

Fourth Quarter (Q4) 2019 Review

January 6, 2020

After selling-off 14% in the prior year fourth quarter, **stocks posted big gains in 2019**. The S&P 500 Stock ETF (SPY) returned +10.3% in Q4 and +31.2% over the year. With help from the Fed, investors became increasingly willing to commit capital as the U.S. and China moved closer to an initial trade agreement. The market advance broadened to pull in several countries and a host of cyclical sectors that had previously been lagging the performance of U.S. growth stocks. Large-cap stocks continued to outpace smaller companies, but the leadership margin narrowed as market participation broadened – a healthy sign. Large growth, technology and bank stocks reasserted leadership into year-end which contributed positively to the strong fourth quarter and full year performance of GPM managed stock portfolios.

Bonds also had a robust year. GPM balanced portfolios continued to benefit from our substantial positioning in high yield bonds (HYB) and investment grade corporates as both components performed exceptionally well. Treasuries were mixed in Q4 with longer maturities modestly in the red. The bond rally was fueled by slower global economic expansion and dovish policy from central banks including the U.S. Fed, which cut rates in July, September and November. The 10-Year Treasury yield began the year at 2.67%, touched a low of 1.43% in September and ended the year at 1.92%.

Economists steadily reduced their global growth expectations during 2019, due primarily to continuing trade negotiations, most notably between the U.S. and China. Related friction has dragged down the [global manufacturing sector](#) and we think July and August data showed early signs of bottoming. [Data since](#) seems to mostly confirm that view. Recall that global GDP expanded 3.5% in 2018. In late November the [OECD](#) expected world GDP growth of 2.9% to 3.0% in 2019 thru 2021. The mid November [Survey of Professional Forecasters](#) collectively expected U.S. Real GDP growth of +2.3% in 2019, slowing to +1.8% in 2020. Both forecasts were made before the U.S. and China tentatively agreed in mid-December to a Phase 1 trade deal. While no monster rebound is expected, progress on China trade, i.e.; execution of the Phase 1 agreement, should lessen friction and boost confidence, which will likely prompt forecasters to begin revising their expectations upward. **Stock investors are clearly ahead of the curve.**



GPM has been investing for clients since 1993. We manage money and advise on critical financial planning and investing decisions. We listen and learn. Our advice is holistic and tailored to you and your peace of mind. We treat you, your family and other advisors with respect. We are easy to work with, accessible and responsive. Our investment strategies are centered around two core competencies - researching high quality companies and actively managing portfolios built with the individual stocks of those companies to deliver growth and income for our clients. Our investment process is disciplined and fundamentally based with a healthy respect for risk. GPM is employee owned and team members invest in our model securities alongside our clients.

Markets Summary

Reference Index Fund	Income Yield %	% Below 1 yr High	Performance for the Period			Average Annual Performance				
			Quarter	2019	2018	2017	3 Yrs	5 Yrs	10 Yrs	15 Yrs
Short-Term Treasury Bond	2.4	0.6	0.4	3.6	1.4	0.4	1.8	1.4	1.3	2.3
Intermediate-Term Treasury Bond	2.3	2.2	(0.6)	6.3	1.0	1.6	2.9	2.3	3.2	3.9
Intermediate-Term Investment Grade Bond	3.1	1.2	0.6	10.5	(0.5)	4.3	4.7	3.9	5.1	5.0
High-Yield Bond	5.3	0.2	2.5	15.9	(2.9)	7.1	6.5	5.8	7.2	6.3
S&P 500 Stock ETF (SPY)	1.7	0.5	10.3	31.2	(4.6)	21.7	15.1	11.6	13.4	8.9
Small-Cap Stock	1.3	0.6	8.1	27.2	(9.4)	16.1	10.2	8.8	12.7	8.9
Total International Stock	3.0	0.5	9.0	21.4	(14.4)	27.4	9.8	5.8	5.1	5.1

Except for SPY, data is for Vanguard funds. All returns include reinvested income. Income (dividend) yield shown is SEC format.

Stock Portfolio Insight	Separately Managed Accounts in Brief
<p>Sector Allocation Breakdown</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Industrials: 32.3% Technology: 32.3% Healthcare: 18.2% Financial Services: 6.2% Consumer Cyclical: 6.0% Communication Services: 5.1% <p>100%</p> <p># of Cos. that Raised Dividend</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fourth Quarter: 6 Year-to-date 2019: 23 Range of increase: 3% to 26% December: SYK +11% <p>Portfolio Company Averages</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dividend yield: 1.55% Market Cap: \$244 bil ROE past 12 mos: 23.7% ROE past 5 years: 23.1% P/E 5-year average: 20.6X P/E trailing 12 months: 22.5X P/E forward 12 months est: 20.3X <p><i>Data is approximate @ quarter-end.</i></p>	<p>Our long-term growth accounts are normally invested 100% in stocks. <u>Balanced accounts</u> take a more conservative approach and hold stocks and bonds. Growth and balanced accounts normally hold the same stocks.</p> <p><i>GPM stock portfolios continued to perform well in Q4 and over the full year.</i></p> <p>Our strategy is to be fully invested nearly all of the time. We focus on U.S. based industry leaders that compete and win around the world - companies with track records of delivering rewarding long-term growth in sales, earnings, cash flow, dividends, and ultimately stock prices. At year-end we held 25 stocks; 23 pay dividends and 21 payouts were raised in 2019. The average hike was 10%. As investors alongside our clients we like increases in portfolio dividend income.</p> <p><i>During the quarter, we sold out of three positions.</i> Travelers Companies (TRV) was sold when adversely developing claims trends pointed to longer term structural problems. Church and Dwight (CHD) was sold after we judged that problems with a recent acquisition would likely intensify and further pressure the stock. Dollar Tree (DLTR) was sold after we lost confidence in management's execution and ability to forecast. We selectively increased the size of multiple core positions and deployed new money deposits opportunistically.</p> <p><i>Balanced accounts also continued to perform very well.</i></p> <p>Results were paced by broad stock gains and all bond components contributed positively, led by high-yield bonds and corporates. Higher dividend income as discussed above, substantially offset lower bond interest. We believe the Fed will remain dovish, leaning lower until global economic data substantially reaccelerates.</p>

Have a happy and healthy 2020. Thank you for allowing GPM to serve as your investment manager and advisor.

Sincerely, the GPM Team

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