

4TH QUARTER 2017 - ADVISORY COMMENTARY

2017 CAME TO A CLOSE WITH EQUITY MARKETS CONTINUING THEIR YEAR-LONG SURGE UPWARDS. THE UPSIDE BIAS WAS GIVEN A BOOST AS CONGRESS PASSED THE NEW TAX CUT & REFORM PACKAGE JUST BEFORE THE END OF THE YEAR. WHILE THE EFFECTS OF ALL OF THE CHANGES REMAIN A BIT MURKY AT THE MOMENT, OUR OPINION IS THAT IT DOES SEEM TO BE A NET POSITIVE FOR U.S. CORPORATE & SMALL BUSINESS EARNINGS. INCOME TAX RATE REDUCTIONS FOR MOST INDIVIDUAL TAX PAYERS SHOULD ALSO PROVIDE SOME MODEST RELIEF TO HOUSEHOLDS AS WELL AS INDICATE A SLIGHT BOOST TO CONSUMER SPENDING IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE, ALMOST ALL INVESTMENTS IN 2018 SHOULD BE VIEWED THROUGH THE LENS OF A LOWER U.S. DOLLAR. WE THINK YOU'LL SEE THE DOLLAR CONTINUE ITS OVERALL PUSH DOWNWARD AS THIS YEAR DEVELOPS. PRESIDENT TRUMP WANTS IT, THE MANUFACTURING INDUSTRY WANTS IT, THE SHALE OIL & GAS INDUSTRY WANTS IT, THE STOCK MARKET WANTS IT AND IN MANY, MANY WAYS THE U.S. FISCAL SITUATION FLAT OUT NEEDS IT. A FALLING DOLLAR HAS A HIGHLY POSITIVE IMPACT ON THE U.S. GOVERNMENT'S FUTURE LIABILITIES, AS IT CAN CONTINUE TO INFLATE ITS WAY OUT OF A LARGE PART OF THE PROBLEM THAT IT REFUSES TO DEAL WITH IN ANY OTHER SUBSTANTIVE WAY.

ALONG THIS INVESTMENT RATIONALE, WE CONTINUE TO HOLD OUR LONG-TERM POSITION IN GOLD. WE ALSO RECENTLY ADDED AN ALLOCATION TO MORE GENERAL COMMODITY EXPOSURE, INCLUDING OIL & GAS, AGRICULTURAL COMMODITIES AND ADDITIONAL PRECIOUS METALS. WHILE NOT AN OVERLY LARGE PERCENTAGE OF OUR OVERALL ALLOCATION, IT SHOULD HOPEFULLY PROVIDE AN EXCELLENT RISK/REWARD BALANCE AS WE ENTER 2018.

GIVEN WHERE THE OVERALL EQUITY MARKETS SIT REGARDING THEIR HIGH HISTORICAL VALUATIONS, WE THINK IT'S BEYOND PRUDENT TO HAVE NON-CORRELATED ASSET EXPOSURE ALONGSIDE A CORE EQUITY POSITION. WE SEE THE VERY REAL POSSIBILITY OF A "MELT-UP" IN STOCK PRICES, WHICH WE WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN, BUT ALSO SEE THE EQUALLY REAL POSSIBILITY OF THE MARKETS RUNNING INTO A WALL CONSTRUCTED OF HIGHER INTEREST RATES, REDUCED CENTRAL BANK LIQUIDITY AND CORPORATE AND GOVERNMENT DEBT SUSTAINABILITY PROBLEMS.

SINCERELY,



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4TH QUARTER 2017 - MARKET UPDATE

EQUITY MARKETS

- S&P 500 INDEX TR +6.64%
- DOW JONES INDUSTRIAL AVERAGE TR +10.96%
- NASDAQ COMPOSITE INDEX +6.27%
- RUSSELL 3000 INDEX TR +6.34%
- CBOE SPX MARKET VOLATILITY INDEX +16.09%

FIXED INCOME MARKETS

- BARCLAYS U.S. AGGREGATE BOND INDEX +0.39%
- BARCLAYS U.S. TREASURY BOND INDEX +0.05%

ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS, COMMODITIES & CURRENCIES

- S&P GSCI TOTAL RETURN INDEX +9.90%
- GSCI WEST TEXAS INTERMEDIATE EXCESS RETURN +15.62%
- U.S. DOLLAR INDEX -1.03%
- GOLD SPOT +0.62%
- DOW JONES COMPOSITE REIT INDEX TR +2.26%
- CBOE BUYWRITE MONTHLY INDEX +2.79%

ANCHORED GROWTH BENCHMARK +4.55%

(70% RUSSELL 3000, 25% BARCLAYS U.S. AGGREGATE BOND INDEX, 5% CASH)

FOUNDATION TOTAL RETURN BENCHMARK +3.35%

(50% RUSSELL 3000, 40% BARCLAYS U.S. AGGREGATE BOND INDEX, 10% CASH)

INFLATION-PLUS INCOME BENCHMARK +0.30%

(40% BARCLAYS U.S. AGGREGATE BOND INDEX, 40% BARCLAYS U.S. TREASURY SHORT INDEX, 20% CASH)

*SOURCE: KWANTL.COM (1/12/18). INDEXES ARE UNMANAGED AND CANNOT BE INVESTED INTO DIRECTLY. UNMANAGED INDEX RETURNS DO NOT REFLECT FEES, EXPENSES, OR SALES CHARGES. INDEX PERFORMANCE IS NOT INDICATIVE OF THE PERFORMANCE OF ANY INVESTMENT. PAST PERFORMANCE IS NO GUARANTEE OF FUTURE RESULTS.



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The Standard & Poor's 500 Index is a capitalization-weighted index of 500 stocks designed to measure performance of the broad domestic economy through changes in the aggregate market value of 500 stocks representing all major industries.

Dow Jones Industrial Average is the most widely used indicator of the overall condition of the stock market, a price-weighted average of 30 actively traded blue chip stocks, primarily industrials. The 30 stocks are chosen by the editors of the Wall Street Journal. The Dow is computed using a price-weighted indexing system, rather than the more common market cap-weighted indexing system.

The NASDAQ Global Market Composite consists of 1,450 stocks that meet NASDAQ's strict financial and liquidity requirements, and corporate governance standards. The Global Market Composite is less exclusive than the Global Select Market Composite.

The Russell 3000 Index is a market capitalization weighted equity index maintained by the Russell Investment Group that seeks to be a benchmark of the entire U.S. stock market. More specifically, this index encompasses the 3,000 largest U.S.-traded stocks, in which the underlying companies are all incorporated in the U.S.

The CBOE SPX Market Volatility Index shows the market's expectation of 30-day volatility. It is constructed using the implied volatilities of a wide range of S&P 500 index options. This volatility is meant to be forward looking and is calculated from both calls and puts. The VIX is a widely used measure of market risk and is often referred to as the "investor fear gauge."

The Barclays US Aggregate Bond Index is a broad-based flagship benchmark that measures the investment grade, US dollar-denominated, fixed-rate taxable bond market. The index includes Treasuries, government-related and corporate securities, MBS (agency fixed-rate and hybrid ARM pass-throughs), ABS and CMBS (agency and non-agency).

The Barclays US Treasury Bond Index measures the performance of U.S. Treasury securities that have a remaining maturity of at least seven years and less than 10 years.

The S&P GSCI is recognized as a leading measure of general price movements and inflation in the world economy. The index – representing market beta – is world-production weighted. It is designed to be investable by including the most liquid commodity futures, and provides diversification with low correlations to other asset classes.

The GSCI West Texas Intermediate Excess Return Index reflects the returns that are potentially available through an unleveraged investment in the West Texas Intermediate (WTI) crude oil futures contract plus the Treasury Bill rate of interest that could be earned on funds committed to the trading of the underlying contracts.

The U.S. Dollar Index is a measure of the value of the U.S. dollar relative to majority of its most significant trading partners. This index is similar to other trade-weighted indexes, which also use the exchange rates from the same major currencies.

Gold Spot refers to the price paid for current delivery of 1 ounce of physical gold.

The Dow Jones Composite REIT Index contains all publicly traded U.S. REITs in the S&P Dow Jones Indices U.S. stock universe that are classified into one of three subcategories—equity, mortgage or hybrid—as defined by the REIT/RESI Industry Classification Hierarchy.

The CBOE S&P 500 BuyWrite Index (BXM) is a benchmark index designed to track the performance of a hypothetical buy-write strategy on the S&P 500 Index.



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