
10. Nonprofit organization

Source: NABCAP, www.nabcap.org

NABCAP list of top wealth managers

This list of top Atlanta wealth managers was evaluated and selected by the National Association of Board Certified Advisory Practices, or NABCAP. The practices listed alphabetically on pages 14D-15D were selected by NABCAP after surveying advisers throughout the greater metro Atlanta area. Though all the practices listed met NABCAP's objective criteria, these nine were singled out as exemplary in three categories: Client Education & Customer Service Model; Financial Planning; and Risk Management.

PRACTICE NAME (CITY)	CATEGORY OF EXCELLENCE
Sullivan & Schlieman Wealth Management LLC (Alpharetta)	Client Education & Customer Service Model
Rod Westmoreland (Atlanta)	Client Education & Customer Service Model
GV Financial Advisors (Atlanta)	Client Education & Customer Service Model
Premier Wealth Management Group (Atlanta)	Financial Planning
Gleneagles Group (Atlanta)	Financial Planning
Ponder, Higgins, Jowers & Associates (Atlanta)	Financial Planning
Green Wealth Management Group (Atlanta)	Risk Management
Buck Wiley (Atlanta)	Risk Management
Atlantic Trust (Atlanta)	Risk Management

Gaining trust of clients in turbulent economy

By Doug DeLoach
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

The origins of **Sullivan & Schlieman Wealth Management LLC** can be traced back to 2003 when Andrew Sullivan and Josh Schlieman began working together at SunTrust Investment Services. Five years later, the two men struck out on their own and founded SSWM, a comprehensive wealth planning firm established to serve affluent individuals and their families as they pursue their financial goals.

The decision proved to be a fruitful one, as the new firm met with almost immediate success. Today, the nine-person staff at SSWM services more than 300 clients with more than $250 million in assets under management.

"I think our performance is a testament to the level of trust clients put in our expertise and vision, even amidst unfavorable market conditions," said Sullivan, who earned an BBA in finance from **The University of Georgia** and a master's in international business from **Georgia State University**.

As part of the nationwide network of **LPL Financial Advisors**, which provides an integrated platform of proprietary technology, brokerage and investment advisory services to more than 12,000 financial advisers across the country, SSWM is ranked as the 44th-largest based on advisory assets under management among more than 4,000 branches. According to Sullivan, SSWM ranks at the top among fellow LPL-affiliated firms in Georgia.

"Our mission is to form lifelong partnerships with individuals and their families in order to deliver superior financial strategies," Sullivan said.

Each client partnership begins with a discovery process, which is designed to establish a clear understanding of the client's personal objectives. Once a strategy has been mapped out, SSWM keeps client up to speed through meetings and a continuing stream of correspondence in the form of newsletters, e-mails and phone calls.

"Our ability to deliver on our commitment to clients is best demonstrated by our retention rate, which has averaged 99 [percent] to 100 percent over the life of the firm," Sullivan said.

SSWM offers comprehensive financial and investment planning, wealth management, estate and tax planning, and risk management and insurance planning. One area of expertise includes income planning.

"We help the client build that nest egg, and then determine the income stream it will sustain for the client in retirement," Sullivan said. "We build a strategy that seeks to produce that income, including how to best distribute it and how all income sources interact in the process."

SSWM brings a wealth management approach to financial planning. This strategic model is designed to cover every aspect of the client's financial well-being.

"When we talk about comprehensive financial planning, we mean investable assets and portfolio construction, umbrella liability policies and everything in between," said Schlieman, another UGA graduate (BBA in Finance) who received his Certified Financial Planner designation through **Oglethorpe University**.

In the current economic climate, the SSWM team remains laser-focused on three core strengths: relationships, expertise and vision. Advisers consider themselves consultants and coaches, offering unbiased advice to clients and ready accessibility. For example, each client has the cell phone number of the appropriate adviser or advisers.

"We strive to help clients solve problems even if they do not directly pertain to their investments or financial plan," Schlieman said. "If there is an issue to address that falls outside our area of expertise, we guide the client to the appropriate adviser in that field."

One of the key components contributing to SSWM's success has been its client advisory board, which meets twice a year and serves as "the firm's internal compass." Wide-ranging discussions about industry trends and activities within the company, as well as input from a client's perspective, help drive accountability throughout SSWM's operational processes.

"From this select group of clients we are able to glean crucial feedback for charting the course of the company," Sullivan said.

With so many loyal clients acting as partners and guides, continued success for the top wealth advisers at Sullivan & Schlieman Wealth Management is virtually assured.

BYRON E. SMALL

Andrew Sullivan: Says mission is to form lifelong partnerships with clients.

Sullivan & Schlieman Wealth Management LLC

When and where firm was founded: August 2008 in Alpharetta, Ga.

President/Executive Director: Andrew Sullivan, managing director and senior wealth adviser

Number of employees: 9

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