

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
August 2, 2017

FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:  
Ty Mays @ (770) 256-8710  
tmays@paragoncommunications.net

## **Ronald Blue & Co., Thrivent Trust Co. join and expand as nationwide trust company**

*Opportunity provides enhanced trust company services for clients*

ATLANTA – Ronald Blue & Co., one of the largest, fee-only independent wealth management firms in the U.S., has joined with Thrivent Trust Company, a subsidiary of Thrivent Financial, to offer a comprehensive suite of services through a nationwide trust company to assist individuals and families in making financial decisions consistent with their values.

Both companies serve clients who believe that when their faith informs their financial planning strategies, they experience a healthier relationship with money and live more generous lives.

Thrivent is providing the trust company business structure through its subsidiary, Thrivent Trust Company. The nationwide trust company will have two divisions: Ronald Blue Trust will continue to serve clients with complex financial needs across generations, including clients previously served by Ronald Blue & Co. Thrivent Trust will continue to provide trust and estate settlement services, as well as investment management solutions, through Thrivent Financial representatives who serve individuals across the United States.

Nicholas Stonestreet will serve as CEO of the newly expanded trust company, which will be part of Thrivent Holdings, a division of Thrivent. Until a new name is chosen, the company will continue to be known as Thrivent Trust Company.

The new entity enables Ronald Blue & Co. to transition to a trust company and provide its clients with enhanced service offerings. As a trustee, Ronald Blue Trust will be able to direct the everyday activities of the trust in accordance with its guidelines, pay bills and taxes, and provide enhanced estate planning services and philanthropic counsel.

This opportunity allows Thrivent, which will acquire the assets of Ronald Blue & Co., to accelerate its mission of helping Christians be wise with money and live generously, while also providing them with access to Ronald Blue Trust's experience and expertise in serving clients with complex financial needs across generations.

"Both Thrivent and Ronald Blue & Co. have a long history of providing guidance to clients who want to connect their values with their finances," said Jim Thomsen, president of Thrivent Holdings. "By joining together, we believe each company will be able to more effectively serve current clients, while also building a presence and expanding their reach to serve more individuals in the future."

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### **About Ronald Blue & Co.**

Founded in 1979, Ronald Blue & Co. is one of the largest independent fee-only wealth management firms in the United States. The firm provides comprehensive financial strategies based on biblical wisdom designed to enrich the lives of clients across the wealth spectrum in key areas including financial, retirement and estate trust planning, investment management and solutions, family office services, philanthropic counsel and strategies, business consulting and institutional client services. The company serves 7,000 clients and has more than \$7 billion in assets under management and advisement, with a network of 13 offices across the country and four distinct divisions. For more information, go to [www.ronblue.com](http://www.ronblue.com). Financial data as of 8/01/17.t

### **About Thrivent Financial**

Thrivent Financial is a financial services organization that helps Christians be wise with money and live generously. As a membership organization, it offers its more than 2 million member-owners a broad range of products, services and guidance from financial representatives nationwide. For more than a century it has helped members make wise money choices that reflect their values while providing them opportunities to demonstrate their generosity where they live, work and worship. It has \$116.5 billion in assets under management and advisement as of 12/31/16. For more information, visit [www.thrivent.com](http://www.thrivent.com).

## **PRESS KIT: BACKGROUNDER**

Thrivent Trust Company, a subsidiary of Thrivent, and Ronald Blue & Co., one of the largest fee-only independent wealth management firms in the U.S., have joined together to expand their presence as a nationwide trust company helping clients who want to be wise with money. The two organizations share aligned missions and the belief that when individuals and families make financial decisions that are more consistent with their values, they will experience a healthier relationship with money and be inspired to live a more generous life.

Founded in 1979, Ronald Blue & Co. has 7,000 clients and more than \$7 billion in assets under management and advisement. The firm maintains a network of 13 offices across the country and four distinct divisions, including the Private Wealth group, which offers comprehensive services to clients with an investable net worth generally starting at \$1 million; and the Family Office division, which is focused on the complex needs of multi-generational families, typically with a net worth of at least \$25 million, to serve its diverse client base. It also has a Professional Athlete division, which understands the planning and management demands of individuals and families in professional sports, which often includes building and retaining wealth during a short career span; and the Everyday Steward group, whose clients typically range from those ready to get started with investing to those with an investable net worth of up to \$1 million.

Thrivent Trust Company provides trust and investment management solutions through its network of Thrivent Financial representatives. Thrivent Trust Company is a subsidiary of Thrivent, a not-for-profit membership organization that offers a full range of guidance, financial solutions, products and services, including life insurance, mutual funds, retail banking, brokerage accounts, and personal trust services. Thrivent Financial has more than two million benefit members and \$116.5 billion in assets under management and advisement as of 12/31/2016.

The combined trust company is the result of nearly two years of discussions, as both organizations considered if a new entity could be forged that would enable it to offer clients and members enhanced services to align their values with their finances.

Thrivent is providing the trust company business structure through its subsidiary, Thrivent Trust Company, which will acquire the assets of Ronald Blue & Co. The trust company will have two divisions. Ronald Blue Trust will continue to serve clients with complex financial needs across generations, including current Ronald Blue & Co. clients; Thrivent Trust will continue to provide services through Thrivent Financial representatives, who serve individuals across the United States.

The two divisions will be led by Nicholas Stonestreet, who will be the new CEO of the expanded nationwide trust company.

## **PRESS KIT: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS**

### **1) Why have Thrivent and Ronald Blue & Co. joined together to form an expanded trust organization?**

The two organizations share aligned missions and the belief that when people make financial decisions that are consistent with their values, they will experience a healthier relationship with money and be inspired to live a more generous life.

### **2) What is the benefit of Ronald Blue & Co. becoming a trust company?**

As a result of moving to a trust company structure, Ronald Blue & Co. will have a greater ability to serve and impact multiple generations of family members as trustee and attract clients who want to integrate their values with their finances.

### **3) What is the benefit for Thrivent, through the Thrivent Trust Company, acquiring the assets of Ronald Blue & Co.?**

This opportunity allows Thrivent to continue to accelerate its mission of helping more Christians be wise with money and live generously. It allows Thrivent to continue to introduce the organization to more Christians who may not be aware of its mission.

### **4) How will the resulting trust company be structured?**

There is one trust company entity, Thrivent Trust, with two divisions: 1) Thrivent Trust and 2) Ronald Blue Trust. The Thrivent Trust division will continue to offer services through Thrivent Financial Representatives and independent advisors. The Ronald Blue Trust division will continue to offer services through Ronald Blue advisors.

### **5) What will be the name of the trust organization going forward?**

The name of the trust company will remain Thrivent Trust Company until a new name is determined.

### **6) Will the name of Ronald Blue & Co. change?**

Yes. The name is changing to Ronald Blue Trust and will operate as a division of Thrivent Trust Company.

## **PRESS KIT: FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (CONT.)**

### **7) Can you tell me more about Ronald Blue & Co.?**

Founded in 1979, Ronald Blue & Co. is one of the largest independent fee-only wealth management firms in the United States with more than \$7 billion in assets under management and advisement, and a network of 13 branch offices, serving 7,000 clients.\*

\* As of 8/01/17 and subject to change.

### **8) Can you tell me more about Thrivent Financial?**

Thrivent has been helping Christians be wise with money and live generously for more than a century. As a not-for-profit membership organization, Thrivent and its affiliates offer a full range of financial solutions, products and services, including life insurance, mutual funds, retail banking, brokerage accounts, and personal trust services. It is number 316 on the 2017 Fortune 500 list. Additionally, Thrivent has:

- More than two million benefit members
- \$116.5 billion in assets under management and advisement (as of 12/31/2016)
- \$9 billion annual surplus (in 2016)
- In 2016, Thrivent and its members gave \$217 million in total outreach to help churches and communities.

### **9) How will the new trust be governed?**

Governance is the responsibility of a 10-member board of directors, which includes three Ronald Blue Trust appointees, three Thrivent appointees and four independent trustees designated by mutual agreement of the other board members. The Office of the Comptroller of the Currency provides regulatory oversight.

### **10) What are the four divisions of Ronald Blue?**

The four divisions are:

- Private Wealth group offers comprehensive services to clients with an investable net worth generally starting at \$1 million.
- The Family Office division is focused on the complex needs of multi-generational families typically starting at \$25 million net worth.
- The Professional Athlete division understands the planning and management demands of individuals and families in professional sports, which often includes building and retaining wealth during a short career span.
- Everyday Steward clients typically range from those getting started with investing to those with an investable net worth of up to \$1 million.

## PRESS KIT: SPOKESPERSON BIOGRAPHIES

### NICK STONESTREET

Nick Stonestreet is the CEO and Chief Investment Officer for Thrivent Trust Company, a nationwide trust company with two divisions, Ronald Blue Trust and Thrivent Trust, and is Chairman of the Board.

Nick has more than 30 years of financial services experience and has managed a broad spectrum of wealth management businesses. As CEO, Nick is active in developing Thrivent Trust Company's strategic initiatives and oversees the overall management of the organization and its divisions. As Chief Investment Officer, he heads the investment department as they develop and implement investment strategies that seek to increase the probability of successfully meeting clients' financial planning goals. Additionally, in his role as Chairman of the Board, Nick leads the board in providing governance and direction for Thrivent Trust Company.

Prior to becoming CEO, Nick co-founded and was CEO of Vident Financial, an investment management firm. He also served as Regional Head of Private Wealth Management for Regions Financial and before that worked at Merrill Lynch for 15 years in several capacities including Chief Executive Officer of Merrill Banc Suisse & Global Head of International Trust, Structuring, Global Co-Head of Private Wealth Services and Director of Private Banking. He was also the Director of Private Banking in Amsterdam, NL. In addition, Nick has been Chief Executive Officer at BCR and started his career at Sun Trust Bank.

Nick earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Biology from Winthrop University in Rock Hill, South Carolina and received a Master's Degree in International Business Studies from the University of South Carolina in Columbia, South Carolina.

Nick and his wife, Ronda, have four adult children and one grandchild and live in Alpharetta, Georgia.



## PRESS KIT: SPOKESPERSON BIOGRAPHIES

### RUSS CROSSON

Russ Crosson is Executive Vice President and Chief Mission Officer of Ronald Blue Trust and Executive Vice Chairman of the board of directors for Thrivent Trust Company, the parent company of Ronald Blue Trust. Russ was hired in 1980 as the second employee of Ronald Blue & Co. (the predecessor company to Ronald Blue Trust).

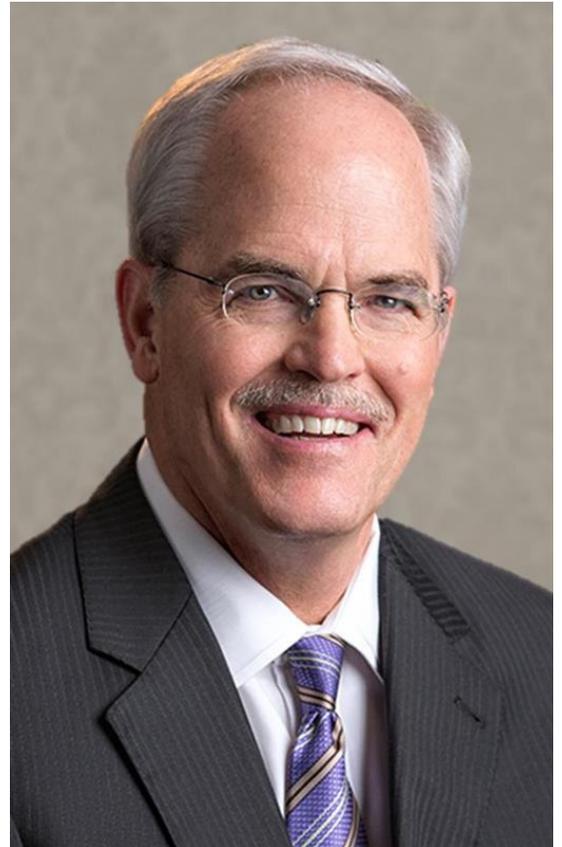
Russ has worked extensively in all areas of financial planning, specializing in comprehensive financial, estate, and philanthropic planning, as well as generational family wealth management and transfer. Russ serves as chief advocate for the heart and soul of the organization and works to ensure the mission of the company is carried out with integrity in every area of the organization with a focus on making sure the company's mission is passed down and inculcated into future generations. As Executive Vice Chairman for Thrivent Trust Company's board of directors, Russ works with other board members to provide governance and direction for the company.

Prior to his current position, Russ served as President & CEO of Ronald Blue & Co (2002 – 2017). From 1999 – 2002, Russ served as Executive Director of the National Christian Foundation (NCF).

Russ is the author of several books including *Your Life... Well Spent*, *The Truth About Money Lies*, and *What Makes a Leader Great*. He has also been a featured speaker in many venues including *Promise Keepers*, *Issachar Summit*, and *America's Best Hope*. He and his wife, Julie, have led seminars around the country on the subjects of money, marriage, and communication.

Russ graduated from Kansas State University with a B.S. in Mathematics and a Master's degree in Education. He currently serves on the board of directors for Fellowship of Christian Athletes (FCA).

Russ and his wife, Julie, live in Roswell, Georgia and are active in the teaching and mentoring of young married couples. They are the parents of three adult sons -- all of whom are married -- and have two grandsons and three granddaughters.



## PRESS KIT: SPOKESPERSON BIOGRAPHIES

### BRIAN SHEPLER

Brian Shepler serves as President and Executive Vice President of Client Services for Ronald Blue Trust, a division of Thrivent Trust Company. He is also a member of the board of directors of Thrivent Trust Company.

As President, Brian oversees the day-to-day management and strategic development of the company. As EVP of Client Services, he supports the entire field organization and its divisions by reinforcing best practices related to corporate culture, growth strategies, advisor compensation/incentives, and compliance. In addition, Brian leads the talent acquisition and development function for the company. Leveraging his background in the investment banking and private equity fields, Brian primarily serves clients who own family businesses, providing advice regarding business succession, strategic growth planning, and corporate capital planning.

Brian began his career with Goldman, Sachs & Co. in New York, serving in the investment banking department. He subsequently joined Pfingsten Partners, a private equity firm in Deerfield, Illinois, targeting Midwest acquisition opportunities. Brian came to Ronald Blue & Co. (the predecessor company to Ronald Blue Trust) in 2000 from SunTrust Banks, Inc., where he served in various roles in the investment banking and equity research divisions.

Brian earned his B.A. in Mathematics from DePauw University and earned an MBA in Finance from the University of Chicago. Brian enjoys engaging his family in missions work and providing consulting to ministries in the areas of strategy and donor development.

Brian and his wife, Cindy, have three children, and live in Roswell, Georgia.



## PRESS KIT: SPOKESPERSON BIOGRAPHIES

### JESSE OSTROM

Jesse Ostrom is the Chief Fiduciary Officer for Thrivent Trust Company's two divisions, Ronald Blue Trust and Thrivent Trust, and also serves as President for Thrivent Trust Company.

Jesse has worked in the trust services industry for nearly 20 years. As Chief Fiduciary Officer, Jesse leads Advisor Services including Estate Planning, Personal Trust, Estate Settlement, Fiduciary Tax, and the team that supports SIMPLIFY, the company's unique personal financial management service. He also heads the Institutional and Private Client groups for Thrivent Trust.

Jesse joined Thrivent Financial Bank in 2010 and helped transition the trust team from a department of the bank to an independent trust company in 2012. Since then he has served in several leadership positions for Thrivent Trust, including CEO and Board Chair.

Jesse is a member of the Wisconsin Bar and holds a JD from University of Wisconsin Law School and a BS in Industrial Engineering from University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.



# RonaldBlueTrust™

## FOR MEDIA INQUIRIES, CONTACT:

**TY MAYS**

Paragon Communications

Phone: (770) 256-8710

Email: [tmays@paragoncommunications.net](mailto:tmays@paragoncommunications.net)