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**MOULTON WEALTH MANAGEMENT INC.**

## **MOULTON HOT MINUTES**

**SPECIALIZING IN RETIREMENT AND TAX PLANNING**

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### **Week of February 16, 2026**

Last week's newsletter discussed the current jobs market. Though the most recent jobs numbers were good, the revisions have been negative. Jobs are important to the economy, and in turn, the stock market. You can read the newsletter here: [Newsletter - Moulton Wealth](#).

*ATTEND OUR...*

## ***FINANCIAL & TAX PLANNING SEMINAR***

***Including the "BIG BEAUTIFUL BILL"***

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- **MARCH 18, 2026 – RICHLAND**
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CALL **509-922-3110** TO RESERVE A SEAT *OR IF YOU WANT A SECOND OPINION ON YOUR PORTFOLIO!*

Last Saturday's radio show explored the similarities between today, and the early stages of the Dot.com bubble popping. It's an important comparison. After the Dot.com bubble burst, the S&P-500 fell ~50% and the NASDAQ ~80%. Worse, it took 13 years for the S&P-500 to permanently reach new highs and the Nasdaq 15 years. If you're retired, how would 15 years of a "down market" impact your retirement lifestyle and plans? You can listen to past radio shows here: [Radio Show - Moulton Wealth](#).

*Please see our website [www.MoultonWealth.com](http://www.MoultonWealth.com). Of the many improvements, the most important is we now host podcasts of past radio shows, allowing you to listen at your convenience. You can also read all the past newsletters and take the test to find your Risk Number.*

## ***Is the Market Improving... or is the NASDAQ Forming a Top?***

If you are retired, the stock market is not just a headline. It directly affects your income, your withdrawals, and your long-term security.

Right now, the picture is mixed.

There are signs the economy is stabilizing. But there are also signs that the market - especially the technology-heavy Nasdaq - may be forming a **top**.

Let's look at both sides clearly and calmly.

## ***Signs of Improvement in the Economy and Market***

*LISTEN TO RIAL'S AND DON'S RADIO SHOW,*

## ***"YOUR MONEY MATTERS"***

*EVERY SATURDAY MORNING AT*

*8:00 AM ON KXLY RADIO CHANNEL 920 AM IN SPOKANE*

*AND AT 9:30 AM ON NEWSTALK RADIO CHANNEL 870 AM IN THE TRI-CITIES AREA*

*LISTEN LIVE AT [WWW.NEWSTALK870.AM](http://WWW.NEWSTALK870.AM) AGAIN AT 9:30 EACH SATURDAY MORNING*

*OR VISIT OUR WEBSITE [MOULTONWEALTH.COM](http://MOULTONWEALTH.COM) FOR PODCASTS*



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## ***The Economy Is Still Expanding***

Economic growth has slowed compared to the rapid rebound after the pandemic, but it has not stalled. Businesses are still operating. Consumers are still spending, though more carefully.

Unemployment has edged up slightly, but it remains far from crisis levels. We are not seeing widespread layoffs across the economy, but job creation is clearly weakening.

That suggests we are not in a deep recession at this time.

For retirees, stability - even moderate stability - matters.

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## ***Corporate Earnings Have Stabilized***

Over the long term, stock prices follow earnings. Companies in the S&P-500 have reported earnings that are generally holding up better than many feared.

Even with higher interest rates, many companies have managed to control costs and protect profit margins.

Markets need earnings to justify prices. So far, earnings have not collapsed.

That provides support under stock prices - at least for now.

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## ***Inflation Is No Longer Surging***

Inflation has cooled meaningfully from its peak. Prices are still higher than a few years ago, but the pace of increase has slowed.

The Federal Reserve is no longer aggressively raising interest rates. That reduces pressure on borrowing costs and helps stabilize bond markets.

For retirees who rely on bonds and fixed income, stability in interest rates is important.

This is a clear improvement compared to the rapid inflation surge we experienced earlier.

# *Now the Warning Signs*

Late-stage markets often look steady on the surface. But underneath, momentum can begin to fade.

One of the most important signals right now comes from the Nasdaq.

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## ***The Nasdaq Peaked in October 2025***

The Nasdaq Composite reached its high point in October 2025.

That may not sound dramatic. Markets go up and down all the time.

But the Nasdaq is different from the broader market.

It is heavily weighted toward growth and technology stocks. These companies tend to be more speculative. They usually rise the fastest when investors feel confident and money is flowing easily.

They also tend to fall first when confidence weakens.

Historically, the Nasdaq often leads the market in both directions. It frequently tops before the broader S&P 500 peaks.

That is why its October 2025 high, matters.

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## ***What “Topping” Actually Means***

A top is not a single day. It is a process.

Think of it like a runner nearing the end of a race. At first, the pace is strong. Then it becomes harder to maintain speed. The runner may still move forward - but with less power.

In market terms, a topping pattern often includes:

- Prices struggling to make new highs
- Fewer stocks participating in rallies
- Increased volatility
- Speculative sectors weakening first

The Nasdaq's peak suggests that the most aggressive part of the market may have already lost momentum.

That does not guarantee a bear market. But it can be an early warning sign.

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## ***Leadership Is Narrow***

Another late-cycle sign is narrow leadership.

Instead of broad participation across many industries, gains have been concentrated in a small group of very large technology companies.

When only a handful of stocks carry the market, risk increases. If those leaders stumble, the broader market can weaken quickly.

Healthy bull markets usually involve many sectors rising together. Narrow markets often appear closer to the end of a cycle.

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## ***Valuations Remain Elevated***

Stock prices are still high relative to long-term earnings averages.

High valuations do not automatically cause declines. But they leave little room for disappointment.

When expectations are high, even small negative surprises can trigger larger pullbacks.

Combined with a Nasdaq that has already peaked, this deserves attention.

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## ***Why This Matters More in Retirement***

When you were working, downturns were uncomfortable - but you had time. You were contributing money regularly. You had your paycheck to live on.

In retirement, you are withdrawing, whether regularly or for special needs / wants.

That introduces something called sequence of return risk. If large losses happen early while you are taking income from your portfolio, the long-term impact can be severe.

Even if markets eventually recover, early damage can permanently reduce your financial flexibility.

That is why recognizing topping behavior matters.

It's not about predicting the exact day the market falls.

It's about managing risk before losses compound.

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## ***The Importance of a Sell Discipline***

A sell discipline is not panic selling. It is not reacting emotionally to news headlines.

It is a written plan that answers questions like:

- When will I trim positions after strong gains?
- When will I rebalance?
- Under what conditions will I reduce stock exposure?

Without a discipline, retirees often hold on too long during topping phases. They ride markets up - and then ride them down.

With a discipline, you make measured adjustments when risks increase, not after damage is done.

If October 2025 turns out to be a true Nasdaq top, those who reduced risk thoughtfully will be in a stronger position.

If it turns out to be just a pause, disciplined investors still benefit from structured decision-making.

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## ***The Bottom Line***

We see reasons for cautious optimism:

- The economy continues to expand
- Earnings are stabilizing
- Inflation has cooled

But we also see reasons for caution:

- The Nasdaq peaked in October 2025
- Leadership is narrow

- Valuations are elevated

Retirement investing is not about chasing every rally.

It is about protecting income, managing downside risk, and ensuring your portfolio can support you through both strong markets and weak ones.

Markets will always cycle.

The key question is not whether another downturn will happen.

It's whether you have a plan in place before it does.

For years, the U.S. economy has relied on one key support: jobs. As long as people were working, investors were told the economy - and the stock market - would be fine.

That support is now weakening.

The jobs market is not collapsing, but it is clearly cooling. And when jobs weaken, risk rises for the stock market. For retirees, higher market risk is not just uncomfortable, it can permanently damage a retirement plan. ***And more importantly, it can seriously damage your retirement lifestyle.***

This is why retirement investing requires something many investors never develop: a ***rules-based, systematic, non-emotional sell strategy. It also needs to be mathematically based. Math doesn't lie, it isn't emotional, and it is clear.***

***It is far better to have a sell strategy and not need it, than to need one and not have it.***

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## ***Want Help?***

Let's review your portfolio, your taxes and your estate plan and design a plan to optimize your retirement. And let's include a math-driven defensive investment discipline, tailored to the next phase of the market - not the last one.

***Prepare - don't panic.***

If you're feeling unsure about how to navigate all of this, or if you're sitting on the sidelines, trying to figure out how (or whether) to get back in, we invite you to call us or join one of our seminars.

We'll walk you through the data, the process, and the options. Our mission is to help you plan with discipline, flexibility, and confidence - whatever the market brings next.

Participate while the trend is strong, but have a clear plan for when to reduce risk.

That's what disciplined investing is all about - balancing the need to capture gains with the need to protect against big losses.

## **Our 8 Core Investment Principles:**

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1. We are committed to making your money last as long as you do.
2. Growth is important, but the protection of principal is even more important.
3. The goal of our Invest and Protect strategy is unlimited upside, with tolerable downside.
4. It's better to have the Invest and Protect strategy and not need it, than to need it and not have it.
5. The Invest and Protect strategy sometimes comes with opportunity cost in certain market environments.
6. Take only as much risk as appropriate to achieve your specific financial goals.
7. Paying taxes on gains is preferable to losing those gains, along with your principal.
8. Working with a financial professional who is a fiduciary, and who has a mathematically based protection strategy, may help you achieve a successful retirement.

Investments are but one topic we cover at our seminars, and discuss in our consultations. Retirement can be a time of great joy and freedom. But leaving aspects of your finances unaddressed, adds uncertainty and stress. It's why it is so important to look beyond just your investments. In our free, initial consultations we review these five critical areas:

1. **Protection** - how do you protect against disasters such as a fire, lawsuits and health issues?

2. **Estate Planning** - what is the best estate plan for you and for your heirs? Is the one you have set up properly? And did you know that no matter how good, your estate plan likely does not cover your biggest assets? They certainly don't govern IRAs, 401ks, 403bs, 457s, Roth IRAs, life insurance or annuities.
3. **Income Taxes** - we'd all like to pay less income taxes, but how? Tax planning is becoming harder and harder to find. Your tax preparer is likely overworked, and doesn't have the time, or expertise, to tax plan in consideration of your entire financial picture. We strive to suggest strategies to save taxes over time for you, for your spouse, and for your heirs.
4. **Retirement** - the biggest question we get is "*do I have enough money?*" If you've not yet retired, you can always decide to delay, assuming it's your choice. But if you're already retired, you need to resolve this as early as possible, so smaller changes can make a bigger impact. Our Family Index will tell you a lot about what you need to know.
5. **Investments** - when asked how they pick investments, we receive a variety of answers. Most say they look at 5- or 10-year returns, and assume those will continue into the future. Some get tips from friends or off the internet. Still others are frozen with indecision, and don't really know what they have, or even when or how they got them. This is especially problematic for surviving widows and widowers, who were not the partner "in charge" of the investments. While any of these can work for a time, many, if not most, will ultimately fail, especially in bear markets. We think it's critical to understand how much risk you are taking, what the downside could be, and to decide, BEFORE IT HAPPENS, if you can financially survive. If not, you need to implement a strategy to minimize this risk, again, before it happens.

For many, worrying about investments, along with all the other retirement concerns, is not something they feel comfortable doing. Many would rather spend retirement enjoying themselves.

Working with an advisor may help.

It doesn't matter if you lose money because you pay more than you need to in taxes, get sued or have a disaster, lose it because your estate plan is not implemented properly, or take a big loss during a stock market decline...

***It's all lost money!***

We offer free, no obligation "Financial Physicals" where we address all of these potential land minds, in addition to your longer term, retirement cash flow needs.

Come to a seminar and decide if a Financial Physical could be helpful.

Hope for the best but plan for the worst.

If you're not a client, what should you do with this information?

## ***Prepare!***

Procrastination and Planning both start with a P, but they are not the same.

# ***Failing to prepare, is preparing to fail.***

Come to a seminar and find out how you might protect yourself. In our seminars, and at initial, free, consultations called "Financial Physicals" we discuss the five areas most important to financial health for retirees or those close to retirement.

1. Protection
2. Estate Planning
3. Income Tax
4. Retirement
5. Investments

Risk management is key for success in all of those areas.

Consider exploring how you might add a defensive strategy to your investment approach.

Maybe this time is different, and if you're a buy and hold investor with no defensive strategy, you're betting your portfolio, and possibly your retirement, on it.

Attend a seminar or call the office to find how adding a defensive strategy to your portfolio could help because...

Sure, the market comes back, eventually...

## ***How long can you afford your portfolio to be down significantly?***

Currently risk-free rates approximate 4.2% compared to what the market “might” make (or more importantly lose) over the coming months, and considering the growing mountain of evidence of an oncoming recession, it seems negligent not to at least explore your options.

***This is even more important if your spouse is not as savvy about investments as you are.***

The Great Financial Crisis was triggered by the popping of a bubble in real-estate. ***The bubble in real-estate today is bigger by most measures.***

The Dot.com bear market was triggered by the popping of a bubble in equity valuations. ***The equity bubble is bigger today by most measures.***

Neither the Dot.com nor the Great Financial Crisis bear markets had inflation, or nearly as much debt across consumers and businesses as we have today.

If the Dot.com bubble resulted in the S&P-500 falling ~ -50% and the NASDAQ falling over ~ -80%...

If the Great Financial Crisis saw the S&P-500 fall ~ -57% and the NASDAQ falling over ~ -50%...

***How much might a market fall with levels exceeding both of those along with inflation and higher leverage?***

You don't have to remain locked into the same approach as you had when these risks didn't exist. You are allowed to protect yourself. You can step away and then come back when the risks decline. Call us to find out how.

***It's time to focus on return of your money rather than return on your money.***

To be clear, we'll have a great buying opportunity at some point in the future. Usually that happens with the market crashing and most investors disgusted with the thought of investing. If you lose much of your net worth, participating will be difficult.

# ***“You can’t buy low if you don’t sell high.”***

Patience and asset protection will be key.

## ***Don’t wait until you have suffered unrecoverable losses before taking action.***

In the Great Financial Crisis, the S&P-500 fell 24% from the start on October 9, 2007 until the Lehman bankruptcy on September 15, 2008. That was close to a year, and not that far off from what we’ve lived through so far.

Then in just over a month from September 15, 2008 to October 27, 2008 the S&P-500 fell **ANOTHER** 28.8%. And from September 15, 2008 to the ultimate bottom, about 5 months later, it fell **ANOTHER** 43%.

Not only do bear markets normally unfold in three stages with the last being the most virulent, it also demonstrates that risk happens slowly and then all at once.

## ***What is your defensive plan?***

Call or attend a seminar to hear about ours.

*Remember, we have a feature on our website to help you measure your risk tolerance. The problem with trying to decide how much risk to take is we all want to be aggressive when the market is going up, but conservative when it’s going down. That’s why a sell discipline is important. However, the first line of defense is always our allocation. This approach to measuring risk gives a number by making investors trade off gains and losses. Just click the button to see where you stand.*

What's Your Risk Number? 

**Get a physical!** We invite you to attend a seminar and come in for a “financial physical”, even if you think your current approach is fine. Much like going to the doctor for a physical despite feeling great, you want to make sure any negative issues you may not be aware of are caught early and addressed. For example...

- Do you need a process to help manage losses during the next bear market?
- Have you addressed your investment process and adjusted it for what is going on in the world?
- If not, what are you waiting for?

**At the bottom of the 2007 - 2009 bear market the S&P-500 index returned to levels last seen in 1996.**

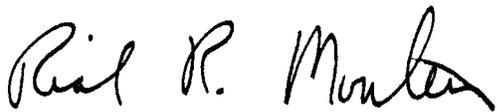
**The drop didn't retrace only a few months or even a couple years.**

We discuss many of these issues and more on the weekly radio show and invite you to listen.

## WEEKLY FOCUS – THINK ABOUT IT

# Three Optimistic Signs and Three That Are Concerning

Yours truly,



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Certified Financial Planner™  
Estate Planning Attorney



**Donald J. Moulton, CFP®, RFC**  
Certified Financial Planner™

P.S. Please feel free to forward this commentary to family, friends, or colleagues. If you would like us to add them to the list, please reply to this e-mail with their e-mail address and we will ask for their permission to be added.

*Investment services offered through Moulton Wealth Management, Inc., an independent Registered Investment Advisor. 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. The 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. Yahoo! Finance or other publications are the source for any reference to the performance of an index between two specific periods. Opinions expressed are subject to change without notice and are not intended as investment advice or to predict future performance. Some of all of this may have been written by AI. Consult your financial professional before making any investment decision. You cannot invest directly in an index. Past performance does not guarantee future results. Investments in securities do not offer a fixed rate of return. Principal, yield and / or share price will fluctuate with changes in market conditions and, when sold or redeemed, you may receive more or less than originally invested. No system or financial planning strategy can guarantee future results.*

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**The Barclays Global Aggregate Bond Index** (formerly Lehman Brothers Global Aggregate Index), is an unmanaged market-capitalization-weighted benchmark, and tracks the performance of investment-grade fixed income securities denominated in 13 currencies. The index reflects reinvestment of all distributions and changes in market prices.

**The Barclays U.S. 1-10 Year TIPS Index** is an unmanaged index composed of inflation-protected public obligations of the U.S. Treasury that have a remaining maturity of one to ten years.

**The Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index** is an unmanaged benchmark index composed of U.S. securities in Treasury, Government-Related, Corporate, and Securitized sectors. It includes securities that are of investment-grade quality or better, have at least one year to maturity, and have an outstanding par value of at least \$250 million.

**The Barclays U.S. TIPS Index** is an unmanaged index composed of all U.S. Treasury Inflation-Protected Securities rated investment grade, have at least one year to final maturity, and at least \$250 million par amount outstanding.

**The Barclays U.S. Treasury Index** is an unmanaged index composed of U.S. Treasuries.

**The CDX IG 12** is a benchmark high-grade derivatives index, which measures the cost of insuring a basket of U.S. investment-grade corporate debt against defaults.

**The Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index (VIX)** tracks the expected volatility in the S&P 500 over the next 30 days. A higher number indicates greater expected volatility. Common usage: The Chicago Board Options Exchange Volatility Index (VIX), a barometer of market volatility.

**The Dow Jones Industrial Average** is a widely followed market indicator based on a price-weighted average of 30 blue-chip stocks that trade on the New York Stock Exchange which are selected by editors of The Wall Street Journal.

**The Dow Jones Wilshire Real Estate Securities Index (RESI)** is used to measure the U.S. real estate market and includes both real estate investment trusts (REITs) and real estate operating companies (REOCs). It is weighted by float-adjusted market capitalization.

**The JP Morgan Emerging Market Bond Index** is a total-return, unmanaged trade-weighted index for U.S. dollar-denominated emerging-market bonds, including sovereign debt, quasi-sovereign debt, Brady bonds, loans, and Eurobonds.

**The JP Morgan EMBI Global Diversified Index** tracks the performance of external debt instruments (including U.S.-dollar-denominated and other external-currency-denominated Brady bonds, loans, Eurobonds and local market instruments) in the emerging markets.

**The JP Morgan GBI-EM Global Diversified Index** tracks the performance of local-currency bonds issued by emerging market governments.

**The MSCI World Index** is a free float-adjusted market capitalization weighted index that is designed to measure the equity market performance of developed markets. The MSCI World Index represents 23 developed market countries.

**The MSCI All Country World Index** is a market-capitalization-weighted index composed of over 2,400 companies, and is representative of the market structure of 46 developed and emerging market countries. The index is calculated with net dividends reinvested in U.S. dollars.

**The MSCI EAFE Index** is an unmanaged, market-capitalization-weighted equity index that represents the developed world outside North America.

**The MSCI Emerging Markets Index** is a free float-adjusted market-capitalization-weighted index designed to measure the performance of global emerging market equities.

**The NASDAQ Composite Index** is a market-value-weighted index of all common stocks listed on the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations (NASDAQ) system.

**The Russell 1000 Index** includes 1000 of the largest U.S. equity securities based on market cap and current index membership; it is used to measure the activity of the U.S. large-cap equity market.

**The Russell 2000 Index** includes 2000 small-cap U.S. equity names and is used to measure the activity of the U.S. small-cap equity market.

**The S&P 500 Index** is a capitalization-weighted index made up of 500 widely held large-cap U.S. stocks in the Industrials, Transportation, Utilities and Financials sectors.

#### **Investing Terminology**

**Alpha** is a measure of a portfolio's return above a certain benchmarked return.

**Alternative Investments** are investments that are not one of the three traditional asset types (stocks, bonds and cash). Alternative investments include hedge funds, managed futures, real estate, commodities, and derivatives contracts.

**Asset-Backed Securities (ABS)** are bonds backed by a pool of loans or accounts receivable and commonly include payments from credit cards, auto loans and mortgage loans.

**Austerity** refers to measures taken by a country's government in an effort to reduce expenditures and a budget deficit.

**Beta** is a measure of the volatility or systematic risk of a security or a portfolio in comparison to the market as a whole.

**Book-to-Price Ratio** is the inverse of the price-to-book ratio, which is calculated as the market value of a security divided by its book value. A lower the price-to-book ratio for a security may mean the security is undervalued, and vice versa (the higher the book-to-price ratio, the better the value).

**Commercial Mortgage-Backed Securities (CMBS)** are pools of commercial mortgage loans that are packaged together and sold to the public. They are usually structured in tranches, or classes of risk, so that investors can determine how much risk they want to take on. In general, CMBS carry less prepayment risk than loans backed by residential mortgages.

**Corporate Bonds** are debt securities issued by corporations to raise money; these bonds usually pay higher coupon rates than government or municipal bonds.

**Correlation Risk** refers to the change in the marked to market value of an asset when the correlation between the underlying assets changes over time.

**Credit Ratings** are an assessment of the risk of default of a company or country. The higher the credit quality (or rating), the lower the perceived risk of default.

**Cyclical Sectors or Stocks** are those whose performance is closely tied to the economic environment and business cycle. Managers with a pro-cyclical market view tend to favor stocks that are more sensitive to movements in the broad market and therefore tend to have more volatile performance.

**Debt-to-Equity Ratio** is calculated as long-term debt divided by common shareholders' equity, and measures the amount of a firm's leverage, or debt.

**Donor Advised Funds** are private funds administered by a third party and created for the purpose of managing charitable donations on behalf of an organization, family, or individual.

**Duration** is a measure of a security's price sensitivity to changes in interest rates. Specifically, duration measures the potential change in value of a bond that would result from a 1% change in interest rates. The shorter the duration of a bond, the less its price will potentially change as interest rates go up or down; conversely, the longer the duration of a bond, the more its price will potentially change.

**Excess Returns** are investment returns from a security or portfolio that exceed a benchmark or index with a similar level of risk.

**Grantor Retained Annuity Trust** is an estate planning technique that minimizes the tax liability existing when intergenerational transfers of estate assets occur. An irrevocable trust is created for a certain term or period of time. The individual establishing the trust pays a tax when the trust is established. Assets are placed under the trust and then an annuity is paid out every year. When the trust expires, the beneficiary receives the assets estate and gift tax free.

**High Yield Debt** is rated below investment grade and is considered to be riskier.

**Managed Futures** strategies use futures contracts as part of their overall investment strategy. They provide portfolio diversification among various types of investment styles and asset classes to help mitigate portfolio risk in a way that is not possible in direct equity investments.

**Market Capitalization** is calculated as the number of companies shares outstanding multiplied by the share price, and is used to determine the total market value of a company.

**Momentum** is the rate of acceleration for an economic, price or volume movement; it is used to locate trends within the market.

**Mortgage-Backed Securities (MBS)** are pools of mortgage loans that are packaged together and sold to the public. They are usually structured in tranches, or classes of risk, so that investors can determine how much risk they want to take on.

**Option-adjusted spreads** estimate the difference in yield between a security or collection of securities and comparable Treasuries after removing the effects of any special features, such as provisions that allow an issuer to call a security before maturity.

**Peripheral Eurozone Countries** are those countries in the Eurozone with the smallest economies.

**Price-to-Book Ratio** is calculated as the market value of a security divided by its book value. A lower the price-to-book ratio for a security may mean the security is undervalued.

**Private Foundations** are charitable organizations that do not qualify as public charities by government standards. A private foundation is a nonprofit organization which is usually created via a single primary donation from an individual or a business and whose funds and programs are managed by its own trustees or directors.

**Quantitative Easing** refers to expansionary efforts by central banks to help increase the supply of money in the economy.

**Recapitalized/recapitalization** refers to injecting fresh equity into a company or a bank, which can be used to absorb future losses. This generally takes place through the company issuing new shares. In the case of a government or organization recapitalizing a bank, it usually results in the government or organization owning a stake in the bank.

**Spreads:** Yield spreads represents the difference in yields offered between corporate and government bonds. If they tighten, this means that the difference has decreased. If they widen, this means the difference has increased.

**Standard Deviation:** Statistical measure of historical volatility. A statistical measure of the distance a quantity is likely to lie from its average value. It is applied to the annual rate of return of an investment, to measure the investment's volatility (risk). Standard deviation is synonymous with volatility, in that the greater the standard deviation the more volatile an investment's return will be. A standard deviation of zero would mean an investment has a return rate that never varies.

**Treasuries** are U.S. government debt obligations that are backed by the full faith and credit of the government. Often, they are used as a proxy for a risk-free asset when comparing other risky assets.

**Yield Curves** illustrate the relationship between the interest rate, or cost of borrowing, and the time to maturity. Yields move inversely to prices. The Barclays Capital 1-10 Year US TIPS Index: Barclays Capital 1-10 Year US TIPS Index measures the performance of inflation-protected public obligations of the U.S. Treasury that have a remaining maturity of one to ten years.