

“The difficulty with predictions”

By Tommy Williams, CFP®

Brexit came as a shock to many. So did the outcome of the U.S. election, but let's face it – whether you're trying to evaluate the potential of a company or the future of a country – predicting what may be ahead is never easy.

For instance, back in 1901, John Elfreth Watkins conferred with the “*the wisest and most careful men in our greatest institutions of science and learning*” to determine what might happen during the next 100 years. His predictions weren't all accurate, but some were quite insightful:



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“There will probably be from 350,000,000 to 500,000,000 people in America and its possessions...Nicaragua will ask for admission to our Union after the completion of the great

canal. Mexico will be next. Europe, seeking more territory to the south of us, will cause many of the South and Central American republics to be voted into the Union by their own people.”

“The American will be taller by one to two inches. His increase in stature will result from better health, due to vast reforms in medicine sanitation, food, and athletics. He will live fifty years instead of thirty-five as at present – for he will reside in the suburbs.”

“There will be no street cars in our large cities. All hurry traffic will be below or high above ground when brought within city limits...These underground or overhead streets will teem with capacious automobile passenger coaches and freight wagons, with cushioned wheels...Cities, therefore, will be free from all noises.”

Clearly, the future is always ripe with possibility. However, political historian Allan Lichtman may feel differently – at least in regards to President-elect Trump's future. Lichtman, who also teaches at the American University in

Washington, has been dubbed “*Prediction Professor*” for accurately predicting nearly every presidential election since 1984, include 2016. Unfortunately, Professor Lichtman's prediction for Trump's Presidency isn't what many voters are hoping to hear. Of course, CNN (and all cable news) is known for their bias one way or the other. So please prepare yourself for the following by being reminded that I don't take political positions in this column. I simply convey what I think are meaningful opinions regarding matters that can impact your financial well-being. So, according to the Professor's interview on CNN,

“‘There's a very good chance that Donald Trump could face impeachment,’ Allan Lichtman told Erin Burnett on ‘Erin Burnett OutFront.’ Lichtman...says he uses his own system of 13 true or false statements to judge whether the incumbent party will retain the White House. However, when it came to his bold prediction of a Trump impeachment, he told Burnett it's based on his instinct. ‘First of all, throughout his life he has played fast and loose with

the law,' Lichtman said. 'He has run an illegal charity in New York State. He has made an illegal campaign contribution through that charity. He has used the charity to settle personal business debts. He faces a RICO lawsuit.' Burnett pushed back at Lichtman's claim, noting his allegations have not been proven in a court of law and went on to ask why he thought Trump could be impeached when Republicans hold both the House and Senate. 'The Republicans are nervous about Donald Trump,' Lichtman said. 'He is a loose cannon. Nobody knows what he really believes or really where he stands. He can't be controlled. The Republicans would vastly prefer to have Mike Pence, an absolutely predictable down-the-pipe conservative Republican.'"

Regardless of the Prediction Professor's pessimistic views, we Americans can only hope President-elect Trump will prove to be a successful leader. Let's hope that, like John Watkins in 1901, that Lichtman is very wrong about this one. Our future, your savings, the prospects for your children and grandchildren are dependent upon positive changes to our gridlocked and ineffective current federal government.

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