



GRIFFIN FINANCIAL PLANNING QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

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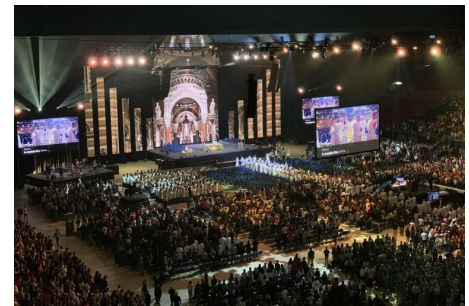
Life Update

Hey, everyone! If you're new here, this may be your first newsletter of mine. If you've been a client for awhile, you'll remember when I used to do these monthly (took way too much time). Plan to receive these quarterly! One common question I've gotten recently is, "We see Griffin Financial Planning, are you still with Mutual of Omaha?" Yes! Griffin Financial Planning is my DBA but I'm still a Mutual of Omaha Advisor.

Over the last year, Kaci and I have had a lot of exciting moments! We bought our first home in March of 2023, Kaci graduated medical school in May of 2023, we went to Italy, and brought home our best friend, Bella (see above). Over the last nine months, I've learned many homeowner tips/tricks and have become more of a handyman than I ever thought I'd be.

Also in May, I hired my first member of the team! Many of you have become familiar with her, but Annalee is my administrative assistant. I've been thrilled with her work and am lucky to have her on the team!

Recently, I had the opportunity to attend SEEK24 conference. SEEK is put on by FOCUS which stands for Fellowship Of Catholic University Students. It's an amazingly beautiful opportunity to worship our Lord, Jesus Christ, with 20,000+ others.



Picture from SEEK24 conference in St Louis, MO.

Praise God!



We became homeowners in Spring 2023



College Planning Tips

First and foremost, this is not investment/financial advice. These are general tips/ideas related to college planning.

Recently with clients, the topic of college planning has come up a lot. I thought I'd summarize some different account types we see often used and the pros/cons of them.

- **State-specific 529 Plan (NEST 529 for Nebraska):** This is a college savings account specifically designed for higher education planning. It allows you to make tax-free contributions (you can deduct on your state tax return), allows the dollars to grow tax-deferred (you don't have to pay taxes while it's growing), and assuming you use it to help pay kids' qualified education expenses, comes out income tax-free (you don't have to pay taxes on the money you spend). Recently, the government allowed a provision to roll over any unused 529 funds into a Roth IRA in the child's name. This account can have penalties and taxes associated with it if withdrawn "improperly."
- **Joint Investment/Brokerage Account:** This is an investment account owned by the parents that is not directly related to college expenses. This account can technically be used to pay for anything, but it's my job as the planner to ensure we stick to your goals of what it should be used for. This account has the most flexibility of all options. It does incur capital gains taxes.
- **UTMA (Uniform Transfer to Minors Act):** This is a custodial account (child owns it but parent is the custodian of it) that treats the contributions as "gifts" from the parents to the child. The child - in the state of Nebraska - receives the funds completely at age 19, or age of majority.

Again, this is just meant to share some different account types I often see. Each situation is different, so if the topic/thought of college planning is on your mind, give me a call and we can review your goals to see which option fits you best!

KEY TAKEAWAYS

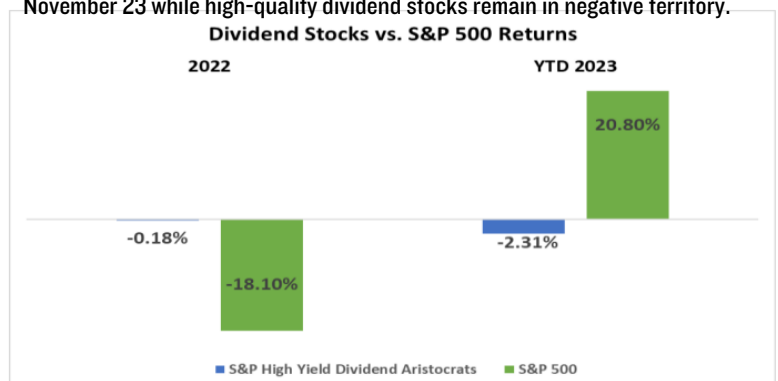
- After sharp declines in stocks and bonds in 2022, the market recovery in 2023 is a perfect reminder that markets are never obvious let alone predictable
- For many investors, despite a remarkable year in S&P 500, your personal performance may be lagging behind.
- Bonds also recover some losses and now provide improved risk-return ahead.

2023 stands in sharp contrast to 2022. In 2022, stocks and bonds declined by double digits. Investor sentiment suggested more of the same for 2023. In contrast, the US economy continued to grow, supported by a resilient consumer. Consumers' spending spree included shopping, travel as well as shelling out big dollars for events like the Taylor Swift Eras Tour. As the economy surprised for the better, so did the markets.

2023 is a perfect example that markets are never obvious, let alone predictable. In this edition, we take three market trends that reversed sharply from 2022 and some lessons from Taylor Swift as we reflect on her success.

A Sharp Reversal

Amid the 2022 bear market, investors piled into dividend-paying stocks, which are primarily viewed as safer, providing steady income from stable companies. Dividend stocks outperformed the broader market in 2022 by falling less than the S&P 500. However, this trend reversed sharply in 2023. So far in 2023, investors have instead piled into technology stocks amid the artificial intelligence frenzy, sending the S&P 500 Index up nearly 21% through November 23 while high-quality dividend stocks remain in negative territory.



Source: Factset. YTD data as of November 30, 2023.

PAST PERFORMANCE IS NOT A GUARANTEE OF FUTURE RESULTS. INDICES ARE NOT AVAILABLE FOR DIRECT INVESTMENT; THEREFORE, THEIR PERFORMANCE DOES NOT REFLECT THE EXPENSES ASSOCIATED WITH THE MANAGEMENT OF AN ACTUAL PORTFOLIO

Financial Planning Packages Available



Over the last year or so, I've had more clients come to me looking specifically for financial planning. This is a process that encompasses ALL areas of one's money - budgeting, insurance, retirement, investments, etc. Over the years, I've offered financial planning, but it's never been marketed well.

I'm excited to announce that I'm now offering specific financial planning packages to my clients!

TIER 1: Module-based Planning (single topic): \$500

TIER 2: Comprehensive, one-time plan (all topics): \$2500

TIER 3: Comprehensive w/ on-going planning: \$1,000 + \$100/month

The goal of financial planning is to give detailed, specific advice around a specific situation. If learning about financial planning is on your radar, or you want to set up a time to discuss, please reach out to me!



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Looking for Safer Alternatives?



Annuities have gotten a bad reputation over the last few years, and it's not much of a surprise. There are so many different kinds: fixed annuities, variable annuities, indexed annuities, etc. The list goes on.

For many clients and their retirement planning needs, they want a way to grow their money that is relatively-safe and is free from stock market risk. As of today, January 9th, the current rate on our 5-year Ultra-Premier fixed annuity is 4.70%. If you're looking for a way to earn more interest on your cash that you won't need for a few years, or take some stock market risk away, this may be a fit!



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