Market returns were broadly negative across major equity and fixed income indices as we finished a highly volatile 1st quarter of 2018. Broad domestic and international equity markets pulled back modestly following a very strong 2017. Fixed income indices also posted negative results, producing returns in-line with those of equities during the quarter. However, when viewed over the past 1-year period, returns remain positive for major indices as improving macroeconomic data and robust corporate earnings worldwide outweighed the near-term market uncertainty. The US stock market represented by the Russell 3000 Index returned -0.6% and 13.8% for the quarter and 1-year period respectively. While the Russell 3000 outperformed the international MSCI ACWI ex US Index during the 1st quarter, international stocks have performed better over the last 12 months. While the US economy continues to show signs of expansion, investors focused on the future path of Federal Reserve (Fed) monetary policy and the emergence of new protectionist trade policies from the Trump administration during the quarter.

Interest rates on the US Treasury Yield Curve ended the 1st quarter of 2018 higher across all maturities. The movement in rates was considerable during the quarter as markets reacted to the greater likelihood of increasing inflation and a more restrictive than expected US monetary policy going forward. The Fed followed suit by increasing short-term interest rates by 25 basis points at their March meeting, the third increase in the last 12 months. The rising interest rate environment negatively impacted fixed income market returns for the quarter. The Bloomberg Barclays US Aggregate Index fell -1.5% for the quarter as credit spreads began to widen.