

VZD Capital Management

A True Influencer



“
Inheritance is more than a transfer of wealth but the creation and protection of individuals and family’s legacies.
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Ethel J. Davis
CEO - Portfolio Manager

Ethel J. Davis, CEO & Portfolio Manager at VZD Capital Management, LLC, is a visionary woman who believes in charting her course in her personal and professional endeavors. From a little girl, her parents (Vergie and Zether Davis, aka VZD) instilled in her that an African American woman would have to work harder, be educated, and keep God first – always. Her belief system, work ethics, and determination is the primary ingredient for her recipe of life. She remains relevant and brings forward-thinking ideas to make the firm different from its peer group.

Ethel is an inspiration to women, minorities, and young people by sharing her knowledge, powerful voice, and finding the best in others. She was an influencer long before that word became a contemporary label. Ethel can extrapolate the best out of people meeting them where they are and helping them develop a customized roadmap based on their goals and objectives. The world of cook-cutter or predetermined models isn’t part of VZD’s core values, for every client’s portfolio reflects their legacy. You won’t see Ethel clinging to her cell phone or scrolling through social media feeds when conversing, for she is present in all conversations with clients and prospects - alike. She believes that listening and hearing are essential skillsets for a wealth manager to go from ordinary to extraordinary. Her faith is more significant than the American Express card, for it has guided her for over 30 years to remain in this male-dominated field. VZD is a fiduciary-driven firm where clients come first, not salaries or compensation

Ethel is a student for life, for she learns personal and professional lessons from anyone and everyone. However, she remains open to an ever-changing world and transforming into a trailblazing leader, daughter, sister, aunt, G-ma (glam mother), successful entrepreneur, financial physician, and a faith-based woman. Ethel believes in mentors, a combination of women and men who continues to sow seeds throughout her journey. She contributes her continued guidance from Ms. Cleo Brager, Mrs. Karen Herman, Sr., Mr. Michael Dayton, and Mr. Patrick Callaway, who is on speed dial when she needs guidance from the experts of wisdom, success, and belief.

VZD’s birth arrived out of pain due to an unexpected firing at the pinnacle of Ethel’s career. “However, I had felt long singled out, discriminated against, but like a bad marriage, you attempt to change yourself for the good of the cause. Shel felt marginalized but didn’t want to disappoint the clients that had followed her to the firm,” she says. “In essence, I wanted to see the diversity of America represented in the financial and investment firms; what I mean by that is to make it comfortable for anyone and everyone to walk through the doors of financial institutions and feel valued regardless of their circumstances.” Therefore, the number one priority for the firm is to welcome clients, celebrate them, and tolerate them as many women and minorities have never felt within the financial arena. “Unfortunately, financial literacy, budgeting, and wealth accumulation are missing from our schools and colleges as a prerequisite to our children’s academic standards,” adds Ethel. “We speak of multigenerational wealth, but we don’t have any formal programs available for people to understand the concepts of how to create it for their families.” The primary consideration is to discuss estate and succession planning with each client regarding their assets to protect them from probate courts. Inheri-

tance is more than a transfer of wealth but the creation and protection of one’s legacy. Or if they are a budding entrepreneur to ensure they understand how to grow and minimize the risk by purchasing professional liability insurance, including errors and omission and cybersecurity protection.

Discussing an instance, Ethel says, “I received a call from a gentleman looking for a wealth manager, for he was retiring in the next year from a prominent position within the Greater Kansas City community. After several years from our initial consultation, he called to ask for a second opinion regarding his portfolio managed by a national firm.” She charged him \$500 to do a comprehensive assessment based on his standard of living, tax consequences, financial goals, objectives, and emotional risk tolerance. “In doing so, I provided him with my recommendation to align his wealth, including having a conversation with his wife to ensure she understood their wealth and part of the conversation to explain my findings.” Ethel believes in transparency and ensuring the families discussed their wealth with each other and nothing is a secret. In that joint conversation, Ethel felt other assets were missing and continued to ask questions to discover additional assets that remained on his previous employer’s books and jeopardize their wealth if something happened to the husband. “Finally, when she recommended that the couple paid off the outstanding balances on their cars, they were not an asset but a liability given the current interest rate attached to the loans. Second, she discovered the family did not have a solid estate plan surrounding their assets or durable power of attorneys for healthcare or financial decisions. Moving ahead, Ethel collaborated with her Estate Planning Attorney and brought in their Certified Public Accountant, and completed the necessary steps within a few months. The client came up with a nickname of “money momma” for walking them through different aspects of their financial health and employing strategies to minimize his taxes but grow his assets to record high level,” says Ethel.

VZD Capital is installing technology that allows the customer base to expand in different states known for affluent to ultra-affluent delegator-type clients. The ideal client has a minimum of \$200,000 of investable assets and believes in multigenerational wealth. Ethel and her team create seminars and workshops that cater to affluent families who want to build adequate wealth for generations to come. She recommends the utilization of Educational Trusts and Generational Skipping Trust for more complex estate planning strategies. Plus, we entertain the thought of future mergers and acquisitions to purchase smaller firms looking for a successor but align with VZD’s value proposition and leadership style. “Our number one goal is to attract more candidates to the Executive Mentoring Program to advance our diversity and inclusion initiatives for the firm,” she says. “We want to collaborate with other professionals that bring legal perspectives, elder care representation, and business tax professionals to round out the offering and services offered by the firm.

We are looking at different media platforms to push our message and knowledge to the masses of people who don’t see themselves in most financial firms. Plus, we are adding new talent to add different divisions to the company to bring additional value to the marketplace.”