The

MERRITT POINT MINUTE

GUIDING CLIENTS THROUGH THE COMPLEXITIES OF WEALTH MANAGEMENT

January, 2026

Merritt Point Wealth Advisors Would Like to Welcome Driftwood Wealth Partners

David Squire, CFP®
Managing Partner

Zachary Hoyle
Managing Partner

Ana Johns
Operations Manager

Christopher B. Smith
Client Associate

We are thrilled to announce that Driftwood Wealth Partners has chosen to partner with Merritt Point Wealth Advisors. Welcome to the Merritt Point team!

IN THIS ISSUE:

Team Birthdays

Michael A Salimbene
Executive Managing Director, Partner
Wealth Advisor - Senior PIM Portfolio Manager
January 2nd

Samantha Belport
Senior Associate
January 3rd

Anthony D'Ambrosio
Executive Managing Director, Partner
Wealth Advisor - Senior PIM Portfolio Manager
January 13th

Jason Hoofnagle
Managing Partner
February 22nd

Ingrid Dikmen
Senior Vice President - Investments
Senior PIM Portfolio Manager
February 25th

Jenna Signorile
Associate
March 7th

Economic Commentary

Q3 economic data once again came in strong, with a faster-than-expected annual growth rate of 4.3%. This was driven by increased consumer spending, robust exports, and government spending. Most Q4 tracking estimates place growth in the 1.3–2.7% range. Contributing factors include expected tighter financial conditions, slower hiring, and softening consumer outlays. Inflation has eased from earlier peaks but remains uneven across categories, with tariff-related price pressures still evident. Given this environment, our investment approach remains focused on diversification and risk balance. We maintain broad exposure across asset classes and regions, with a modest underweight to technology to manage volatility tied to valuation sensitivity and policy uncertainty. This positioning aims to keep portfolios resilient in the event growth moderates and macro conditions remain mixed.

Asset allocation and diversification are investment methods used to help manage risk. They do not guarantee investment returns or eliminate risk of loss including in a declining market.

Ross Bauer
Founder, COO

Support - NYC Marathon with StacheStrong

It's been our pleasure at Merritt Point Wealth Advisors to be a supporter of **StacheStrong** for several years, and this year to support Joe Barbalaco as he ran the New York City Marathon in November to raise funds and awareness in the fight against brain cancer.

2025: A Year to Remember

2025 was another memorable ride as we saw the SP500 drop nearly 20% as a result of the Tariff Tiff in February and March. I don't think many envisioned we'd recover as quickly as we did, let alone finish the year with a 16% return!

Artificial Intelligence was the primary theme for market returns in 2025 whose benefit came from Trillions of dollars committed to the technology and development of data centers. For most of the year the AI opportunity could only go up, until it didn't, when in October many began to question the ability to see a return on such staggering investment.

For all the good we saw in the AI space, for the first time in a few years, the so-called "Magnificent 7" did not lead the way. In fact, only 2 of the companies that made up the Magnificent 7 were able to outperform the index itself.

Gold continued to shine in 2025 delivering an impressive return of 63%. However, Silver shined prettier and delivered a historic return of roughly 145%!

International, both developed and emerging markets, also made a strong showing in 2025 outperforming the US markets for the first time in several years.

All in all, despite the volatility we experienced, we believe hindsight delivered a good year for 2025.

S&P 500 Index is a capitalization-weighted index calculated on a total return basis with dividends reinvested. The index includes 500 widely held U.S. market industrial, utility, transportation and financial companies.

Chris Offner
Managing Partner

Team Anniversaries

Jason Andrews
Founder, CEO
7 Years

Ross Bauer
Founder, COO
7 Years

Beth Cutler
Founder, President
7 Years

Larry Baker
Senior Vice President
4 Years

Kate Welch
Wealth Strategist
4 Years

David C. Belport
Managing Director - Investments Senior PIM Portfolio Manager
3 Years

Steven Belport
Senior Vice President - Investments
3 Years

Samantha Belport
Senior Associate
3 Years

Dan Dodderidge, RICP
Executive Vice President - Investments
3 Years

Ted Youngling
Executive Vice President – Investments
3 Years

Roberta Anderson, CFP®
Vice President - Investments
2 Years

Andrew Pillarella
Vice President - Investments
2 Years

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Empowerment in Retirement

Retirement can be one of the most empowering phases of life. For the first time in decades, you have full control over your time, your priorities, and your path forward. The constraints of career obligations, deadlines, and external expectations begin to fade, making room for self-directed living. This is your opportunity to reclaim your voice, rediscover your passions, and make decisions based on what truly matters to you.

Empowerment in retirement means embracing you. You can choose to travel, start a new hobby, volunteer, or learn to play a musical instrument. You can speak up for causes you care about, mentor others, or pursue education that was once out of reach. It's a time to reflect on your values and align your actions with them without compromise.

It also means rewriting your narrative. You're not "retired" in the passive sense—you're re-engaged, reimagined, and revitalized. You have wisdom, experience, and perspective that younger generations crave. Use it. Share it. Celebrate it.

Dan Dodderidge, RICP
Executive Vice President – Investments

MPWA Year-End Gathering

Our annual gathering brought the Merritt Point Wealth Advisors team together to celebrate another year of meaningful growth and expansion.

As we continue to grow, our focus remains unchanged: delivering thoughtful, personalized advice and an exceptional client experience. We're proud of the team behind this momentum and energized by the opportunity to serve our clients with even greater depth, reach, and care in the year ahead.

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Keynote Panel at ALTSMIA 2025

Beth Cutler, Founder, President, spoke on the Keynote Panel at ALTSMIA 2025, a one-day forum for leaders in alternative investments, including venture capital, private debt, hedge funds and real assets. The conference brings together top industry professionals to share insights on market trends, investment strategies, and the future of the alternative investment landscape. Beth discussed the macroeconomic environment, the evolving nature of portfolio diversification, and the potential for a heavier reliance on both alternative assets and sector specific opportunities in 2026.

The 2025 AdvisorHub CEO Summit

In November, Ross Bauer, COO, attended the 2025 Advisorhub CEO Summit, leading a session on Next-Gen Integration Strategies, a topic that's central to the future of wealth management.

At Merritt Point Wealth Advisors, we're passionate about building a model that empowers advisors and their teams to thrive across generations — investing in our next-gen talent and combining freedom, flexibility, and a deep bench of support to help advisors grow and sustain their legacies for decades to come.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CEO

Jason Andrews
Founder, CEO

Dear Clients,

As 2025 comes to a close, I'd like to reflect on the continued growth of Merritt Point and look ahead to our expanding presence across the country in 2026. While we remain focused on growth, our commitment to delivering high-quality investment advice and maintaining strong client relationships remains unchanged.

As with every year, navigating the markets will be critical to our clients' goals. There is no doubt the year ahead will present its own challenges, as well as abundant opportunities. We remain dedicated to guiding our clients with care, discipline, and insight—standing alongside them every step of the way.