

WEEKLY FOCUS

Designated an Executor? What You Should Ask

Having a loved one ask you to serve as their executor is a tremendous honor, knowing they trust you to carry out their final wishes. It is also a huge responsibility, particularly with considerable estates. And you'll likely be carrying out your duties at a very difficult time emotionally. Asking your family member to do the following can make performing your role much easier when the time comes:

Share their choice with other family members. If, for example, a parent has asked you to be their executor, they should tell your other siblings why. Perhaps you are the oldest, you live the closest, you can spare the time off work or you have a business/financial background.

Create a letter of direction. Even if your family member prefers to keep their will or final wishes private for now, they should prepare a letter of direction that includes:

1. Where the will is located, ideally in a safety deposit box or filed with their lawyer.
2. Where they keep any deeds, partnership documents, insurance policies, etc.
3. A list of personal possessions assigned to desired recipients.
4. Contact information for their attorney, accountant, financial advisor, banker and any other important professionals they work with.
5. Advanced health directives. Having a loved one's wishes in writing when they can no longer make their own decisions can prevent potential conflict among relatives.
6. Service and remains preferences. Do they want to be cremated or buried? Where would they like their funeral or memorial service?

Keep and update a yearly accounting sheet. A current snapshot of assets can greatly reduce the amount of detective work you'll need to do.

Create a digital estate plan. In today's digital world, you'll need a list of online financial and social media accounts with passwords.

Keep some ready cash. Providing access to a cash account will make it easier to pay bills and final expenses before everything is settled.

Estate planning can be very involved, and it's crucial to get it right. We'd be happy to work with your loved one and their other advisors to find solutions for their situation. *Securities America and its representatives do not provide legal advice.*

FINANCIAL FACTS

More Than Just Wages — For every \$1 spent for wages and salaries in the private sector, employers spend an additional 44 cents on benefits. Average compensation is \$23.15 per hour while the cost of benefits averages an additional \$10.11 per hour (source: Bureau of Labor Statistics, BTN Research).

In or Out? — Health insurance companies had until Sept. 27 to decide whether they will participate in the federal health insurance exchange in 2018. Open enrollment for 2018 insurance coverage begins on Nov. 1 (source: BTN Research).

Smaller — The Federal Reserve remitted \$92 billion to the Treasury in 2016, the interest return on its \$4.2 trillion bond portfolio. These payments would decline as the Fed shrinks its balance sheet (source: BTN Research).

WEEKLY COMMENTARY

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THE MARKETS

Technology gains helped the S&P 500 and the NASDAQ advance to record levels Friday. The three major indexes completed the quarter with solid gains; the S&P closed its sixth month of gains. For the week, the Dow rose 0.25 percent to close at 22,405.09. The S&P gained 0.72 percent to finish at 2,519.36, and the NASDAQ climbed 1.07 percent to end the week at 6,495.96.

| Returns Through 9/29/17 | 1 Week | YTD | 1 Year | 3 Year | 5 Year |
|----------------------------|--------|-------|--------|--------|--------|
| Dow Jones Industrials (TR) | 0.25 | 15.45 | 25.45 | 12.35 | 13.57 |
| NASDAQ Composite (PR) | 1.07 | 20.67 | 22.29 | 13.07 | 15.83 |
| S&P 500 (TR) | 0.72 | 14.24 | 18.61 | 10.81 | 14.22 |
| Barclays US Agg Bond (TR) | -0.10 | 3.14 | 0.07 | 2.71 | 2.06 |
| MSCI EAFE (TR) | -0.02 | 19.96 | 19.10 | 5.04 | 8.38 |

Source: Morningstar.com. *Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Indexes are unmanaged and cannot be invested into directly. Three- and five-year returns are annualized. The Dow Jones Industrials, MSCI EAFE, Barclays US Agg Bond and S&P, excluding "1 Week" returns, are based on total return, which is a reflection of return to an investor by reinvesting dividends after the deduction of withholding tax. The NASDAQ is based on price return, which is the capital appreciation of the portfolio, excluding income generated by the assets in the portfolio in the form of interest and dividends. (TR) indicates total return. (PR) indicates price return. MSCI EAFE returns stated in U.S. dollars.

Lawrence E. Jacobs, CFS
704 Texas Avenue
Bridge City, Texas 77611
409-792-0179

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* 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 October 2017. All rights reserved. Securities offered through Securities America, Inc., Member FINRA/SIPC. SAI# 1911159.1