

PARTNERING WITH FAMILIES IS KEY TO SUCCESS FOR SYNOVUS

Katherine Dunlevie, Executive Vice President and Managing Director, The Family Office at Synovus, talks to *Family Wealth Report*.



Founded in 1947 to provide estate planning and trust services for its founding family, The Family Office at Synovus has grown to now include 40 team members, with \$8.2 billion in assets under administration. Today The Family Office at Synovus provides comprehensive investment management, wealth-transfer planning, and family enterprise and fiduciary services to more than 80 families in North and South America, Europe, and the Middle East.

What sets you apart from your peers this year and why?

“Synovus Family Office team members develop deeply personal client relationships and devise integrated strategies that uncover and address each family’s challenges, vision, goals, and needs. In fact, working as a partner alongside client families is fundamental to our success,” said Katherine Dunlevie, Executive Vice President and Managing Director, The Family Office at Synovus.

“The programs that we are being recognized for by *Family Wealth Report* demonstrate the value and the impact of these close relationships. When COVID-19 struck in 2020, the chaos that ensued challenged one client family foundation to quickly adjust its philanthropic focus in order to meet the immediate needs in their local communities. Because we are in ‘lock-step’ with our client families, we were able to nimbly

pivot a well-established family foundation, which had formalized structure for grant administration, including governance, committees, reviews, and quarterly meetings, to a model that responded more urgently, providing immediate relief. As a result of the new process, the foundation disbursed approximately \$7.5 million and saved an entire community from collapse.”

Similarly, the Women’s Fund, a collectively owned and managed portfolio that helps women become knowledgeable sustainers of their family fortunes and family enterprises, is a Synovus Family Office initiative that stems from several relationship managers’ personal commitment to help their female clients become more financially savvy.

Katherine Dunlevie says: “We launched the first Women’s Fund after numerous client meetings, private equity fund launches, and conversations with female members of a client family who revealed they wanted a greater role in family investments but didn’t feel knowledgeable enough to participate. Synovus designed the fund not just to deliver on its investment promise but also to familiarize women with the fundamentals of investing while educating, empowering, and advocating female engagement in building wealth.”

Whom do you look to for inspiration and ideas?

“The Synovus Family Office team members are driven to be servant leaders for our clients - committed to enhancing the financial and personal lives of our clients, preparing family members to become successful stewards of their assets and values, and creating rich, sustainable family legacies. This focus challenges Synovus to closely align with our clients to guide their day-to-day work as well as to inspire new ideas to help clients achieve their goals. Since The Synovus Family Office is a multi-family firm, teams collaborate internally to ensure successful strategies that work for one client family are shared and evaluated for use with other client families.” ■

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The judges chose The Family Office at Synovus as category winner because of their quick and efficient response to the new needs that arose during the pandemic. When COVID-19 struck, the chaos and urgency demanded a new, nimble method for rapid decisions. Synovus helped the foundation pivot to a model that included new priorities and phases for meeting immediate relief along with longer-term needs.

