

# **Christopher Kuehne**

## **Independent Financial Advisors**

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914-299-6447

January 1, 2024

This Brochure provides information about the qualifications and business practices of Independent Financial Advisors, represented by Christopher Kuehne ("IFA"). If you have any questions about the contents of this Brochure, please contact IFA at 914-299-6447 or [chris@christopherkuehne.com](mailto:chris@christopherkuehne.com).

With extensive experience in the financial services industry, including 12 years on Wall Street as a Vice President at Merrill Lynch and Bankers Trust Company, Mr. Kuehne started his own financial planning practice in 1995. Mr. Kuehne is a fee-only Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®). Christopher received an MS in Economics from the Graduate School of Business at Carnegie-Mellon University. He is a member in good standing of the Financial Planning Association (FPA). In his spare time Chris has volunteered for his local land trust, serving most recently as president of its board of directors.

The SEC requires that IFA tell you that being registered as a Registered Investment Adviser does not imply any level of skill or training. The information in this Brochure has not been approved or verified by the United States Securities and Exchange Commission or by any state securities authority.

Additional information about Christopher Kuehne and Independent Financial Advisors also is available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov). The searchable IARD/CRD number for Independent Financial Advisors is 125758.

## **Item 2 – Material Changes**

The purpose of this page is to inform you of any material changes since the last annual update to this brochure. If you are receiving this brochure for the first time this section may not be relevant to you.

IFA has had no material changes to its Brochure since the last annual update, January 1, 2023.

Our Brochure may be requested by contacting IFA at 914-299-6447 or [chris@christopherkuehne.com](mailto:chris@christopherkuehne.com).

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## **Item 4 – The Advisor’s Business**

Christopher Kuehne of Independent Financial Advisors (“IFA”) has been in business since 1995 and is a sole proprietor. Assets are managed on a non-discretionary basis. As of January 17, 2023, assets under management totaled \$101,358,096.

Independent Financial Advisors is a fee-only financial planning firm dedicated to helping its clients achieve financial security and independence by providing a full range of personalized planning and investment management services. We help the client develop a financial plan with specific goals in mind, implement it and then monitor it on an on-going, long-term, non-discretionary basis.

Independent Financial Advisors works only for its clients and is compensated by a previously agreed upon fee from the client. We do not accept commissions or compensation from any other source. We design an overall plan specifically for the client. The Plan includes analysis and recommendations in the following areas:

- Investments
- Retirement Income Planning
- Life Insurance Needs
- College Funding
- Tax Reduction Strategies
- Estate Planning

In addition to the above, IFA also examines benefit plans, 401(k)s, wills, trusts and insurance policies that the client already has to make sure the client is adequately protected in those areas.

For any client, an introductory hour-long meeting is customarily offered at no charge, as a get-acquainted session. At the end of that initial meeting, IFA is normally able to determine if he feels he can render a valuable service to the prospective client; when that is the case and the prospective client is interested, IFA quotes a fee structure for the potential engagement (see Item 5 below).

Retirement Rollovers-No Obligation/Conflict of Interest: A client leaving an employer typically has four options (and may engage in a combination of these options): 1) leave the money in his former employer’s plan, if permitted, 2) roll over the assets to his/her new employer’s plan, if one is available and rollovers are permitted, 3) rollover to an Individual Retirement Account (IRA), or 4) cash out the account value (which could, depending upon the client’s age, result in adverse tax consequences).

IFA may recommend an investor roll over plan assets to an IRA managed by IFA. As a result, IFA may earn an asset-based fee; however, a recommendation that a client or prospective client leave their plan assets with their old employer will result in no

compensation. IFA has an economic incentive to encourage an investor to roll plan assets into an IRA that IFA will manage.

There are various factors that IFA may consider before recommending a rollover, including but not limited to: i) the investment options available in the plan versus the investment options available in an IRA, ii) fees and expenses in the plan versus the fees and expenses in an IRA, iii) the services and responsiveness of the plan's investment professionals versus those of IFA, iv) required minimum distributions and age considerations, and vi) employer stock tax consequences, if any. No client is under any obligation to roll over plan assets to an IRA managed by IFA.

When IFA provides investment advice to the client regarding a retirement plan account or individual retirement account, IFA is a fiduciary within the meaning of Title I of the Employee Retirement Income Security Act and/or the Internal Revenue Code, as applicable, which are laws governing retirement accounts. The way IFA makes money creates some conflicts with your interests, so IFA will operate under a special rule that requires the firm to act in your best interest and not put our interests ahead of yours.

Under this special rule's provisions, IFA must:

- Meet a professional standard of care when making investment recommendations (give prudent advice);
- Never put IFA financial interests ahead of those of the client when making recommendations (give loyal advice);
- Avoid misleading statements about conflicts of interest, fees, and investments;
- Follow policies and procedures designed to ensure that IFA gives advice that is in the best interest of the client;
- Charge no more than is reasonable for IFA services; and
- Give the client basic information about conflicts of interest.

### **Client Obligations**

In performing its services, IFA is not required to verify any information received from the client or from the client's other professionals. Moreover, each client is advised that it remains his or her responsibility to promptly notify IFA if there is ever any change in the client's financial situation or investment objectives during the client engagement.

### **Disclosure Statement**

A copy of IFA's written brochure as set forth on Part 2A of Form ADV shall be provided to each client prior to, or at the same time as, the execution of the *Client Advisory Agreement*. Any client who has not received a copy of IFA's written brochure at least 48 hours prior to

executing the *Client Advisory Agreement* shall have five business days subsequent to executing the agreement to terminate IFA's services without penalty.

### **Non-Participation in Wrap Fee Programs**

IFA, as a matter of policy and practice, does not sponsor any wrap fee program. A wrap fee program is defined as any advisory program under which a specified fee or fees not based directly upon transactions in a client's account is charged for investment supervisory services (which may include portfolio management or advice concerning the selection of other investment advisers) and the execution of client transactions.

### **Our Policy on Class Action Lawsuits**

From time to time, securities held in the accounts of clients will be the subject of class action lawsuits. IFA has no obligation to determine if securities held by the client are subject to a pending or resolved class action lawsuit. It also has no duty to evaluate a client's eligibility or to submit a claim to participate in the proceeds of a securities class action settlement or verdict. Furthermore, IFA has no obligation or responsibility to initiate litigation to recover damages on behalf of clients who may have been injured as a result of actions, misconduct, or negligence by corporate management of issuers whose securities are held by clients.

Where IFA receives written or electronic notice of a class action lawsuit, settlement, or verdict affecting securities owned by a client, it will forward all notices, proof of claim forms, and other materials, to the client. Electronic mail is acceptable where appropriate if the client has authorized contact in this manner.

### **Item 5 – Fees and Compensation**

IFA provides investment services and furnishes advice to clients on matters not involving securities only as part of a total financial planning process.

The possible fee structures include a) hourly (rarely used) at \$225 per hour, b) fixed fees for financial planning projects, which are set according to the scope and complexity of the work, and c) annual investment management fees, set as a percentage of period-end market value of investment assets, as follows:

- 1% of assets on the first \$500,000 of investment assets, including any 401(k) s, 403(b) s, etc.
- $\frac{3}{4}$  of 1% of assets on the next \$500,000 of investment assets
- $\frac{1}{2}$  of 1% of assets on the next \$2 million of investment assets
- $\frac{1}{3}$  of 1% of assets on any amounts over \$3 million of investment assets

Fees for ongoing Investment Management services are either a) debited to the client's investment account or b) billed through hard copy invoice. The Investment Management

fee is calculated on the above formulas, based upon the portfolio balance at the end of each quarter. The date of the quarter-end balance is based upon the settlement date.

The annual fee for investment management services provided are based upon a percentage (%) of the market value of the Assets under management in accordance with the fee schedule in the Agreement signed by the Client. IFA considers cash to be an asset class and part of Assets under management and subject to the same fee calculation as the Client's non-cash investments.

Financial plans, which are required up-front for all new Investment Management clients, are charged on a fixed-fee basis. Such planning normally covers all or most of the following areas: retirement planning, investment planning, tax minimization, estate review and insurance recommendations. Fees for financial plans normally range from \$3,500 to \$4,500, depending on the scope, complexity, and number of alternative scenarios we expect will be developed. If the two spouses keep their finances separately and essentially require separate Financial Plans, the cost is \$4,000 to \$5,000 for both.

Fees for Financial Planning projects are payable as follows: 50% up-front, non-refundable, with the remainder due after the initial Financial Plan is delivered. For a subsequent period of up to 60 days as many as three iterations of revisions to the plan may be requested by the client. In the case of ongoing Investment Management services, fees subsequent to the Financial Planning project will be billed and payable quarterly, for services rendered in the previous quarter.

In certain instances, depending on the client's needs and the services to be performed by IFA, a contract may be entered into with a fee different from the fee structure described above. A client can terminate the engagement at any time, with 30 days written notice.

IFA invests client assets chiefly in no-load mutual funds, exchange-traded funds (ETFs) and bonds. It should therefore be noted and disclosed that clients are essentially paying two advisor's fees: a) the fee, described above, paid to IFA on an ongoing basis for IFA's services and b) the fee charged by the mutual funds and ETFs (whose fees are fully described in the fund's prospectus).

IFA's fees are separate from brokerage commissions, transaction fees, and other related costs and expenses that may be incurred by the client. Clients may incur certain charges imposed by custodians, brokers, third party investment and other third parties such as fees charged by managers, custodial fees, deferred sales charges, odd-lot differentials, transfer taxes, wire transfer and electronic fund fees, and other fees and taxes on brokerage accounts and securities transactions. Mutual funds and exchange-traded funds also charge internal management fees, which are disclosed in a fund's prospectus.

Such charges, fees and commissions are exclusive of and in addition to IFA's fee, and IFA does not receive any portion of these commissions, fees, and costs.

IFA's relationship with each client is nonexclusive; in other words, IFA provides investment supervisory services and financial planning services to multiple clients. IFA seeks to avoid situations in which one client's interest may conflict with the interest of another of its clients.

## **Item 6 – Performance-Based Fees and Side-By-Side Management**

IFA does not charge any performance-based fees (fees based on a share of capital gains on or capital appreciation of the assets of a client).

## **Item 7 – Types of Clients**

IFA provides portfolio management services to individuals, families, high net worth individuals, charitable institutions, and non-profit foundations.

Certain asset minimums may apply; such minimums vary, depending upon availability of IFA resources. Currently prospective clients need a minimum of \$1 million in investible assets to qualify as a client of Independent Financial Advisors.

## **Item 8 – Methods of Analysis, Investment Strategies and Risk of Loss**

Our philosophy is that investing is a long-term, ongoing process. We offer portfolio management services once the financial plan has been completed. IFA takes a value-oriented, long-term approach to investing. IFA develops an investment plan taking four factors into consideration: the client's objectives, time horizon, ability to tolerate risk, and financial situation. A broadly diversified portfolio of mutual funds, ETFs and bonds serves as the centerpiece of a solid investment plan.

IFA does not make recommendations to buy or sell individual stocks, as it is our opinion that diversified mutual funds provide more downside protection. So if stocks are held in a client's account(s), it is their responsibility to inform IFA when they want them sold, or, alternatively, to sell them themselves. IFA will include such stocks in regular performance reports, but they will be segregated in a separate section at the end of the report, called "unmanaged assets." Those stocks are not charged an investment management fee.

IFA does not warrant or represent that a particular level of investment performance will be achieved as a result of his recommendations. The risks of various investment alternatives will be explained to the client verbally and then confirmed in writing in the Investment Policy Statement (part of the Financial Plan) that IFA will draft based on discussions with the client. We ask our clients to recognize and acknowledge that all investments possess some level of market risk. IFA's investment recommendations will be based in part on past results, which are not necessarily be indicative of future performance. We ask the client to agree to carefully consider the risks associated with any of IFA's recommendations before they approve them. IFA will never promise specific returns. At any point in time, the investments will be worth more or less than the client originally purchased them for. At some point in time, something that IFA recommends inevitably will lose money. This is all part of accepting market risks.

IFA reviews in writing all Investment Management accounts no less than quarterly. At each review, a portfolio performance report is prepared and sent to all clients, along with recommendations concerning future strategy and changes to the portfolio. The departure of a mutual fund portfolio manager, or some other fundamental shift, could trigger the need for a more frequent account review. A major goal change or unplanned event in client's life



will also trigger a complete portfolio review. The need for rebalancing the portfolio is examined on at least an annual basis.

### **Item 9 – Disciplinary Information**

Registered Investment Advisors are required to disclose all material facts regarding any legal or disciplinary events that would be material to your evaluation of me or the integrity of my management. IFA has no information applicable to this Item, that is, there are no legal or disciplinary events now nor have there been any in the past.

### **Item 10 – Other Financial Industry Activities and Affiliations**

Neither IFA nor its representatives are registered, or have an application pending to register, as a broker-dealer or a registered representative of a broker-dealer.

Neither IFA nor its representatives are registered, or have an application pending to register, as a futures commission merchant, a commodity pool operator, a commodity trading advisor, or a representative of the foregoing.

IFA does not have any relationship or arrangement that is material to its advisory business or to its clients with any related person.

IFA provides investment advisory services and furnishes advice to clients on matters not involving securities, only as a part of a total financial planning process.

### **Item 11 – Code of Ethics**

IFA has adopted a Code of Ethics for all supervised persons of the firm describing our high standard of business conduct, and fiduciary duty to our clients. The Code of Ethics includes provisions relating to the confidentiality of client information, a prohibition on insider trading, a prohibition of rumormongering, restrictions on the acceptance of significant gifts and the reporting of certain gifts and business entertainment items, and personal securities trading procedures, among other things. All supervised persons at Independent Financial Advisors must acknowledge the terms of the Code of Ethics annually, or as amended. IFA's clients or prospective clients may request a copy of the firm's Code of Ethics by contacting Christopher Kuehne.

IFA anticipates that, in appropriate circumstances, consistent with clients' investment objectives, it will cause accounts over which IFA has management authority to effect and will recommend to investment supervisory clients or prospective clients, the purchase or sale of securities in which IFA, its affiliates, and/or clients, directly or indirectly, have a position of interest. IFA's employees and persons associated with IFA are required to follow IFA's Code of Ethics. Subject to satisfying this policy and applicable laws, officers, directors, and employees of IFA trade for their own accounts in securities which are recommended to and/or purchased for IFA's clients. The Code of Ethics is designed to assure that the personal securities transactions, activities, and interests of the employees of IFA will not interfere with (i) making decisions in the best interest of advisory clients and (ii) implementing such decisions while, at the same time, allowing employees to invest for their own accounts.

Under the Code, certain classes of securities have been designated as exempt transactions, based upon a determination that these would materially not interfere with the best interest of IFA's clients. Nonetheless, because the Code of Ethics in some circumstances would permit employees to invest in the same securities as clients, there is a possibility that employees might benefit from market activity by a client in a security held by an employee. Employee trading is continually monitored under the Code of Ethics, and to reasonably prevent conflicts of interest between IFA and its clients.

## **Item 12 – Brokerage Practices**

It should be noted that IFA is a Registered Investment Advisor and not a broker. IFA custodies all securities with Schwab Institutional, who serves as broker.

In the course of IFA's normal investment advisory services to clients, we recommend securities to clients and purchases and sells securities for clients, on a non-discretionary basis.

Although IFA deals chiefly in mutual funds for clients' accounts, it should be noted that all equity buys and sells are directed to Schwab Institutional. Such a directed brokerage arrangement does not limit IFA's ability to negotiate commission rates and achieve best execution. In addition, buys and sells for some closed-end bond funds and individual bonds are directed to Raymond James. Such a directed brokerage arrangement limits IFA's ability to negotiate commission rates and achieve best execution.

IFA recommends that clients establish accounts with the Schwab Institutional division of Charles Schwab & Co., Inc. ("Schwab"), a registered broker-dealer, Member SIPC/NYSE, to maintain custody of clients' assets and to effect trades for their accounts. IFA is independently owned and operated and not affiliated with Schwab. Schwab provides IFA with access to its institutional trading and operations services, which are typically not available to Schwab retail investors. These services generally are available to independent investment advisors on an unsolicited basis, at no charge to them. Schwab's services include research, brokerage, custody, access to mutual funds and other investments that are otherwise generally available only to institutional investors or would require a significantly higher minimum initial investment.

From time-to-time IFA may make an error in submitting a trade order on a client's behalf. When this occurs, IFA may place a correcting trade with the broker-dealer that has custody of your account. If an investment gain results from the correcting trade, the gain will remain in your account unless it is not permissible for you to retain the gain, or we confer with you and you decide to forego the gain (e.g., due to tax reasons). If the gain does not remain in your account and Charles Schwab & Co. Inc. is the custodian, Schwab will donate the amount of any gain \$100 and over to charity. If a loss occurs greater than \$100, IFA will pay for the loss. Schwab will maintain the loss or gain (if such gain is not retained in your account) if it is under \$100 to minimize and offset its administrative time and expense. Generally, if related trade errors result in both gains and losses in your account, they may be netted.

For IFA's client accounts maintained in its custody, Schwab generally does not charge separately for custody but is compensated by account holders through commissions or other transaction-related fees for securities trades that are executed through Schwab or that settle into Schwab accounts.

Schwab Institutional also makes available to IFA other products and services that benefit IFA but may not benefit its clients' accounts. Some of these other products and services assist IFA in managing and administering clients' accounts. These include software and other technology that provide access to client account data (such as trade confirmations and account statements), facilitate trade execution (and allocation of aggregated trade orders for multiple client accounts), provide research, pricing information and other market data, facilitate payment of IFA's fees from its clients' accounts, and assist with back-office functions, recordkeeping, and client reporting. Many of these services generally may be used to service all or a substantial number of IFA's accounts, including accounts not maintained at Schwab Institutional. Schwab Institutional also makes available to IFA other services intended to help IFA manage and further develop its business enterprise. These services may include consulting, publications and conferences on practice management, information technology, business succession, regulatory compliance, and marketing. In addition, Schwab may make available, arrange and/or pay for these types of services to IFA by independent third parties. Schwab Institutional may discount or waive fees it would otherwise charge for some of these services or pay all or a part of the fees of a third party providing these services to IFA. While as a fiduciary, IFA endeavors to act in its clients' best interests, IFA's requirement that clients maintain their assets in accounts at Schwab may be based in part on the benefit to IFA of the availability of some of the foregoing products and services and not solely on the nature, cost or quality of custody and brokerage services provided by Schwab, which may create a potential conflict of interest.

Clients are informed beforehand of all such purchases and sales through the approved Investment Plan and the Investment Policy Statement since IFA requires their prior approval of an Investment Plan prior to actual implementation. IFA may speed up or slow down the process of dollar-cost averaging into approved mutual funds, depending upon market conditions, without necessitating a call to the client for prior approval (since the Investment Plan is already approved).

Schwab provides a monthly statement of all account balances and transactions.

IFA does not receive any direct compensation from Schwab or any other third-party other than those noted above. The only compensation IFA receives is directly from his clients, as described above. Schwab may provide certain discounts to IFA for products, such as Portfolio Center or Schwab Data Delivery.

Some clients may instruct IFA to use one or more particular brokers for the transactions in their accounts. Clients who may want to direct IFA to use a particular broker should understand that this may prevent IFA from effectively negotiating brokerage compensation on their behalf. This arrangement may also prevent IFA from obtaining the most favorable net price and execution.

Thus, when directing brokerage business, clients should consider whether the commission expenses and execution, clearance, and settlement capabilities that they will obtain through their broker are adequately favorable in comparison to those that IFA would otherwise obtain for its clients. Clients are encouraged to discuss available alternatives with Mr. Kuehne.

IFA does not aggregate trades as all trades are client specific.

### **Item 13 – Review of Accounts**

IFA reviews in writing all Investment Management accounts no less than quarterly. At each review, a portfolio performance report is prepared and sent to all clients, along with recommendations concerning future strategy and changes to the portfolio. The departure of a mutual fund portfolio manager, or some other fundamental shift, could trigger the need for a more frequent account review. A major goal change or unplanned event in client's life will also trigger a complete portfolio review. The need for rebalancing the portfolio is examined on an annual basis.

Mr. Kuehne does all the account reviews himself.

A comprehensive portfolio status and performance report is prepared by IFA quarterly and sent to each client. The report contains a summary of all holdings for a client showing the beginning balance, withdrawals, contributions and the ending balance for a rolling 12 month period. It also shows the investment gain or loss over that period, followed by percentage total return for all longer periods. The detailed report shows the performance of the portfolio holding by holding: what percentage of the total each holding represents; the beginning balance; capital gains or losses; interest and dividends, the ending balance and percent total return.

### **Item 14 – Client Referrals and Other Compensation**

IFA does not accept any referral fees and pays no referral fees. The only compensation IFA receives is directly from the client as detailed above in Item 5, "Fees and Compensation."

As referenced in Item 12 above, IFA may receive an indirect economic benefit from Schwab.

### **Item 15 – Custody**

It is IFA's policy to not accept custody of client's securities. In other words, IFA is not granted access to the clients' account that would enable IFA to withdraw or transfer or otherwise move funds or cash from any client account to IFA's accounts or the account of any third party (other than for purposes of fee deductions, as explained below).

However, with a client's consent, IFA will be provided with the authority to seek deduction of IFA's fees from a client's accounts; this process generally is more efficient for both the client and the investment adviser.

The account custodian does not verify the accuracy of IFA's advisory fee calculation.

Clients receive monthly statements from Schwab Institutional. IFA urges the client to carefully review such statements and compare such official custodial records to the quarterly performance reports that we provide. Our reports may vary from custodial

statements based on accounting procedures, reporting dates, cutoff dates, or valuation methodologies of certain securities. Schwab Institutional is the custodian of all client assets, with the exception of small amounts of I Bonds (inflation-protected bonds) held in a few client accounts with Treasury Direct, an online feature of the U.S. Treasury. If you are not receiving at least quarterly custodial account statements, please contact us at the number on the cover page of this brochure.

### **Item 16 – Investment Discretion**

IFA provides Investment Management services to clients on a non-discretionary basis. That means that all future buys and sells for a client are revealed to the client prior to execution, either through the approved Investment Plan, or through direct communication from IFA.

When engaging IFA on a non-discretionary basis, IFA will select the identity and amount of securities to be bought or sold but must receive approval from the client prior to placing any trades in the client's account. Please be advised that as a result, until IFA reaches the client, no transactions will be placed in any client accounts.

### **Item 17 – Voting Client Securities**

As a matter of firm policy and practice, IFA does not have any authority to and does not vote proxies on behalf of IFA's clients. Clients will receive their proxies or other solicitations directly from their broker-dealer/custodian.

Notwithstanding the IFA's limited power of attorney to make investment decisions on your behalf, in accordance with the approved Investment Plan, the IFA will not exercise proxy voting authority over client securities. The obligation to vote proxies shall at all times rest with the client. The client is in no way be precluded from contacting IFA for advice or information about a particular proxy vote. However, IFA will not be deemed to have proxy voting authority solely as a result of providing such advice. Should the IFA inadvertently receive proxy information for a security held in a client's account, IFA will immediately forward such information on to the client but will not take any further action with respect to the voting of such proxy.

### **Item 18 – Financial Information**

Registered Investment Advisors are required in this Item to provide you with certain financial information or disclosures about Independent Financial Advisors financial condition if we require prepayment of fees 6 months or more in advance. IFA does not require prepayment of more than \$1,200 in fees per client, six months or more in advance. Further, IFA has no financial commitment that impairs his ability to meet contractual and fiduciary commitments to clients and has not been the subject of a bankruptcy proceeding.

## Brochure Supplement (Part 2B of Form ADV)

### Supervised Persons

Christopher Kuehne

### **Independent Financial Advisors**

**25418 N. Quail Haven Drive**

**Rio Verde, AZ 85263**

As of January 1, 2024

**This Brochure Supplement provides information about Christopher Kuehne that supplements the Independent Financial Advisors brochure. You should have received a copy of that brochure. Please contact Christopher Kuehne, Managing Member, at 914-299-6447 or [chris@christopherkuehne.com](mailto:chris@christopherkuehne.com) if you did not receive Independent Financial Advisors' brochure or if you have any questions about the contents of this supplement.**

**Additional information about Christopher Kuehne is available on the SEC's website at [www.adviserinfo.sec.gov](http://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov). Click on the "Investment Adviser Search" link and then search for "Individual" using the individual's CRD number 1504097.**

## Education and Business Standards

**Independent Financial Advisors** requires that any employee whose function involves determining or giving investment advice to clients must be a graduate of a four-year college and must:

- Have at least three years' experience in insurance, investments, accounting, or financial planning
- Hold or be pursuing one of the following designations: Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®) or MS in Economics or Finance.
- Subscribe to the Code of Ethics of the CFP® Board of Standards
- Be properly licensed for all advisory activities in which they are engaged.

## Professional Designations or Memberships

Employees have earned certifications and credentials that are required to be explained in further detail.

### **CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™**

CERTIFIED FINANCIAL PLANNER™, CFP® and federally registered CFP (with flame design) marks (collectively, the “CFP® marks”) are professional certification marks granted in the United States by Certified Financial Planner Board of Standards, Inc. (“CFP Board”). The CFP® certification is a voluntary certification; no federal or state law or regulation requires financial planners to hold CFP® certification.

To attain the right to use the CFP® marks, an individual must satisfactorily fulfill the following requirements:

- **Education** – Complete an advanced college-level course of study addressing the financial planning subject areas that CFP Board’s studies have determined as necessary for the competent and professional delivery of financial planning services, and attain a bachelor’s degree from a regionally accredited United States college or university (or its equivalent from a foreign university). CFP Board’s financial planning subject areas include insurance planning and risk management, employee benefits planning, investment planning, income tax planning, retirement planning, and estate planning
- **Examination** – Pass the comprehensive CFP® Certification Examination
- **Experience** – Complete at least three years of full-time financial planning-related experience (or the equivalent, measured as 2,000 hours per year)
- **Ethics** – Agree to be bound by CFP Board’s Standards of Professional Conduct, a set of documents outlining the ethical and practice standards for CFP® professionals.



Individuals who become certified must complete the following ongoing education and ethics requirements in order to maintain the right to continue to use the CFP® marks:

- **Continuing Education** – Complete 30 hours of continuing education hours every two years, including two hours on the Code of Ethics and other parts of the Standards of Professional Conduct, to maintain competence and keep up with developments in the financial planning field
- **Ethics** – Renew an agreement to be bound by the Standards of Professional Conduct. The Standards prominently require that CFP® professionals provide financial planning services at a fiduciary standard of care. This means CFP® professionals must provide financial planning services in the best interests of their clients.

CFP® professionals who fail to comply with the above standards and requirements may be subject to CFP Board's enforcement process, which could result in suspension or permanent revocation of their CFP® certification.

### **Christopher Kuehne, MS, CFP®**

#### **Educational Background**

- B.S. in Engineering from The U. S. Military Academy at West Point in 1970
- M.S. in Economics from Carnegie Mellon University in 1977.
- Certified Financial Planner™ (CFP®), having completed his course of study for certification in 1997

**Disciplinary Information:** None

#### **Business Experience:**

Christopher Kuehne founded Independent Financial Advisors in 1995. He has over 25 years of experience in the financial services industry, including 12 years working at Banker's Trust (now Deutsche Bank) and as a Vice President at Merrill Lynch in their Capital markets Department. He is a member in good standing of the Financial Planning Association (FPA).

**Other Business Activities:** None

**Additional Compensation:** None

#### **Supervision:**

Christopher Kuehne is a sole proprietor and supervises his own work.