

NICOLE J. BEST

Action oriented executive with strategic vision and multi-functional financial services experience. Proven ability to lead corporate finance, innovate and resolve multiple and complex issues across disciplines while driving strategy, ensuring effective execution, and motivating internal talent and strategic third party partners to peak performance.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Financial Strategy, Forecasting and Analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strategic Planning and Execution
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cash Flow and Expense Management – Throughout Business Cycles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Contract Negotiations With Focus on Long-term Strategic Alliances
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Budgeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Audit and Internal Controls Design
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Risk Management and Compliance 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Information Systems, Business Continuity Planning and Creative Technology Utilization
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Team Building and Resource Development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Process Design and Productivity Improvement
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Change Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Business Development and Relationship Management

CAREER EXPERIENCE

HEARTLAND ADVISORS, INC.

2010 – Present

HEARTLAND FUNDS

Senior Vice President, Chief Financial Officer and Chief Administrative Officer – Milwaukee, WI

Shareholder and Executive Leadership Team member responsible for the oversight of financial operations, client service, information technology, digital marketing strategy, human resources, benefit plan administration and general office management, while leading and executing business strategies, with keen focus on risk management and firm wide resource allocation and alignment.

- Direct oversight of mutual fund administration, corporate accounting, client service, portfolio accounting, investment operations, treasury functions, information systems and human resources
- Responsible for internal controls supporting financial operations and timely and accurate financial and related regulatory reporting, ensuring compliance with GAAP and applicable SEC and FINRA requirements
- Financial and operational liaison to the Funds’ Board of Directors, Fund counsel and Counsel to the Independent Directors, while dually representing activities of the Funds and the Investment Advisor
- Management, routine due diligence and ongoing development of strategic business relationships with third party service providers, driving best in class client service coupled with effective risk mitigation
- Risk oversight as an active member on the Pricing, Investment Policy and Disclosure Controls Committees
- New product development team member, with responsibility for identifying, assessing and conveying business cases, and implementing approved initiatives
- Oversight of bank relationships, cash management, liquidity discipline and credit lines
- Conversion, implementation and ongoing administration of firm wide CRM system
- Design and implementation of enhanced compensation arrangements for investment management and sales personnel, balancing objective and subjective factors
- Design and implementation of multi-channel, cross vehicle sales reporting
- Previous oversight of digital marketing team, including linked-in strategy, campaign management and reporting and stewarding firm wide transition from print to digital awareness and presence
- Direct oversight of Human Resources, onboarding and offboarding activities, payroll and 401k/benefits administration
- Proven experience at designing and operating a resilient model allowing for effective operations through firm, market and industry downturns, and driving margins in all stages of the business cycle
- Designed and implemented a flexible model to assess the profitability of products by vehicle, strategy and service model
- Developed and documented Information Systems policies and procedures
- Developed driver-based forecasting tool to facilitate stress testing and scenario analysis
- Led planning, budgeting, workplace layout, vendor procurement, move logistics and IT infrastructure changes related to corporate office relocation into new construction space
- Spearheaded fund reorganizations, and acquisitions
- Project management, thoughtful change management and resourcefulness are key strengths

Senior Vice President, Investor Services and Markets – Boston, MA

Responsible for managing, retaining, and expanding global relationships. Maximized revenue opportunities while driving value added, and often customized solutions to existing and prospective clients.

- Developed strategic business relationships with top level executives of client/prospect organizations to drive revenue and expand services provided to existing clients
- Converted prospects to new relationships and generated \$2m in new recurring annual revenue
- Designed relationship excellence plans to build an in-depth knowledge of clients and prospects 1, 3 and 5-year business strategies, key imperatives, organizational changes and related activities
- Served as the client advocate within Brown Brothers Harriman, at a strategic level, by leading, motivating and coordinating resources amongst Accounting, Custody, Fund Administration, Tax Services, Foreign Exchange, Securities Lending, Operations and Information Systems with multiple reporting lines across the organization
- Identified, designed, coordinated and implemented innovative and integrated solutions to address clients' strategic challenges
- Promoted products and services throughout the industry, positioning Brown Brothers Harriman for long-term opportunities, maximizing profitability and increasing product depth with new and existing clients

HEARTLAND FUNDS**Senior Vice President, Chief Compliance Officer****Vice President, Treasurer & Principal Accounting Officer****Manager of Fund Accounting and Fund Administration****Milwaukee, WI**

Responsibilities evolved through a variety of dynamic senior and front-line management roles across compliance, fund administration, fund accounting, separately managed account operations, tax, trade processing and corporate accounting. Representative experiences included:

- Active engagement and coordination with the Heartland Funds Board of Directors, Audit Committee and Nominating Committee
- Preparation and review of shareholder reports and regulatory filings for the Advisor and Funds
- Management and execution of fund mergers, liquidations and the sale of the Wisconsin Tax Free Fund
- Identification, evaluation, and implementation and ongoing oversight of outsourcing strategies which improved efficiency, drove cost savings, reduced firm wide risk, and delivered an enhanced customer experience
- Spearheaded third party service provider conversions including: Fund Accounting, Fund Administration, Transfer Agency, Shareholder Services, Fund Distribution, Custody and Proxy Voting Services
- Coordination with various independent accounting firms engaged to audit the Advisor, its Parent Company, the Funds and a Wisconsin LP
- Primary liaison with AIMR/GIPS verifiers
- Managed regulatory examinations and acted as primary interface with the Securities & Exchange Commission, DOL and FINRA
- Managed brokerage, advisory and investment company compliance matters including the establishment and ongoing monitoring of 38a-1 compliance programs for the Funds and Advisor
- Implemented the Charles River Trading and Compliance System
- Coordinated proxy solicitations
- Designated Financial Operations Principal for the dually registered broker dealer
- Managed licensing and oversight of registered representatives
- Reviewed retail and institutional advertising, sales literature and correspondence to ensure compliance with applicable SEC and FINRA rules
- Supervision, training and development of staff in various areas including accounting, investment operations and compliance

Audit and Advisory Senior - Financial Markets - Milwaukee, WI

Provided audit and advisory services for mutual funds, insurance companies and broker-dealers. Services performed included:

- Analysis of complex financial and operations issues involving the application and interpretation of accounting principles and regulatory reporting requirements
- Preparation and review of audit and financial statements, SEC filings and internal control reports
- Supervision, training and evaluation of audit staff through on-the-job training adapting to individual instruction needs and work style
- Specialized services related to due diligence and valuation assistance in connection with the evaluation of mergers and acquisitions and defined benefit and defined contribution plan audits
- Interim Controller, management of existing accounting staff, 401k administration, management reporting, financial statement preparation, payroll and training of permanent replacement
- Design and implementation of Andersen's first paperless audit tool for mutual funds

FORMAL EDUCATION

Master of Science of Business Administration, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee

Bachelor of Business Administration, Accounting & Finance, Creighton University, Omaha, NE

PROFESSIONAL ACCREDITATIONS AND AFFILIATIONS

- **Certified Public Accountant**: State of Wisconsin
- **FINRA Licenses**: Series 24, 27, 65, 99, 7 and 63 certified
- **National Investment Company Service Association (NICSA)**: Past Strategic Leadership Forum Co-Chair, Midwest Committee Co-Chair, Former West Coast Committee Member
- **Wisconsin Mutual Fund Group**: Founding Member
- **American Institute of CPAs (AICPA)**: Member
- **Wisconsin Institute of CPAs (WICPA)**: Member
- **TEMPO Milwaukee**, Former Membership Committee Member

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

- **Girl Scouts Wisconsin**: Board of Director and Treasurer (Former 2nd Vice Chair), Finance Committee Chair, Audit Committee Member and Strategic Planning Committee Member
- **Secure Futures (Formerly Make A Difference Wisconsin)**: Advisory Board Member; Past President, Treasurer, Vice Chair and Secretary, Executive Committee Member, Governance Committee Member, Fund Development Committee Member, Annual Conference Planning Committee Member; Financial Literacy Coach and Classroom Volunteer
- **Global Youth Leadership Institute**: Past Board of Director; Finance Committee Member
- **American Heart Association**: Go Red for Women Executive Leadership Team
- **Junior Achievement**: Volunteer
- **Milwaukee's Historic Third Ward Public Market**: Former Board of Director