

Turning Tragedy Into Success - Shamar Clarke Makes His Mark At Sagicor Life Jamaica

Posted **October 30, 2020**

2016 was a defining year for Shamar Clarke, when he met in a car accident barely escaping with his life. The experience, though traumatic, would serve as a pivotal moment for him and his career, as it ignited an all-consuming passion and set him on a mission to achieving financial security for himself and his family.

Shamar shared that during that ordeal he thought a lot about the fact that he could have died and would not have had enough provision in place to care for his family that is left behind. "That is when I started to think hard about life insurance and eventually, I became a champion for it", he said.

He also shares an emotional story about a close friend of his, Niko, who he would often have discussions with about the importance of getting insurance coverage. "Niko would promise to get it done, but never got around to it," he said. One day Shamar received the devastating news that his friend had been badly injured in a freak accident at his home. Niko died a week later.

Shaken up by the tragedy of his friend's death, Shamar decided he wanted to actively champion the cause of ensuring persons are adequately covered by life insurance so that their family and loved ones have a security net in the event of sickness or death. He reached out to Sagicor Life Jamaica for a job; quickly secured an interview and started his journey as a Financial Advisor with the company in October 2017.

After just a year into his new-found passion, the 30-year-old performed so well he was awarded the company's coveted Rookie of the Year for 2018. Beyond that, he was honored as Court of the Table in the prestigious Million Dollar Round Table (MDRT), the premier international association for financial professionals. He is the first advisor ever to achieve Court of the Table status in his rookie year.

He was also a Century Club qualifier for the year and received several other awards, including the third-place trophy for volume of cases, and the Branch Manager's Trophy for having the highest first-year commission at the Sagicor Life New Kingston branch.

Shamar shared some sound advice noting that, "Regardless of where you are in life, insurance is about having peace of mind and security for yourself and your family, that if you should pass on prematurely, they will be taken care of," he said, explaining the value to him of being able to help others achieve this.

"I have this saying that I came up with – *"selling a policy doesn't necessarily solve the client's needs but solving the client's needs sells a policy."*

Shamar added that he is focused on helping people to achieve their own financial security and he enjoys meeting with people and helping them develop a plan, which is in line with their goals.

"It has been a fun journey so far. The most valuable thing to me since I started is the relationships which I have been able to develop; since I have been here at Sagicor, some of my closest friends are my clients," he said, adding "I enjoy

working hard and I enjoy this career. It is fun for me, so I don't see it as work."

A Glenmuir High School alum, Shamar studied Political Science at the University of the West Indies, but instead of pursuing a minor, the Chancellorite used his free electives to do business and hospitality courses, which would earn him a job in the hospitality industry straight out of University. The job as an events coordinator and later a sales coordinator gave him the introduction to customer service and sales, which would prove to be particularly valuable skillsets as a financial advisor.

"Success favors the prepared mind," he said, repeating a quote told him by one of his mentors. "That is my mantra and I use it to encourage persons and my clients now," noting that it means "If your mind is ready for success, you will achieve it."

Shamar grew up in Clarendon and was raised by his mother, whom he describes as a firm disciplinarian. The eldest of five siblings, he spent his youth in several volatile communities in the parish, often experiencing the pull of negative influences in his environment. Despite the challenges of being raised in a community marred by violence, Shamar would manage to keep his head above the fray through his abiding desire to make his mother proud.

His consistent love for reading since he was a child, he notes, has also helped to shape his career and life; this passion was evident as he recalled an incident that happened when he was 10 years old and witnessed his family home going up in flames.

"On the night of the fire, while everybody else was trying to save the furniture and the appliances, I tried to make my way back into the burning house for one thing, my books. Books were my escape when I was younger, and they still are," he shared.

Now, he uses books to help his clients achieve financial security, often making recommendations and lending his own copies. His favorite, *Richest Man in Babylon*, is a 1926 book by George S. Clason, which dispenses financial advice through a collection of parables.

"I found the way to the achievement of wealth through mentorship and reading books and I am excited to share it with my clients."

Shamar, who has co-authored the ebook '*Distilled Jamaican Wisdom*', is now working on his second publication, *Lessons from my Clients*, a collection of life- and financial lessons from his interactions as a financial advisor.

Meanwhile, he remains focused on his career and is looking to greater growth and success in the field, where he hopes to continue impacting lives and no doubt racking up accolades.

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