Key Wealth

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Books and Podcasts for Your 2025 Summer Reading and Listening

Summer is a great time to catch up on your reading or podcasts, whether at the beach, the mountains, or any other place where you get away. But while a good thriller or romantic novel is always a solid choice, so is a well-written nonfiction book or well-honed podcast that helps develop our skills or expand our knowledge of the world. We asked our Wealth Institute team to help us curate the perfect summer reading and listening list for 2025. Here are the books and podcasts they thought you might enjoy.

Ather F. Bajwa CFA, CPA
Managing Director, Investment Research

"Our Dollar, Your Problem: An Insider's View of Seven Turbulent Decades of Global Finance, and the Road Ahead" by Kenneth Rogoff

In the book, Mr. Rogoff explores how the U.S. dollar achieved global dominance through a mix of strategy and luck, outperforming rivals like the yen, ruble, and euro. He warns that this dominance is under threat from rising global frustration, political instability, crypto, and competition from currencies like the Chinese yuan. Drawing on his experience, Rogoff emphasizes that sustaining the dollar's power requires responsible policymaking and a recognition of the risks tied to America's financial privilege.

"The Great Dissenter: The Story of John Marshall Harlan, America's Judicial Hero" by Peter S. Canellos

Justice John Marshall Harlan served on the U.S. Supreme Court from 1877 to 1911 and earned the title "Great Dissenter" for his principled opposition to racial segregation, especially in Plessy v. Ferguson. Once a slaveholder, he became a staunch advocate for civil rights, famously arguing that the Constitution is "color-blind." Though often alone in his views, his dissents laid the foundation for future rulings like Brown v. Board of Education, cementing his legacy as a champion of equality.

George K. Mateyo
Chief Investment Officer

"Same as Ever: A Guide to What Never Changes" by Morgan Housel

As we navigate this time of profound uncertainty, it is enticing to try and predict the future; countless resources are deployed, and exponential amounts of effort are expended aimed at doing so with great precision. Such approaches, in our view, (most of the time) are counterproductive. A far more effective strategy is to do the opposite: study the big things from the past that remained the same over time, and will endure going forward. In his follow-up success and "must read," "The Psychology of Money (a prior KWI recommendation)," bestselling author Morgan Housel offers several approaches to learn from our past and, in the process, approach the future with greater confidence and clarity.

Daniel Fiedler
Senior Portfolio Manager

"The Red Right Hand" by Joel Townsley Rogers

Published in 1945, this psychological crime fiction story is a foundational work in the mystery genre.

Daniel Fiedler
Senior Portfolio Manager

"The Moving Target" by Ross Macdonald

Early (1949) entry in Macdonald's Lew Archer series was redone on the big screen as "Harper" starring Paul Newman. Macdonald expanded on the legacy of great early crime fiction writers like Dashiell Hammett and Raymond Chandler.

Jim Thomas
National Banking Team Lead

"The Swamp Peddlers: How Lot Sellers, Land Scammers, and Retirees Built Modern Florida and Transformed the American Dream" by Jason Vuic

This book is a compelling mix of history, business, and environmental reckoning, offering readers an eye-opening look at how unchecked development can shape an entire state. Vuic's storytelling is lively and engaging, making what could be a dry historical account into a fascinating tale of ambition, deception, and unintended consequences. It's perfect for those interested in real estate, urban planning, or Florida's unique history — especially if you love stories that reveal the hidden forces behind the places we live in today.

Sean Poe
Director, Investment Research

"Capital Allocators" by Ted Seides

In this book and podcast series, Seides leverages his background at the Yale University endowment and Protege Partners to provide deep insight into how asset allocators think about building a portfolio. On his podcast, Seides interviews a variety of chief investment officers and investment professionals from top investment offices across endowments, healthcare systems, pensions, sovereign wealth funds, and other asset managers, providing a fascinating look into the world of high-dollar money management.

Renee Porter-Medley
Regional Director for Financial Planning

"The Let Them Theory: A Life-Changing Tool That Millions of People Can't Stop Talking About" by Mel Robbins

"The Let Them Theory" is a step-by-step guide on how to stop letting other people's opinions, drama, and judgment impact your life. Two simple words, "Let Them," will set you free from the exhausting cycle of trying to manage everything and everyone around you. The next two important words are, "Let Me." You can choose to pause and reflect, acknowledge your emotions, and decide on a response that helps you be thoughtful and still be true to what is best for you.

Tom Jarecki
Head of Wealth Planning

"The Price of Peace: Money, Democracy, and the Life of John Maynard Keynes" by Zachary D. Carter

The book offers a compelling and accessible portrait of one of the most influential economists of the 20th century. Blending biography with intellectual history, Carter explores how Keynes' ideas about government spending, markets, and the role of the state were shaped by the upheavals of war and depression — and how they remain deeply relevant today. This book is a must-read for anyone interested in economics, public policy, or the ongoing debate over the balance between capitalism and democracy.

Vince Lecce
Rochester Market President and
Private Bank Market Leader

"Unreasonable Hospitality: The Remarkable Power of Giving People More Than They Expect" by Will Guidara

Will Guidara ran Eleven Madison Park, a restaurant in New York City that was named the best restaurant in the world under his leadership. This book talks about how he transformed Eleven Madison Park by turning ordinary transactions into extraordinary experiences. This is a must-read for anyone who interacts directly with customers in their day-to-day role. It is a master class in delivering white glove service.

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Paul Kieffer
Senior Wealth Planner

"Unrequited Infatuations" by Stevie Van Zandt

Interesting autography of Van Zandt's life, spanning his early years growing up in New Jersey and how that influenced his life to discovering music and how that became his passion. But he was not satisfied and branched out into production advocacy and eventually acting, finding different levels of success in each area. While not giving specific numbers, the book discusses how the industry worked financially, and different pitfalls that artists, producers, and actors should be aware of. This weaving of both the financial and emotional sides of the business make this book a compelling read.

Podcasts

Joe Velkos
National Director, Trust Tax

"The Town" with Matt Belloni

This podcast is entertaining and provides interesting insights into the business side of Hollywood. The podcast lays out a valuable look at how industry executives look at and judge their industry.

Mike Kehoe
Senior Lead Analyst

"Business Breakdowns"
Host: Colossus

The "Business Breakdowns" podcast offers well-researched, in-depth explorations of individual companies and business models across a wide range of industries. Each episode highlights what makes a business successful — covering competitive advantages, financials, and key strategic decisions throughout its history — making it an insightful and enjoyable listen for investors, operators, and anyone interested in how great businesses are built and sustained.

For additional recommendations or to pass along your own, please contact your advisor.

The Key Wealth Institute is a team of highly experienced professionals representing various disciplines within wealth management who are dedicated to delivering timely insights and practical advice. From strategies designed to better manage your wealth, to guidance to help you better understand the world impacting your wealth, Key Wealth Institute provides proactive insights needed to navigate your financial journey.