

**The Power of Clarity***A Note from Max Winthrop*

Clarity is an interesting thing.

When you have it, you move forward with confidence. When you don't, even simple decisions can feel overwhelming. Without clarity, you are flying blind—reacting instead of navigating.

This year, I was reminded of that in a deeply personal way. Over the past several months, my wife and I have been navigating the healthcare system, and it has been an enormously difficult and stressful process. Despite countless tests, appointments, and specialists, no one has been able to step back, synthesize the information, and help us build a clear roadmap. In moments like that, what you want more than anything is clarity—someone to connect the dots, explain the trade-offs, and help you understand the path forward.

This experience stayed with me.

While the work we do at Winthrop Wealth is not health-related, it is deeply connected to another essential dimension of life: financial health. And time and again, I am reminded that our greatest value is not predicting the future—it's providing clarity and confidence so our clients can move forward thoughtfully, even when the road ahead is uncertain.

**Markets, Momentum, and the Value of Process**

From a market perspective, we are living in remarkable times. While headline market returns have been incredibly strong, much of that performance has been driven by a relatively narrow group of large technology companies (some call them the MAG 7) at the center of the artificial intelligence (AI) boom.

Much of our market perspective this year was shaped by the consistently clear-eyed and thoughtful commentary of Andrew Murphy. Throughout the year, our clients benefited from the steady, disciplined insights he and our Portfolio Management team shared in moments of both optimism and uncertainty. Andrew's commentary is intentionally less about prediction and more about perspective—helping investors focus on what truly matters, tune out what doesn't, and remain anchored to a disciplined process. In doing so, it reinforces confidence through strong markets and the inevitable periods of volatility. I would strongly encourage clients to read our Portfolio Management updates as they're published each month.



U.S. equity markets delivered another strong year, with the S&P 500 rising +17.9% in 2025, marking the third consecutive year of double-digit gains following +26.3% in 2023 and +25.0% in 2024. Corporate earnings remained resilient, optimism around artificial intelligence continued to shape capital markets, and the Federal Reserve began easing policy as inflation pressures moderated. Fixed income also played an important role, with the Bloomberg U.S. Aggregate Bond Index gaining +7.3%, its best calendar-year return since 2020.

But the year was not without its moments of stress.

In April, markets suffered a sharp drawdown—nearly entering bear-market territory—after President Trump’s “Liberation Day” tariff announcement reignited policy uncertainty and unsettled investors. Many portfolios were temporarily down, and emotions understandably ran high. Importantly, we did not view that period as a failure of strategy, but as a test of discipline.

During that volatility, we leaned into our process. We sought to execute meaningful tax-loss harvesting, rebalance portfolios, and selectively reposition client capital—actions that we believe, in hindsight, meaningfully benefited clients as markets recovered and moved to new highs. It was a clear reminder that our Disciplined, Opportunistic, and Diversified Methodology (DODM) isn’t just a philosophy—it’s something we actively execute, especially when it’s hardest to do so. As a reminder, no strategy assures success and past performance is no guarantee of future results.

### **Our People, Our Process, Constant Improvement**

None of this would be possible without the people behind the work. In 2025, I am incredibly proud of our team and the experience they delivered to our clients day in and day out. Across every function of the firm, our team remained deeply focused on continuous improvement — thoughtfully refining how we communicate, how we serve, and how we execute — all in pursuit of delivering an even better client experience. This mindset is deeply rooted in one of our core values: If it ain’t broke, make it better. We believe excellence is never static, and the compounding effect of small, intentional improvements over time is powerful.

In that spirit, we were also excited to welcome Matthew McGrath, CFA, to our Portfolio Management team this year. Matthew brings significant industry experience and a deep understanding of disciplined investment processes, further strengthening our ability to support clients through a wide range of market environments. His addition reflects our ongoing commitment to investing in talent and continually seeking to raise the bar on behalf of the clients we serve.



### Strategic Clarity in How We Operate

2025 was also a meaningful inflection point for Winthrop Wealth.

It marked our first full year of our financial professionals operating on an advisory-only basis, meaning they are no longer dually-registered representatives of a broker-dealer or offering commissionable securities. This shift was intentional and years in the making, but experiencing it in practice reinforced something important: clarity of structure enables clarity of action.

By simplifying our model and reducing operational barriers, we believe we have gained the ability to move faster strategically and make more deliberate decisions in the best interest of clients. That clarity has already translated into tangible progress in our opinion. In 2025, we introduced new investment strategies designed to meet the increasingly complex realities our clients face, including direct indexing and concentrated stock management capabilities.

We believe these tools allow us to be more precise, more tax-aware, and more flexible—particularly for clients with significant single-stock exposure or nuanced planning needs. We are proud of this progress, not because it represents an endpoint, but because it reflects how we think about our responsibility as fiduciaries. Operating on an advisory-only basis gives us the clarity and freedom to build, adapt, and innovate faster in our opinion—without compromise.

### Recognition as a Byproduct, Not a Goal

While recognition is never our objective, we appreciate acknowledgment when it reflects the consistency of our process, the strength of our people, and our long-term commitment to clients.

In 2025, Winthrop Wealth and members of our leadership team were honored by several respected organizations:

Forbes named Winthrop Wealth to its America's Top RIA Firms list, ranking us #86 nationally among independent advisory firms.

*The Forbes America's Top RIA Firms 2025 ranking, developed by SHOOK Research, was awarded on October 1, 2025, using data collected as of October 2024. Rankings are based on qualitative and quantitative criteria, including interviews, revenue trends, assets under management, client retention, compliance records, and best practices in client service. Portfolio performance is not a factor. Neither Forbes nor SHOOK Research receives compensation for placement.*



Newsweek included Winthrop Wealth on its America's Top Financial Advisory Firms list (2026 rankings announced in late 2025).

*The Newsweek America's Top Financial Advisory Firms 2026 ranking, developed by Plant-A Insights Group, is based on an analysis of publicly available SEC Form ADV data from September 2020 through September 2025, with ranking announced November 14, 2025. More than 16,000 SEC-registered investment advisory firms were reviewed, and the top 1,000 firms were selected using a quantitative scoring model that considered AUM growth, client growth, advisor expertise, client-to-advisor ratios, breadth of services, conflicts of interest, and clean disciplinary records. Firms did not apply or pay to be considered. Firms must also meet eligibility requirements, including maintaining a clean disciplinary record.*

Forbes recognized Mark Winthrop and Earl Winthrop on its Best-In-State Wealth Advisors list for Massachusetts.

*Data provided by Forbes in partnership with SHOOK Research. Data as of June 30, 2024, representing a trailing 12-month period. Award granted April 8, 2025. Mark Winthrop ranked #6 on the Forbes' 2025 Best-In-State Wealth Advisors list. Mark Winthrop ranked #13 on the Forbes' 2025 Best-In-State Wealth Advisors list. Ranking published April 2025. Advisors do not pay a fee to be considered or selected for the ranking. Forbes and SHOOK Research do not receive compensation in exchange for placement on the list. Some advisors may pay a fee for marketing or licensing purposes; such compensation does not influence rankings.*

Forbes also named Lucas Winthrop to its Top Next-Gen Wealth Advisors list.

*Data provided by Forbes in partnership with SHOOK Research, LLC. Data as of March 31, 2025, representing the trailing evaluation period used for the 2025 list. Award granted August 6, 2025. Lucas Winthrop ranked #28 on the Massachusetts Best-In-State Next-Gen Wealth Advisors list. Advisors do not pay a fee to be considered or selected for the ranking. Forbes and SHOOK Research do not receive compensation for placement on the list; some advisors may opt to pay an optional fee for enhanced profile features, which does not affect ranking inclusion.*

Barron's named Mark Winthrop to its Top 1,200 Financial Advisors nationwide.

*Data provided by Barrons.com – Data from ranking as of 9/30/2024 representing trailing 12 months. Award granted: 3/25/2025. Ranking published March 10, 2025. Barron's does not receive compensation in exchange for its placements or ranking.*



Inc. recognized Winthrop Wealth as one of its Best Workplaces, reflecting the culture, collaboration, and care our team brings to work every day.

*Award granted 6/2/2025. Best Workplaces program is awarded by Inc. Magazine. Applicants pay an entry fee of \$495 for consideration. This award is not a recognition or ranking of the Firm's credentials or qualifications as a registered investment advisor.*

We view these honors not as endpoints, but as byproducts of something more important: Our commitment to providing disciplined execution, thoughtful advice, and a team aligned around doing what's right for clients.

#### **Strengthening the Platform, Expanding the Impact**

In 2025, we continued to invest thoughtfully in the infrastructure that supports our advisors and clients, with a focus on long-term durability and reach. A meaningful milestone in that effort was our most recent acquisition of Mercer Asset Management, Inc., which expanded our client base and presence in the Pacific Northwest.

This relationship allows us to support firms and families seeking a fully integrated wealth management approach—bringing together investment management, financial planning, tax awareness, and long-term continuity—while preserving the independence and client-first mindset that define Winthrop Wealth. Importantly, it also reflects our belief that growth should be purposeful: expanding our geographic footprint only where we believe we can bring real value, deepen relationships, and maintain the high standard of service our clients expect.

As we grow, clarity remains our north star—clarity of purpose, clarity of roles, clarity of advice, and clarity for the families and institutions we serve.



### Looking Ahead

Markets will continue to evolve. Volatility will return. Predictions will change. What endures is the need for clarity—a clear plan, a clear process, and a trusted partner who can help navigate complexity with confidence.

Personally, this year reinforced how valuable clarity truly is. Professionally, it strengthened my conviction that the work we do matters deeply.

Thank you to our clients for your trust, to our team for your dedication, and to our partners for walking alongside us. We look forward to continuing this journey together—with clarity, confidence, and care.

Sincerely,  
Max G Winthrop and the Winthrop Team

