

BrokerCheck Report

SHARON BENTZ MUSTERED

CRD# 1758562

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When communicating online or investing with any professional, make sure you know who you're dealing with. [Imposters](#) might link to sites like BrokerCheck from [phishing](#) or similar scam websites, or through [social media](#), trying to steal your personal information or your money.

Please contact FINRA with any concerns.

About BrokerCheck®



BrokerCheck offers information on all current, and many former, registered securities brokers, and all current and former registered securities firms. FINRA strongly encourages investors to use BrokerCheck to check the background of securities brokers and brokerage firms before deciding to conduct, or continue to conduct, business with them.

- **What is included in a BrokerCheck report?**

- BrokerCheck reports for individual brokers include information such as employment history, professional qualifications, disciplinary actions, criminal convictions, civil judgments and arbitration awards. BrokerCheck reports for brokerage firms include information on a firm's profile, history, and operations, as well as many of the same disclosure events mentioned above.
- Please note that the information contained in a BrokerCheck report may include pending actions or allegations that may be contested, unresolved or unproven. In the end, these actions or allegations may be resolved in favor of the broker or brokerage firm, or concluded through a negotiated settlement with no admission or finding of wrongdoing.

- **Where did this information come from?**

- The information contained in BrokerCheck comes from FINRA's Central Registration Depository, or CRD® and is a combination of:
 - o information FINRA and/or the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) require brokers and brokerage firms to submit as part of the registration and licensing process, and
 - o information that regulators report regarding disciplinary actions or allegations against firms or brokers.

- **How current is this information?**

- Generally, active brokerage firms and brokers are required to update their professional and disciplinary information in CRD within 30 days. Under most circumstances, information reported by brokerage firms, brokers and regulators is available in BrokerCheck the next business day.

- **What if I want to check the background of an investment adviser firm or investment adviser representative?**

- To check the background of an investment adviser firm or representative, you can search for the firm or individual in BrokerCheck. If your search is successful, click on the link provided to view the available licensing and registration information in the SEC's Investment Adviser Public Disclosure (IAPD) website at <https://www.adviserinfo.sec.gov>. In the alternative, you may search the IAPD website directly or contact your state securities regulator at <http://www.finra.org/Investors/ToolsCalculators/BrokerCheck/P455414>.

- **Are there other resources I can use to check the background of investment professionals?**

- FINRA recommends that you learn as much as possible about an investment professional before deciding to work with them. Your state securities regulator can help you research brokers and investment adviser representatives doing business in your state.

Thank you for using FINRA BrokerCheck.



Using this site/information means that you accept the FINRA BrokerCheck Terms and Conditions. A complete list of Terms and Conditions can be found at

brokercheck.finra.org



For additional information about the contents of this report, please refer to the User Guidance or www.finra.org/brokercheck. It provides a glossary of terms and a list of frequently asked questions, as well as additional resources. For more information about FINRA, visit www.finra.org.



SHARON BENTZ MUSTERED

CRD# 1758562

Currently employed by and registered with the following Firm(s):

IA MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INCORPORATED
 2548 A BEACH BLVD
 BILOXI, MS 39531
 CRD# 7691
 Registered with this firm since: 07/30/1996

B MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INCORPORATED
 2548 A BEACH BLVD
 BILOXI, MS 39531
 CRD# 7691
 Registered with this firm since: 10/23/1987

Report Summary for this Broker

This report summary provides an overview of the broker's professional background and conduct. Additional information can be found in the detailed report.

Broker Qualifications

This broker is registered with:

- 6 Self-Regulatory Organizations
- 21 U.S. states and territories

This broker has passed:

- 0 Principal/Supervisory Exams
- 2 General Industry/Product Exams
- 2 State Securities Law Exams

Registration History

This broker was previously registered with the following securities firm(s):

No information reported.

Disclosure Events

All individuals registered to sell securities or provide investment advice are required to disclose customer complaints and arbitrations, regulatory actions, employment terminations, bankruptcy filings, and criminal or civil judicial proceedings.

Are there events disclosed about this broker? **Yes**

The following types of disclosures have been reported:

Type	Count
Customer Dispute	3



Broker Qualifications

Registrations

This section provides the self-regulatory organizations (SROs) and U.S. states/territories the broker is currently registered and licensed with, the category of each license, and the date on which it became effective. This section also provides, for every brokerage firm with which the broker is currently employed, the address of each branch where the broker works.

This individual is currently registered with 6 SROs and is licensed in 21 U.S. states and territories through his or her employer.

Employment 1 of 1

Firm Name: **MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INCORPORATED**

Main Office Address: **ONE BRYANT PARK
NEW YORK, NY 10036**

Firm CRD#: **7691**

	SRO	Category	Status	Date
B	Cboe BYX Exchange, Inc.	General Securities Representative	Approved	05/09/2014
B	Cboe BZX Exchange, Inc.	General Securities Representative	Approved	05/09/2014
B	Cboe Exchange, Inc.	General Securities Representative	Approved	03/03/1991
B	FINRA	General Securities Representative	Approved	10/23/1987
B	Nasdaq Stock Market	General Securities Representative	Approved	07/12/2006
B	New York Stock Exchange	General Securities Representative	Approved	11/16/1987

	U.S. State/ Territory	Category	Status	Date
B	Alabama	Agent	Approved	04/02/1997
B	Arizona	Agent	Approved	03/23/1994
B	California	Agent	Approved	06/04/1998
B	Florida	Agent	Approved	01/27/1995
B	Georgia	Agent	Approved	12/23/1996
B	Illinois	Agent	Approved	02/24/2021
B	Iowa	Agent	Approved	08/06/2025

Broker Qualifications



Employment 1 of 1, continued

	U.S. State/ Territory	Category	Status	Date
B	Louisiana	Agent	Approved	11/28/1988
B	Massachusetts	Agent	Approved	05/04/2021
B	Michigan	Agent	Approved	12/13/2016
B	Minnesota	Agent	Approved	01/04/2012
B	Mississippi	Agent	Approved	10/29/1987
IA	Mississippi	Investment Adviser Representative	Approved	10/25/2002
B	Missouri	Agent	Approved	02/13/2025
B	Nevada	Agent	Approved	05/02/2023
B	New Jersey	Agent	Approved	06/16/1998
B	New York	Agent	Approved	06/04/1998
B	North Carolina	Agent	Approved	08/02/2010
B	Oklahoma	Agent	Approved	02/24/2005
B	Tennessee	Agent	Approved	06/01/2015
B	Texas	Agent	Approved	07/30/1996
IA	Texas	Investment Adviser Representative	Restricted Approval	07/30/1996
B	Virginia	Agent	Approved	02/12/1998

Branch Office Locations

MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INCORPORATED
 2548 A BEACH BLVD
 BILOXI, MS 39531



Broker Qualifications

Industry Exams this Broker has Passed

This section includes all securities industry exams that the broker has passed. Under limited circumstances, a broker may attain a registration after receiving an exam waiver based on exams the broker has passed and/or qualifying work experience. Any exam waivers that the broker has received are not included below. A passed exam or exam waiver does not permit a broker to do business without an active SRO or state registration.

This individual has passed 0 principal/supervisory exams, 2 general industry/product exams, and 2 state securities law exams.

Principal/Supervisory Exams

Exam	Category	Date
No information reported.		

General Industry/Product Exams

Exam	Category	Date
B Securities Industry Essentials Examination	SIE	10/01/2018
B General Securities Representative Examination	Series 7	10/17/1987

State Securities Law Exams

Exam	Category	Date
IA Uniform Investment Adviser Law Examination	Series 65	11/30/1995
B Uniform Securities Agent State Law Examination	Series 63	11/25/1987

Additional information about the above exams or other exams FINRA administers to brokers and other securities professionals can be found at www.finra.org/brokerqualifications/registeredrep/.

Broker Qualifications



Professional Designations

This section details that the representative has reported **0** professional designation(s).

No information reported.



Registration and Employment History

Registration History

The broker previously was registered with the following firms:

Registration Dates	Firm Name	CRD#	Branch Location
No information reported.			

Employment History

This section provides up to 10 years of an individual broker's employment history as reported by the individual broker on the most recently filed Form U4.

Please note that the broker is required to provide this information only while registered with FINRA or a national securities exchange and the information is not updated via Form U4 after the broker ceases to be registered. Therefore, an employment end date of "Present" may not reflect the broker's current employment status.

Employment	Employer Name	Position	Investment Related	Employer Location
09/2011 - Present	BANK OF AMERICA, N.A.	WEALTH MANAGEMENT ADVISOR	Y	BILOXI, MS, United States
08/1987 - Present	MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH INCORPORATED	NOT PROVIDED	Y	GULFPORT, MS, United States

Other Business Activities

This section includes information, if any, as provided by the broker regarding other business activities the broker is currently engaged in either as a proprietor, partner, officer, director, employee, trustee, agent or otherwise. This section does not include non-investment related activity that is exclusively charitable, civic, religious or fraternal and is recognized as tax exempt.

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For profit or not for profit: For-Profit Organization

Name of outside business organization: SBD Properties LLC

Investment related: Yes

Address of business: Gulfport, Mississippi 39502

Nature of business: LLC

Position, title, association: Family Held

Start date of relationship: 12/20/2012

Number of hours devoted: 1 hour Qtrly

Number of hours devoted during trading hours: 1

Duties: Family LLC for Estate Planning Purposes. While the LLC started as gifting from my father, my brother and I will add funds of our own to make investments and lending.

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Registration and Employment History

Other Business Activities, continued

For profit or not for profit:

Name of outside business organization: Sharon Bentz realtor properties

Investment related: No

Address of business: Biloxi, Mississippi 39531

Position, title, association: Co-owner with other family members

Start date of relationship: 4/1/2021

Number of hours devoted: 1 hour

Number of hours devoted during trading hours: 0

Duties: solely owns this property

I*: 2307258

Entity Type:

Name of OBA: Turan Road Benton Property (raw land)

Address: Harrison County, MS

Investment Related: No

Position, Title, Association: Owner

Employee Start Date: 05/2024

Number of Hours: 0

Number of Hours during trading: 0

Duties: Raw land purchase in a preapproved Equity Trust self directed IRA

Disclosure Events



What you should know about reported disclosure events:

1. All individuals registered to sell securities or provide investment advice are required to disclose customer complaints and arbitrations, regulatory actions, employment terminations, bankruptcy filings, and criminal or civil judicial proceedings.
2. **Certain thresholds must be met before an event is reported to CRD, for example:**
 - o A law enforcement agency must file formal charges before a broker is required to disclose a particular criminal event.
 - o A customer dispute must involve allegations that a broker engaged in activity that violates certain rules or conduct governing the industry and that the activity resulted in damages of at least \$5,000.
 - o
3. **Disclosure events in BrokerCheck reports come from different sources:**
 - o As mentioned at the beginning of this report, information contained in BrokerCheck comes from brokers, brokerage firms and regulators. When more than one of these sources reports information for the same disclosure event, all versions of the event will appear in the BrokerCheck report. The different versions will be separated by a solid line with the reporting source labeled.
 - o
4. **There are different statuses and dispositions for disclosure events:**
 - o A disclosure event may have a status of *pending*, *on appeal*, or *final*.
 - A "pending" event involves allegations that have not been proven or formally adjudicated.
 - An event that is "on appeal" involves allegations that have been adjudicated but are currently being appealed.
 - A "final" event has been concluded and its resolution is not subject to change.
 - o A final event generally has a disposition of *adjudicated*, *settled* or *otherwise resolved*.
 - An "adjudicated" matter includes a disposition by (1) a court of law in a criminal or civil matter, or (2) an administrative panel in an action brought by a regulator that is contested by the party charged with some alleged wrongdoing.
 - A "settled" matter generally involves an agreement by the parties to resolve the matter. Please note that brokers and brokerage firms may choose to settle customer disputes or regulatory matters for business or other reasons.
 - A "resolved" matter usually involves no payment to the customer and no finding of wrongdoing on the part of the individual broker. Such matters generally involve customer disputes.

For your convenience, below is a matrix of the number and status of disclosure events involving this broker. Further information regarding these events can be found in the subsequent pages of this report. You also may wish to contact the broker to obtain further information regarding these events.

	Pending	Final	On Appeal
Customer Dispute	0	3	N/A



Disclosure Event Details

When evaluating this information, please keep in mind that a disclosure event may be pending or involve allegations that are contested and have not been resolved or proven. The matter may, in the end, be withdrawn, dismissed, resolved in favor of the broker, or concluded through a negotiated settlement for certain business reasons (e.g., to maintain customer relationships or to limit the litigation costs associated with disputing the allegations) with no admission or finding of wrongdoing.

This report provides the information exactly as it was reported to CRD and therefore some of the specific data fields contained in the report may be blank if the information was not provided to CRD.

Customer Dispute - Award / Judgment

This type of disclosure event involves a final, consumer-initiated, investment-related arbitration or civil suit containing allegations of sales practice violations against the broker that resulted in an arbitration award or civil judgment for the customer.

Disclosure 1 of 1

Reporting Source:	Regulator
Employing firm when activities occurred which led to the complaint:	MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH, INCORPORATED
Allegations:	BREACH OF FIDUCIARY DUTY; NEGLIGENCE; NEGLIGENT MISREPRESENTATION; AND COMMON LAW FRAUD.
Product Type:	Annuity-Variable
Alleged Damages:	\$393,937.00
Arbitration Information	
Arbitration/Reparation Claim filed with and Docket/Case No.:	FINRA - CASE #08-01816
Date Notice/Process Served:	06/04/2008
Arbitration Pending?	No
Disposition:	Award
Disposition Date:	04/09/2010
Disposition Detail:	AWARD: THE PANEL FINDS THAT THE SURRENDER OF THE 1995 ANNUITIES AND SUBSEQUENT PURCHASE OF THE 2004 ANNUITIES (KNOWN AS THE "EXCHANGE") WAS UNSUITABLE, AND THEREFORE SHOULD NOT HAVE BEEN RECOMMENDED. RESPONDENT IS JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY LIABLE TO AND SHALL PAY CLAIMANT AS AMENDED THROUGH ITS TRUSTEE COMPENSATORY DAMAGES IN THE TOTAL SUM OF \$85,467.00 AS



FOLLOWS:

A) SURRENDER FEES ON THE 2004 ANNUITIES IN THE SUM OF \$38,751.00;
AND

B) 1.35% SUB ACCOUNT FEES IN THE SUM OF \$46,716.00.

RESPONDENT IS JOINTLY AND SEVERALLY LIABLE TO AND SHALL PAY CLAIMANT AS AMENDED THROUGH ITS TRUSTEE INTEREST ON THE SUM OF \$85,467.00 AT THE RATE OF 2% PER ANNUM BEGINNING THE DATE THE AWARD IS SERVED UNTIL THE DATE THE AWARD IS PAID.

DISMISSED: THE CLAIMS OF CLAIMANT, INDIVIDUALLY, THROUGH HER ATTORNEY-IN-FACT ARE DISMISSED WITH PREJUDICE.

Reporting Source:	Broker
Employing firm when activities occurred which led to the complaint:	MERRILL LYNCH, PIERCE, FENNER & SMITH, INC.
Allegations:	[TRUSTEE], AS TRUSTEE AND ATTORNEY-IN-FACT FOR [CUSTOMER], ALLEGES THAT THE FINANCIAL ADVISOR MADE MISREPRESENTATIONS AND UNSUITABLE INVESTMENT RECOMMENDATIONS WITH RESPECT TO INVESTMENTS IN ANNUITIES.
Product Type:	Annuity-Variable
Alleged Damages:	\$300,000.00
Arbitration Information	
Arbitration/CFTC reparation claim filed with (FINRA, AAA, CFTC, etc.):	FINRA
Docket/Case #:	08-01816
Date Notice/Process Served:	06/10/2008
Arbitration Pending?	No
Disposition:	Award to Customer
Disposition Date:	04/09/2010
Monetary Compensation Amount:	\$85,546.61
Individual Contribution Amount:	\$0.00



Customer Dispute - Settled

This type of disclosure event involves (1) a consumer-initiated, investment-related arbitration or civil suit containing allegations of sales practice violations against the individual broker that was dismissed, withdrawn, or denied; or (2) a consumer-initiated, investment-related written complaint

Disclosure 1 of 1

Reporting Source:	Broker
Employing firm when activities occurred which led to the complaint:	MERRILL LYNCH
Allegations:	CUSTOMER ALLEGES HIS REGISTERED REPRESENTATIVE INCORRECTLY ALLOWED HIM TO EXCHANGE VARIABLE ANNUITIES.
Product Type:	Annuity(ies) - Variable
Alleged Damages:	\$25,000.00

Customer Complaint Information

Date Complaint Received:	12/20/1999
Complaint Pending?	No
Status:	Settled
Status Date:	04/06/2000
Settlement Amount:	\$12,797.83
Individual Contribution Amount:	\$1,675.28
Broker Statement	WITHOUT ADMITTING ANY LIABILITY, MERRILL LYNCH SETTLED THE MATTER IN ORDER TO AVOID THE EXPENSE AND UNCERTAINTY OF LITIGATION



Customer Dispute - Closed-No Action / Withdrawn / Dismissed / Denied

This type of disclosure event involves (1) a consumer-initiated, investment-related arbitration or civil suit containing allegations of sales practice violations against the individual broker that was dismissed, withdrawn, or denied; or (2) a consumer-initiated, investment-related written complaint containing allegations that the broker engaged in sales practice violations resulting in compensatory damages of at least \$5,000, forgery, theft, or misappropriation, or conversion of funds or securities, which was closed without action, withdrawn, or denied.

Disclosure 1 of 1

Reporting Source:	Broker
Employing firm when activities occurred which led to the complaint:	MERRILL LYNCH
Allegations:	CUSTOMER ALLEGES THAT MS. BENTZ'S RECOMMENDATION TO PUT HIS MOTHER INTO A MANAGED WRAP ACCOUNT DID NOT TAKE INTO ACCOUNT HER FINANCIAL SITUATION. NO SPECIFIC DAMAGES ALLEGED.
Product Type:	Other
Alleged Damages:	\$0.00

Customer Complaint Information

Date Complaint Received:	01/06/2000
Complaint Pending?	No
Status:	Denied
Status Date:	01/13/2000

Settlement Amount:

Individual Contribution Amount:

Broker Statement	CUSTOMER'S MOTHER COMPLETED A QUIESTIONAIRE FOR HER MANAGED WRAP ACCOUNT THAT ESTABLISHED HER INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES AND RISK TOLERANCE. BASED ON THE INFORMATION CUSTOMER'S MOTHER PROVIDED, AN INVESTMENT MANAGER WAS CHOSEN THAT WAS APPROPRIATE FOR HER STATED RISK PROFILE. CUSTOMER'S MOTHER INDICATED THAT SHE WAS WILLING TO ACCEPT MODERATE RISK. CUSTOMER'S MOTHER DECIDED TO CLOSE THE ACCOUNT AFTER ONLY THREE MONTHS.
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End of Report



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