



Meet the President

Cultivating a Passion for Service

By Michael Muckian

Peter Benjamin, CMB already has a career's worth of experience making mortgage loans and managing mortgage lending departments. In 20 short years he's worked his way up the career ladder at eight different mortgage lending institutions, even serving as mortgage training instructor at \$112 billion Navy Federal Credit Union, the world's largest financial cooperative.

With such an impressive track record, you'd think the Washington, D.C.-area native would sit back, take some time and rest on his laurels. But Benjamin, 42, is just getting started. In March, he became president of the American Credit Union Mortgage Association (ACUMA). It's his dream job, the president says, because it gives him the opportunity to help credit union mortgage lenders focus less on the loans they make and more on the mem-

bers who receive them.

"I learned early that mortgages reach beyond just the printed contract and into the hearts of credit union members," Benjamin says. "Taking out a mortgage will be the most significant financial contract many members will make in a lifetime. Having a home will help them grow their wealth, establish a foothold in a community, and provide a safe and secure place for them to raise their families. In my

mind, there is nothing more important than that."

Those who know Benjamin have heard this mantra before. If an individual can have a mission statement, Benjamin's would stress the sanctity of homeownership and emphasize the goal of putting as many credit union members in their own homes as possible. To him, a mortgage lender's job is simply that.

Benjamin, who was born in D.C. and grew up in and around the city's metro area, was the older of two siblings. He attended school and played sports, eventually becoming an Eagle Scout, the first of numerous leadership positions he would hold. He participated in many different sports, but excelled at lacrosse, playing throughout middle and high school.

It was while in college that he first became exposed to mortgage lending, joining a firm part-time at the invitation of a friend who was employed there. He enjoyed the work and he enjoyed the people. But the more he learned about mortgages, the more he understood their value and power to help borrowers form the foundation of their finances. Soon mortgages became more than just financial transactions to Benjamin, and it also became his life's work.

"I fell in love with the process," Benjamin says. "It was fun, and it was fast-paced. Having waited tables and tended bar, I knew what that was like. As I progressed through my career, I started talking to borrowers and began to see the faces behind the loans. My mindset shifted, and passion for the work carried me forward."

Most of Benjamin's mortgage experience came through institutions in his native D.C. area with the exception of a five-year turn in Dallas, Texas, for Capital One.

"I didn't like the heat," he says, "but that is where I met my lovely wife Danielle and I convinced her to return to D.C. with me." The pair settled in Maryland, where they currently are raising three children — a son Bryce, 4, and identical twin daughters Riley and Harper, who recently turned 2 years old.

Prior to joining ACUMA, Benjamin served as senior vice president of mortgage lending at \$1.4 billion Lafayette Federal Credit Union in Rockville, Maryland, where he was responsible for all aspects of



Peter Benjamin in his at-home brewery.

the mortgage and home equity lending process. He also implemented a first-time home buyer and construction loan programs.

Benjamin also serves as advisory council member for the Transformative Leadership in Disruptive Times Executive Program at George Washington University. He is a certified Six Sigma Black Belt and a Certified Mortgage Banker.

During his limited free time, Benjamin is an avid homebrewer with a 20-gallon setup that's able to brew up to five gallons simultaneously. Hoppy beers are a personal favorite, but his wife enjoys more malt-forward brews, giving him a well-rounded portfolio of types.

"My signature beers are porters and ambers," Benjamin explains. "In my opinion, both are very good, and they're the ones that people request well before they're ready. I also do a very good pale ale and a pumpkin pie porter that I love.

"I once brewed a Lucky Charms cream ale," he admits. "I won't be doing that again."

He also still carries on his lifelong interest in sports, particularly the NFL, maintaining love/hate relationships with the team now called the Washington Commanders. He's also a fan of the Denver Broncos, largely due to past quarterbacks John Elway and Peyton Manning. Good QBs is something the home teams seem to struggle with, he says.

"Yes, D.C. had Theismann, Rypien and Williams, who all won Super Bowls," Benjamin complains. "But look at all the quarterbacks they've had lately. I think it's something like 30."

Well, there's always next season. 

Michael Muckian is the editor of Pipeline.



ACUMA POWER TURN IT ON DEEP-DIVE NASHVILLE WORKSHOP NOTES

A capacity crowd gathered at the Sheraton Grand Downtown in Nashville, Tennessee, May 3-4, for this year's first Deep Dive Workshop. A full brace of hot topics, mortgage experts and motivated students made this one of the liveliest workshops in recent memory. We hope though this collection of candid shots and cogent comments that we can share some of the excitement of this year's event with you.

