



**“We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.”**

**- John Dewey**



## ***A Message from Brandon Wilkins*** CFO, Majestic Financial, Financial Consultant, RJFS

As a kid, spring was one of my favorite times of the year. The weather was warming up and school was almost done for the summer, but mainly because of baseball. Baseball season was very important to me when I was younger because it was part of my escape to being outside. My best friend Jacob and I would practice hours at a time, except it wasn't really practice as it was just playing. Riding our bikes to Baily Park in Battle Creek or just to the local school was as much invigorating as it was fun. We loved the simple parts of baseball like playing catch, hitting each other ground balls and pop flies, and pitching to each other for some BP. We would pretend to be our favorite baseball players which at the time for him was Ryne Sandberg and for me was Alan Trammell. I never understood and still don't know why he was a cubs fan instead of a Tigers fan but I digress.

However, now as an adult during this time of the year I think more about

the Passover and Easter. If you truly look at the Jewish tradition of the Seder meal during Passover and how it points to the savior of the world Jesus Christ, it makes me think how did they miss it? But then again, we all miss it in some way shape or form throughout our lives. 2023 was a year of reflection for me personally and where I wanted to go as a business owner, a husband, a father, a grandfather (yes that makes Sean old enough to be a great grandfather), but more importantly as a man of God. In my prayer & study time for 2024, something kept coming to mind, the title “2024 The Year of Chaos”. Which I do understand is not what you want to hear from your financial advisor, but chaos can be both a good and bad thing and if you want to understand more of my thoughts, watch this [video](#).

But chaos to me is learning to capitalize on the opportunities that are set before us, which is what we did at Majestic three years ago. We left

our comfort zone and embarked on a journey into an unknown world that has opened doors that we could have never imagined. One of the many things that I am excited about this year is our release of faith based/Bible based portfolios. This is something that has always been important to me and now we have the freedom to explore such opportunities due to the chaos that was set before us three years ago.

I encourage everyone who is interested in faith-based investing to join us on April 16th in Hastings to learn more. Non-clients are welcome at the event so please bring anyone you know that is interested. As I wrap this up, I want to thank my family and friends that supported me during these past three years, my wife which has always supported me and encouraged me, but most of all my Lord and Savior, King Jesus who died to take away the sins of the world!

# Beyond the Mountain Range

A blog written by Sean Budlong, CFP®

## Advisors vs DIY



We are all aware of how the world around us has changed over the last 3, 10, and 20 years. Technology is King, and almost everything can be “googled,” instead of learned. Car broke down, google “engine stopped running.” Feeling sick? Google “achy head and stuffed nose.” Don’t want to pay for someone to construct the deck? Google “easy deck construction.” Simple, right? Until you do more damage to your car, you find out you don’t have a cold but COVID instead, and your neighbor falls through the deck. Just because you can read about a skill online doesn’t automatically grant you the ability to use said skill.

The same is true of investing. Many of the people I talk to about Majestic have the assets they need to achieve their goals, and the intelligence to invest them in simple mutual funds. And if investing was as simple as going to a website and buying the one fund that will get you to your goal, everyone should fire us and google their way to financial freedom. However, we all know it’s not that simple.

If you look at the top ten companies (based on market capitalization) from 1980 to 2000 to 2023, there is not a single company from 1980 that appears in 2023. In fact, many of the companies from 1980 disappeared (most through mergers) prior to 2000.

While a technology company has held the top spot in all three years, it’s changed each time. In 1980, IBM was the largest company in the world with a \$35 Billion cap. In 2000, Microsoft took the top spot with a \$586 Billion cap. Just 23 years later, Apple crossed the \$3 Trillion cap level.

Just as the companies that you would invest in changed, so did the companies you invest with. In 2000, there were a handful of companies that offered “on-line” investing, led by Goldman Sachs, Prudential, PaineWebber, Ameritrade, Schwab and E\*Trade. Very few (relatively speaking) clients were interested in on-line anything – banking, shopping, or investing. In 2024, there are far too many on-line platforms to name. However, here are a few that may not be as well known but can be found on a google search: Betterment, Fundrise, Robinhood, Ally Invest, eToro, Firstrate, Yieldstreet, Tasty Trade, Stash. Each of these sites offer different hooks to get you in, levels of services and fees, and “advice.” All you have to decide is how much time and money you want to spend while working as your own financial analyst and broker.

And that’s the reason we talk to prospective clients first – we are not interested in charging clients fees just for them to do it all themselves. We want to make investing easy and

profitable even when we don’t control whether Exxon Mobil is the 5th largest company in the world (2000) or Saudi Aramco is the third largest (2023). We don’t want a client who wants to google “why didn’t I make as much as the S&P 500 in 2023?” We want to have that conversation about why they didn’t have every dollar in the portfolio invested in the Magnificent 7 (google it...). We know that the online companies will allow you to pay them less money for the right for you to do all the work. We know that the online companies will allow you to pay them to use tools that may not be helpful in deciding if your money should be invested in ABC or XYZ company. At Majestic Financial, we want to actually help you reach financial goals, not offer you a second job you pay for. Not everyone needs a human advisor – or wants one. But we aren’t interested in that person as a client, and we won’t compete with Robinhood.

So, google all day long, and enjoy learning just enough to be dangerous. We will keep investing in the ways that make the most sense for our clients. And if anyone happens to talk to Laurie, please tell her I found easy instructions for remodeling bathrooms online.

Catch up on past blog posts and stay up to date with future posts at [InvestMajestic.com](https://InvestMajestic.com).

## Brandon’s Office Trivia

What is the longest chapter in the bible?

Who holds the record for the most home runs in a major league career?

What top vocal group performs at the wedding in bridesmaids?

What’s the largest stock exchange in the world in terms of market capitalization?

Who was the first woman to make a million dollars in the U.S.?

Answers on page 4

# Letter from Chief Investment Officer

## “The Next Level Up”

Written by Lawrence V. Adam, III, CFA, CIMA®, CFP®, Chief Investment Officer, [Raymond James](#)

Investors, it's time to power up! With technology changing the way we live, we are taking a trip down memory lane to look back at a piece of technology that has entertained generations: classic video games. Why? Because whether you are in a fictional gaming world or the real-life investment world, you need to be well prepared and ready for any challenges that come your way. We have these two worlds collide as we get set for the next level of play in the financial markets. Let's hit the start button and go!

The US economy has eluded obstacles and defied recessionary predictions like players in Frogger dodging cars and alligators to arrive safely home. Our economist believes that while the economy will slow meaningfully from its recent leaping pace, recessionary concerns are fading. Yes, consumer spending is likely to be challenged by rising credit card balances, falling savings rates, and less robust employment growth, but record household net worth will keep spending from collapsing. In addition, healthy government-induced corporate investments through the CHIPS and Science Act, Inflation Reduction Act, and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law are likely to offset any consumer weakness. As a result, rather than the mildest recession of all time, we slightly tilt our forecast to the softest of soft landings, pushing our GDP forecast from 1.7% to 2.1% for 2024.

Of course, that also depends on how the Federal Reserve (Fed) plays its high-stakes Minecraft game of monetary policy. Fed Chairman Jerome Powell has the blocks to build a solid foundation under the economy, nourishing it with rate cuts if he chooses to use them. We expect three this year. But he must be on guard against the inflation monster as it might keep the Fed from paring rates as soon or as much as we expect. Current rates are already starting to hobble the economy, particularly small business lending. But with short-term cash investments still yielding north of 5% and rates expected to come down slowly, investors do not have to rush to deploy outsized

levels of cash to other asset classes. Patience is important as time will likely present better opportunities as we progress through the year.

Two people focused on the economy are Presidents Biden and Trump—as the robustness of the economy has historically been influential in determining election outcomes. As we approach the 2024 election, both are already tossing barrels at each other like Donkey Kong to differentiate their platforms in an effort to secure a second term in the White House. Regardless of the winner, our most likely scenario is a split government, which will make any significant policy changes in Washington next year very difficult.

Ms. Pac-Man characterizes our fixed income strategy: consistently gobble up coupon payments like the small pac-dots! That's one of the benefits of last year's dramatic rise in rates—bonds provide more attractive income potential. And, if interest rates fall as we expect, you'll experience some long-awaited power-pellet performance via price appreciation. Rates may be volatile in the near term, due to the ghosts of monetary policy, inflation, and growth scares. But the biggest antagonist could be weak auctions of US government debt. While the appetite for these bonds remains healthy, any weakness in demand could lead to a spike in interest rates. But be sure to use any uptick in interest rates as the bonus fruits to temporary opportunities. The reason: our year-end target for the 10-year Treasury yield is ~3.75%. With solid corporate fundamentals and recession prospects dwindling, we favor high quality investment grade bonds. Corporate credit spreads may have narrowed to historically tight levels, but yields remain attractive.

Major US equity indices have notched new high scores in recent months. Large-cap tech stocks got a boost from the AI tailwind, like Super Mario powering up after eating a mushroom.

Read the rest of the article and the full Investment Strategy Quarterly newsletter from Raymond James [here](#).

## Seasonal Recipe

By: Becky Sharp

For those of you that don't know me, I love to cook and bake. However, I don't always follow a recipe. I am always tweaking recipes. And I don't always measure... it's a spoonful or scoop of this or a splash or squirt of that. This is a recipe I don't really measure, so if you are a little short or over on an ingredient, it won't really matter. You can also change it up, it may be strawberry Jello and fresh strawberries or lemon Jello and strawberries. Have FUN!

### Orange Fluff

Ingredients:

- 2 Cups cottage cheese
- 20 oz can crushed pineapple, drained
- Small box of Orange Jello
- 12 oz Cool-Whip, thawed
- 14 oz can mandarin oranges, drained

Cooking Directions:

- In a large bowl, mix cottage cheese, drained pineapple, and orange Jello until well mixed and jello is dissolved.
- Add Cool-Whip, mix until combined.
- Gently fold in mandarin oranges.
- Chill until ready to serve.



# Faith Based Investing



Please join the Majestic Financial team for good food and company at our next educational dinner!

Brandon Wilkins and Sean Budlong recently became members of Kingdom Advisors and they are excited to share information about Majestic Financial's newest service offering, Faith Based Portfolios.

**Date/Time: April 16<sup>th</sup> @ 5 PM**

**Location: Somebody Slap Me That's Good Barbecue**

**128 S Jefferson St, Hastings, MI 49058**

**Please RSVP by 4/9 to: [isiah@investmajestic.com](mailto:isiah@investmajestic.com)**

\*Raymond James is not affiliated with and does not endorse the opinions or services of Kingdom Advisors.

Trivia Answers from page 2

1) Psalm 119; 2) Barry Bonds; 3) New York Stock Exchange; 4) Wilson Phillips; 5) Madam CJ Walker



# Long-Term Strategies



Written by Sean Budlong, CFP®, CEO, MF, Financial Consultant, RJFS on 3/25/2024

Three months ago, sitting down to write an article for the newsletter, UM was preparing to play for the National Title, and the Detroit Lions were getting ready to play in a playoff game. Today, the first two rounds of March Madness have been completed, and my bracket in the Majestic Financial challenge is already busted. The Otsego JV baseball team (I am an assistant coach) plays their first game of the season against Allegan, and I hope I have packed enough layers of clothing.

It may seem like my life revolves around sports, and to an extent that's true. But what fascinates me so much about sports is the same thing that fascinates me about investments – options specifically. Sports are simple at their core – you play a game and one side wins, one side loses. The opposing teams play by the same rules, share the same playing field, and deal with the same arbitrators of justice (referees or umpires). Theoretically, there should not be any upsets since the games should come down to a simple matter of skill. However, the strategies and momentum are what

makes sports...well sports! An Oakland University (without a single top recruit) can beat the storied University of Kentucky (starting 5 high school All Americans) by showing a defense that they didn't play all year and feeding a hot 3-point shooter. The Detroit Lions can make it to the NFC Championship game by running variations of blitzes that were never shown during the regular season. What also intrigues me is that the upsets very seldom turn into championship stories. Oakland lost (in overtime) their next game, the Lions lost to the 49rs.

Investing is the same situation, just more serious in nature. The theory is simple – buy low, sell high. Buy quality companies, maintain the proper asset allocation, increase your contributions when you can. Easy, right? But the strategies are endless and should be based on individual needs, risk tolerance, and goals. Are we selling call options, buying put options, tax harvesting? Are we selling or buying into a stock split or stock buyback? Are we making a trade to potentially take advantage of coming interest rate cuts, and are we using options for this

strategy?

At Majestic Financial, we are not investing for clients to make a quick buck, just like I wasn't putting money on the Oakland University Grizzlies to make it to the Final Four. We want to use strategies designed to help maximize returns that our clients want and need without increasing risk. Our strategies may seem extreme while you are on the phone, in a zoom meeting, or talking with us in person and we are explaining them. But that is only because we are not afraid to find a different way of investing than you may have done in the past. As we head into the Presidential election, potential rate cuts, and continuing wars around the globe, remember that we are here to work with and for you. We want you involved in the plan and decisions.

Unlike my NCAA bracket, we want to help you succeed for the long term. Give us a call and let's talk strategies.

## Upcoming Local Events

[Majestic Financial Charity Golf Outing](#)

Saskatoon Golf Club  
Aug. 2nd

[Island City Festival](#)

Downtown Plainwell  
May 31 - June 2nd

[The Big Cheese Mac & Cheese Festival](#)

Kellogg Arena, Battle Creek  
April 20th

[Majestic Financial Quarterly Webinar: Options](#)

Online - Zoom  
April 22nd

[Summerfest](#)

Downtown Wayland  
June 7th

[Eclipse Viewing Party](#)

Air Zoo, Kalamazoo  
April 8th

[Rain - A Tribute to The Beatles](#)

Miller Auditorium  
May 14th

[Kalamazoo Rock, Gem, Fossil & Mineral Show](#)

Kalamazoo Expo Center  
May 3 - 5th

# The Majestic Team



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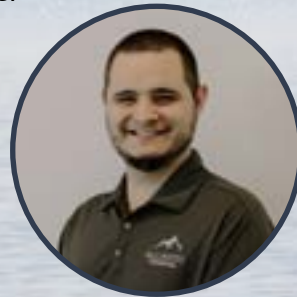
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