



WEEKLY MARKET COMMENTARY

For the Week of February 11, 2019

The Markets

Friday on Wall Street, positive corporate results offset skepticism over a U.S. – China trade deal by the March 1 deadline. The S&P 500 and the NASDAQ snapped a two-day losing streak, and all three indexes closed the week higher. For the week, the Dow rose 0.32 percent to finish at 25,106.33. The S&P gained 0.11 percent to finish at 2,707.88, and the NASDAQ climbed 0.47 percent to end the week at 7,298.20.

Estate Taxes — An estimated 2.8 million Americans died in 2018. Of the 2.8 million deaths, an estimated 4,000 (i.e., one in every 700 deaths) died with an estate worth more than \$11.2 million, the maximum dollar amount that can be passed estate tax-free per decedent with proper tax planning (source: Tax Policy Center, BTN Research).

Required Minimum Distributions — Clients who turned age 70½ sometime in 2018 must begin taking annual withdrawals from their IRA accounts no later than April 1. If they delay their first withdrawal until April 1, they must also take a second distribution by Dec. 31 (source: Internal Revenue Service, BTN Research).

Way Down — U.S. banks repossessed 230,305 homes in 2018, down 21 percent from 291,579 repossessions in 2017, down 39.3 percent from 379,437 repossessions in 2016 and down 48.8 percent from 449,900 repossessions in 2015. The peak in repossessions: 1,050,500 in 2010 (source: Attom Data Solutions, BTN Research).

WEEKLY FOCUS – Making Your Executor’s Job Easier

Being an executor is a serious and time-consuming task performed during a stressful time. Why not make your designated executor’s work easier with a well-organized, clearly communicated overview of your assets and wishes? Here are a few tips to get started.

Create a letter of direction telling the executor where to find everything they need, including passwords to your digital accounts. Privacy policies could make it very difficult for an executor to access your online accounts without them. Don’t reveal passwords in a will, which will become a public document. Also provide the code or keys to your home alarm system, home safe, safe deposit box and locked mailboxes or cabinets. State your funeral and remains preferences. If your will doesn’t address personal items with sentimental value, cover how you want them distributed here as well.

Make some cash available. You may want to make your executor a co-signer on your financial accounts and safe deposit box. Your executor will need to pay bills and cover funeral expenses. And they might need to hire repairs and updates to get your home ready to sell.

Review your estate plan annually to make sure your will, trust and beneficiary designations are current. Your estate plan should include the following documents: a will, medical and financial powers of attorney, an advance health directive, testamentary trust documents, organ donation wishes and guardianship information, if applicable.

Provide other documents and connections. On top of the estate documents, the following may be needed: your birth certificate, death certificate, brokerage statements, insurance policies, real estate deed(s), marriage certificate, divorce decree, military discharge papers, property and income tax records, Social Security records, bank statements, vehicle titles and a current snapshot of assets. It is also an excellent idea to introduce your executor to your lawyer, accountant, financial advisor, banker and insurance agent.

From medical to financial decisions and everything in between, planning an estate can be an uncomfortable subject, especially when you involve your family in the planning. In the end, you want your legacy to be protected. Our office can work with your attorney to plan your estate, help you take the proper steps to protect your family's future and make your executor's role easier. *Securities America and its representatives do not provide legal advice.*

* The Standard & Poor's 500 (S&P 500) is an unmanaged group of securities considered to be representative of the stock market in general. The Dow Jones Industrial Average is a price-weighted index of 30 actively traded blue-chip stocks. NASDAQ Composite Index is an unmanaged, market-weighted index of all over-the-counter common stocks traded on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotation System. The Morgan Stanley Capital International Europe, Australia and Far East Index (MSCI EAFE Index) is a widely recognized benchmark of non-U.S. stock markets. It is an unmanaged index composed of a sample of companies representative of the market structure of 20 European and Pacific Basin countries and includes reinvestment of all dividends. Barclays Capital Aggregate Bond Index is an unmanaged index comprised of U.S. investment-grade, fixed-rate bond market securities, including government, government agency, corporate and mortgage-backed securities between one and 10 years. Written by Securities America, Copyright February 2019. All rights reserved. Securities offered through Securities America, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC. SAI#2419016.1

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