

Value Opportunities is a concentrated portfolio of businesses that range in market capitalization. Companies are selected using a bottom-up, fundamental research process that seeks to identify individual businesses that are trading at substantial discounts to our estimate of intrinsic value and have near-term catalysts in which to unlock the value. The portfolio may have concentrations in both individual holdings and/or industries. It typically comprises 8-12 holdings and is expected to result in high annual turnover. The strategy is appropriate for clients seeking an aggressive approach to generating capital appreciation.

## **Market Commentary**

Equity markets struggled to start the new year as investors grappled with the latest Omicron wave, the Russian invasion of Ukraine, and the actions of the Federal Reserve. These concerns weighed not only on domestic equity markets but all asset classes except for commodities. Even Treasuries, often viewed as safe havens, reported losses across maturities, with the 10-year Treasury yield moving up from 1.62% to 2.32% and resulting in a -6.86% loss of principal. The only asset to escape the downdraft was commodities as supply has been slower to ramp back up despite solid demand as economies are reopening (see *Figure 1* with asset class returns, from Confluence's Asset Allocation Committee). Companies are also struggling with labor shortages as well as recent outages caused by Omicron which are putting upward pressure on wages. Inflation has also been pressured by supply chain issues that are testing the limits of the global just-in-time inventory approach — an approach that helped put downward pressure on inflation over the past few decades. The Russian invasion only advanced concerns surrounding the supply of agriculture products and certain commodities, which was further exasperated by the sanctions imposed on Russia. These headwinds offset the positive effects of economies reopening and the ensuing strong demand.

Figure 1

2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	Q1 2022
Emerging Markets	REITs	Long-Term Bonds	Emerging Markets	US Small Cap	REITs	REITs	US Small Cap	Emerging Markets	Cash	US Large Cap	US Large Cap	REITs	Commodities
78.5%	28.0%	22.0%	18.2%	41.3%	30.1%	3.2%	26.6%	37.3%	1.9%	31.5%	18.4%	43.2%	33.1%
Speculative Bonds	US Mid-Cap	Intermediate- Term Bonds	REITs	US Mid-Cap	Long-Term Bonds	US Large Cap	US Mid-Cap	Int'l Developed	Short-Term Bonds	US Mid-Cap	Emerging Markets	Commodities	Cash
57.5%	26.6%	10.6%	18.1%	33.5%	20.1%	1.4%	20.7%	25.0%	1.6%	26.2%	18.3%	40.4%	0.0%
US Mid-Cap	US Small Cap	REITs	US Mid-Cap	US Large Cap	US Large Cap	Intermediate- Term Bonds	Speculative Bonds	US Large Cap	Intermediate- Term Bonds	REITs	Long-Term Bonds	US Large Cap	Short-Term Bonds
37.4%	26.3%	8.3%	17.9%	32.4%	13.7%	1.4%	17.5%	21.8%	-0.1%	26.0%	15.5%	28.7%	-2.6%
Int'l Developed	Emerging Markets	Speculative Bonds	Int'l Developed	Int'l Developed	US Mid-Cap	Short-Term Bonds	US Large Cap	US Mid-Cap	Speculative Bonds	US Small Cap	US Mid-Cap	US Small Cap	REITs
31.8%	18.9%	4.4%	17.3%	22.8%	9.8%	0.7%	12.0%	16.2%	-2.3%	22.8%	13.7%	26.8%	-3.9%
REITs	Speculative Bonds	US Large Cap	US Small Cap	Speculative Bonds	Intermediate- Term Bonds	Cash	Commodities	US Small Cap	Long-Term Bonds	Int'l Developed	US Small Cap	US Mid-Cap	Speculative Bonds
28.0%	15.2%	2.1%	16.3%	7.4%	6.8%	0.1%	11.4%	13.2%	-4.1%	22.0%	11.3%	24.8%	-4.5%
US Large Cap	US Large Cap	Short-Term Bonds	US Large Cap	REITs	US Small Cap	Int'l Developed	Emerging Markets	Long-Term Bonds	US Large Cap	Long-Term Bonds	Intermediate- Term Bonds	Int'l Developed	US Large Cap
26.5%	15.1%	1.6%	16.0%	2.5%	5.8%	-0.8%	11.2%	10.4%	-4.4%	18.8%	9.5%	11.3%	-4.6%
US Small Cap	Long-Term Bonds	US Small Cap	Speculative Bonds	Short-Term Bonds	Speculative Bonds	US Small Cap	REITs	Speculative Bonds	REITs	Emerging Markets	Int'l Developed	Speculative Bonds	US Mid-Cap
25.6%	10.6%	1.0%	15.6%	0.7%	2.5%	-2.0%	8.5%	7.5%	-4.6%	18.4%	7.8%	5.4%	-4.9%
Commodities	Intermediate- Term Bonds	Cash	Long-Term Bonds	Cash	Short-Term Bonds	US Mid-Cap	Long-Term Bonds	Commodities	US Small Cap	Commodities	Speculative Bonds	Cash	US Small Cap
13.5%	9.6%	0.1%	8.7%	0.1%	0.8%	-2.2%	5.7%	5.8%	-8.5%	17.6%	6.2%	0.0%	-5.6%
Intermediate- Term Bonds	Commodities	Commodities	Intermediate- Term Bonds	Commodities	Cash	Long-Term Bonds	Intermediate- Term Bonds	REITs	US Mid-Cap	Speculative Bonds	Short-Term Bonds	Short-Term Bonds	Int'l Developed
7.4%	9.0%	-1.2%	7.2%	-1.2%	0.0%	-2.8%	3.2%	5.2%	-11.1%	14.4%	3.3%	-0.4%	-5.9%
Short-Term Bonds	Int'l Developed	US Mid-Cap	Short-Term Bonds	Emerging Markets	Emerging Markets	Speculative Bonds	Short-Term Bonds	Intermediate- Term Bonds	Int'l Developed	Intermediate- Term Bonds	Cash	Intermediate- Term Bonds	Intermediate- Term Bonds
3.8%	7.8%	-1.7%	1.5%	-2.6%	-2.2%	-4.6%	1.3%	3.9%	-13.8%	10.6%	0.7%	-2.2%	-6.5%
Long-Term Bonds	Short-Term Bonds	Int'l Developed	Cash	Intermediate- Term Bonds	Int'l Developed	Emerging Markets	Int'l Developed	Short-Term Bonds	Commodities	Short-Term Bonds	REITs	Emerging Markets	Emerging Markets
1.8%	2.8%	-12.1%	0.1%	-3.4%	-4.9%	-14.9%	1.0%	0.9%	-13.8%	4.1%	-8.0%	-2.5%	-7.0%
Cash	Cash	Emerging Markets	Commodities	Long-Term Bonds	Commodities	Commodities	Cash	Cash	Emerging Markets	Cash	Commodities	Long-Term Bonds	Long-Term Bonds
0.2%	0.1%	-18.4%	0.1%	-9.4%	-33.1%	-32.9%	0.3%	0.9%	-14.6%	2.3%	-23.7%	-2.8%	-10.9%

(Source: <u>Confluence Asset Allocation Committee</u>. See disclosures on p.5 for asset class composition.)

## Market Commentary continued...

Inflation is the primary concern weighing on investors, which has not really been present for a few decades (see CPI and core CPI graph, Figure 2). In fact, we have to look back to the 1970s and early 1980s for the last time inflation wreaked havoc on markets. At that time, Paul Volcker was brought in to chair the FOMC to break inflation. He did so by aggressively raising interest rates to a high of 20%, which worked but also resulted in a double-dip recession. During the decades that followed we saw more prudent monetary policy with globalization combined technological innovation, which inflation in check. It was so successful that the past few generations have little to no experience with inflation as the chart below illustrates from Confluence's macro team (Figure 3). Thus, with inflation running

Figure 2 CPI and core CPI % change vs. prior year, seasonally adjusted 50-yr. avg. Jan. 2022 Feb. 2022 Recession Headline CP Core CPI 3.8% 6.0% 6.4% Food CPI 4 0% 7.0% 79% 12% Energy CP 27.0% 25.7% Headline PCE deflato 3.4% 6.0% Core PCF deflato '96 '98 '00 '02 '04 '06 '08 '10 '74 78 '80

(Chart source: J.P. Morgan Asset Management; Guide to the Markets - U.S., Data as of March 31, 2022)

much higher than expected, investors are grappling with how much of the rise is transitory and how much is structural as they determine their inflationary expectations, which has induced the recent volatility. What is certain is that the FOMC will be shifting monetary policy away from easing conditions as shown during the quarter with an increase in rates of 25 bps and a reduction in the Fed's balance sheet. Of course, the key question is, what will be the pace and magnitude of future tightening?

Figure 3

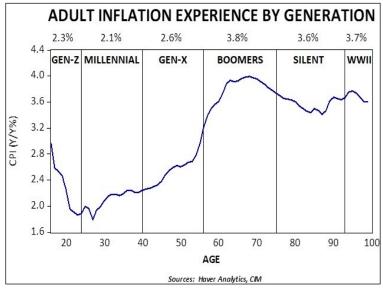
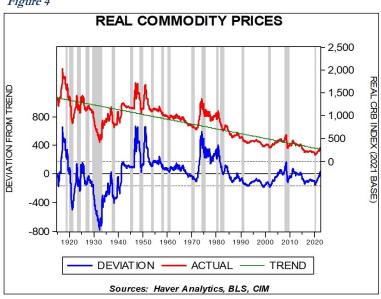


Figure 4



For the equity markets, the quarter reflected the strength of commodities as the Energy sector led the way with gains of 39% and was the only sector other than the Utilities sector, up 5%, to post a gain. The quarter ended with the broad market proxy, the S&P 500 Index, down 4.6% and the small capitalization proxy, the Russell 2000 Index, down 7.5%. Regarding style, the value indexes have larger exposures to commodities and utilities, thus value outperformed growth with the Russell 3000 Value Index down 0.8% and the Russell 3000 Growth Index down 9.3%. While commodities are drawing a lot of attention and have had some good periods from time-to-time, over the long run innovation via means of extraction and users finding more efficient usage have historically put downward pressure on commodity prices (see Figure 4).

### **Strategy Commentary**

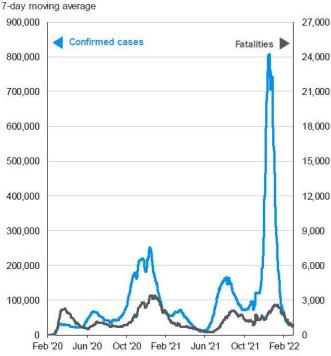
Confluence Value Opportunities returned -6.9% in the first quarter, trailing the S&P 500 Index at -4.6% and the Russell 3000 Value at -0.8%. [Net-of-fees return for the same period was -7.6% QTD. See disclosures on p.5 for fee description; actual investment advisory fees may vary.]

The first quarter of 2022 began with record COVID contagion, witnessed the start of the largest European war since World War II, saw inflation reach a 40-year high, and ended with a two-week market rally of 8.5% in the S&P 500 that coincided with a dramatic increase in the 10-year Treasury yield. This quarter-end rally also saw a return to areas that displayed excess exuberance over the past few years, such as GameStop (GME) and Tesla (TSLA), which were up +113% and +40%, respectively, over the last two weeks of March.

During the quarter, Value Opportunities underperformed the S&P 500 as valuations contracted in a few holdings, partially offset by some strong returns driven by stock-specific catalysts. Specifically, BRP Group (BRP) and NXP Semiconductors (NXPI) underperformed as valuations contracted for these high-growth companies, and Cannae (CNNE) declined as the market valued the company at a significant discount to the sum of its publicly traded parts. The portfolio also trailed due to having no Energy holdings, but it did benefit from owning SL Green Realty (SLG) as the company's world-class office properties in New York continue to rebound post-pandemic.

The top contributors to performance in the first quarter were driven by company-specific catalysts. An activist investor at Dollar Tree (DLTR) was awarded several board seats which will further support changes that should drive higher margins and better product assortment. Markel (MKL) continues to benefit from the strongest specialty insurance market in 20 years and the market began to reflect this in the stock price this quarter. Lastly, Clarivate (CLVT) gained nicely after being added to the portfolio during the quarter.

Figure 5
Change in confirmed cases and fatalities in the U.S.



(Chart source: J.P. Morgan Asset Management; Guide to the Markets - U.S., Data as of March 31, 2022)

In early February, we sold Healthcare Services Group (HCSG) in order to opportunistically purchase Clarivate. Clarivate (CLVT) operates a collection of subscription-based services focused largely on analytics in the areas of scientific and academic research, patent intelligence and compliance standards, pharmaceutical and biotech intelligence, trademark, domain, and brand protection; basically, it is the database for innovation. Clarivate has all the hallmarks of a business that can generate consistent and sustainable cash flow as it is asset-light, subscription-based, and has high customer retention rates. Clarivate acquired these one-of-a-kind databases over the last few years under the leadership of industry veteran Jerre Stead, who has a solid track record of maximizing shareholder value. While much progress has been made, the company had to lower its near-term growth expectations during the first quarter, resulting in a stock selloff that provided an attractive opportunity to add it to the portfolio. With continued execution, we believe Clarivate should prove to be a high-quality business that can grow and compound over the long term.

#### Outlook

It will take time for all these macro events from the first quarter to settle out, but initially it looks like ongoing trade disputes with China, a disjointed global supply chain, and global trade disruptions from the Russian invasion of Ukraine have ended the 25-year trend of increased globalization. As a result, inflation pressures could persist and force the Fed to aggressively raise rates, something the stock market has not experienced in over 20 years. If the Fed does follow through with aggressive tightening, then a complacent stock market could see some volatility over the next 12 months.

Despite a weak start to the year, the Value Opportunities strategy is well positioned in good businesses at reasonable valuations, which we believe should help it outperform if the market continues to unwind the speculative valuations that have built up over the past five years. In the meantime, we continue to focus on owning high-quality businesses with capable management teams at attractive prices.

#### Contribution<sup>1</sup>

(YTD as of 3/31/2022)

The top contributors and detractors for the portfolio thus far in 2022 are shown in this table:

Security	Avg Weight (%)	Contribution (%)		
Top 5				
Dollar Tree, Inc.	14.18	2.07		
Markel Corporation	10.86	2.04		
Clarivate Plc	3.77	0.73		
SL Green Realty Corp.	5.80	0.70		
Booking Holdings Inc.	9.85	(0.27)		
Bottom 5				
Vontier Corporation	7.70	(1.51)		
Frontdoor, Inc.	9.42	(1.91)		
Cannae Holdings, Inc.	4.59	(1.99)		
NXP Semiconductors N.V.	11.91	(2.38)		
BRP Group, Inc.	7.97	(2.39)		

(Contribution data shown from a sample account, based on individual stock performance and portfolio weighting)

## Performance Composite Returns<sup>2</sup> (For Periods Ending March 31, 2022)

	Since Inception**	20-Year*	15-Year*	10-Year*	5-Year*	3-Year*	1-Year	YTD	QTD
Pure Gross-of-Fees <sup>3</sup>	10.6%	9.1%	9.1%	10.8%	3.4%	8.4%	(3.9%)	(6.9%)	(6.9%)
Net-of-Fees <sup>4</sup>	7.4%	6.0%	5.9%	7.5%	0.3%	5.2%	(6.8%)	(7.6%)	(7.6%)
S&P 500	7.2%	9.2%	10.3%	14.6%	16.0%	18.9%	15.6%	(4.6%)	(4.6%)
Russell 3000 Value	7.7%	8.1%	7.3%	11.6%	10.1%	13.0%	11.1%	(0.8%)	(0.8%)

Calendar Year	Pure Gross- of-Fees <sup>3</sup>	Net-of- Fees <sup>4</sup>	S&P 500	R3000 Value	Difference (Gross- S&P500)	# of Portfolios	Composite Assets (000s)	Total Firm Assets (000s)	Composite 3yr Std Dev	S&P 500 3yr Std Dev	R3000V 3yr Std Dev	Composite Dispersion
2000**	43.6%	40.7%	(11.1%)	7.3%	54.8%	1	\$74		N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
2001	1.1%	(1.7%)	(11.9%)	(4.3%)	13.0%	79	\$7,097		N/A	N/A	N/A	0.4%
2002	(14.8%)	(17.1%)	(22.1%)	(15.2%)	7.3%	107	\$7,786		N/A	N/A	N/A	0.9%
2003	40.4%	36.5%	28.7%	31.1%	11.7%	126	\$23,976		25.2%	18.1%	16.0%	0.9%
2004	4.8%	2.0%	10.9%	16.9%	(6.1%)	189	\$25,252		20.1%	14.9%	14.8%	1.0%
2005	4.4%	1.6%	4.9%	6.9%	(0.5%)	179	\$23,399		11.7%	9.0%	9.7%	0.8%
2006	27.0%	23.6%	15.8%	22.3%	11.3%	171	\$19,132		7.6%	6.8%	7.0%	1.7%
2007	2.1%	(0.7%)	5.5%	(1.0%)	(3.4%)	197	\$20,510		8.4%	7.7%	8.3%	0.7%
2008	(22.3%)	(24.5%)	(37.0%)	(36.2%)	14.7%	29	\$8,299	\$291,644	18.6%	15.1%	15.5%	N/A
2009	31.5%	27.6%	26.5%	19.8%	5.0%	37	\$14,001	\$533,832	25.2%	19.6%	21.3%	2.0%
2010	6.9%	3.7%	15.1%	16.3%	(8.2%)	51	\$7,429	\$751,909	27.9%	21.9%	23.5%	0.7%
2011	(1.7%)	(4.6%)	2.1%	(0.1%)	(3.8%)	53	\$7,694	\$937,487	23.7%	18.7%	21.0%	0.6%
2012	28.5%	24.7%	16.0%	17.6%	12.5%	53	\$9,576	\$1,272,265	18.3%	15.1%	15.8%	0.9%
2013	32.3%	28.3%	32.4%	32.7%	(0.1%)	76	\$18,299	\$1,955,915	13.5%	11.9%	12.9%	0.4%
2014	31.6%	27.7%	13.7%	12.7%	17.9%	110	\$31,040	\$2,589,024	11.4%	9.0%	9.4%	0.9%
2015	2.3%	(0.7%)	1.4%	(4.1%)	1.0%	554	\$113,587	\$3,175,419	10.8%	10.5%	10.7%	0.3%
2016	15.4%	12.0%	12.0%	18.4%	3.4%	959	\$207,565	\$4,413,659	10.9%	10.6%	11.0%	0.5%
2017	14.5%	11.1%	21.8%	13.2%	(7.3%)	1,737	\$359,636	\$5,944,479	9.8%	9.9%	10.3%	0.8%
2018	(18.8%)	(21.2%)	(4.4%)	(8.6%)	(14.4%)	1,494	\$236,097	\$5,486,737	11.9%	10.8%	11.1%	0.8%
2019	28.6%	24.7%	31.5%	26.2%	(2.9%)	1,129	\$230,991	\$7,044,708	13.6%	11.9%	12.0%	0.7%
2020	9.5%	6.2%	18.4%	2.9%	(8.9%)	745	\$165,389	\$6,889,798	20.0%	18.5%	20.0%	1.3%
2021	6.9%	3.8%	28.7%	25.3%	(21.7%)	532	\$132,656	\$7,761,687	18.3%	17.2%	19.3%	1.2%

<sup>\*</sup>Average annualized returns

\*\*Inception is 4/1/2000

See performance disclosures on next page.

## Portfolio Benchmarks

**S&P 500**® **Index** – A capitalization-weighted index of 500 stocks designed to measure performance of the broad domestic economy through changes in the aggregate market value of 500 stocks representing all major industries.

Russell 3000® Value Index — A capitalization-weighted index designed to measure performance of those Russell 3000® Index companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values. (Source: Bloomberg)

### **Disclosures**

Market & Strategy Commentary—Figure 1: Asset class representation: Cash (ICE BofA 3M T-Bill); Short-Term Bonds (ICE BofA 1-3 Year US Corp&Govt); Intermediate-Term Bonds (ICE BofA 5-10 Year US Corp&Govt); Long-Term Bonds (ICE BofA 10+Yr US Corp&Govt); Speculative Grade/High-Yield Bonds (ICE BofA US High Yield Master); REITs (FTSE NAREIT Equity); Large Cap (S&P 500); Mid-Cap (S&P MidCap 400); Small Cap (S&P Small Cap 600); Foreign Developed Country (MSCI EAFE); Emerging Markets (MSCI Emerging Markets); Commodities (S&P GSCI). Data source: Morningstar Direct.

Information is presented as supplemental information to the disclosures required by GIPS® standards. Individual holding performance and contribution methodology as well as a list of every holding's contribution to the strategy can be obtained by contacting Confluence. Material is published solely for informational purposes and is not an offer to buy or sell or a solicitation of an offer to buy or sell any security or investment product. Opinions and estimates are as of a certain date and subject to change without notice. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

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Indices: The S&P 500 Index and Russell 3000 Value Index are shown as additional information. These indices are unmanaged. An investor cannot invest directly in an index. They are shown for illustrative purposes only & do not represent the performance of any specific investment. Index returns do not include any expenses, fees or sales charges, which would lower performance.

<sup>1</sup>Contribution—Table showing the top 5 contributors/detractors reflects the strategy's best and worst performers, based on each holding's contribution to the sample account for the period stated. Holdings identified do not represent all of the securities purchased, sold or recommended. Individual client portfolios in the strategy may differ, sometimes significantly, from these listings. Contact Confluence for a complete list of holdings.

<sup>2</sup>Performance Composite Returns—Confluence Investment Management LLC claims compliance with the Global investment Performance Standards (GIPS®) and has prepared and presented this report in compliance with the GIPS standards. Confluence Investment Management LLC has been independently verified for the periods August 1, 2008, through December 31, 2020. The verification report is available upon request. A firm that claims compliance with the GIPS standards must establish policies and procedures for complying with all the applicable requirements of the GIPS standards.

Verification provides assurance on whether the firm's policies and procedures related to composite maintenance, as well as the calculation, presentation, and distribution of performance, have been designed in compliance with the GIPS standards and have been implemented on a firm-wide basis. Verification does not provide assurance on the accuracy of any specific performance report.

GIPS® is a registered trademark of CFA Institute. CFA Institute does not endorse or promote this organization, nor does it warrant the accuracy or quality of the content contained herein. The Value Opportunities Strategy was incepted on April 1, 2000, and the current Value Opportunities Composite was created on August 1, 2008. Performance presented prior to August 1, 2008, occurred while the Portfolio Management Team was affiliated with a prior firm and the Portfolio Management Team members were the primary individuals responsible for selecting the securities to buy and sell. Confluence Investment Management LLC is an independent registered investment adviser. Results are based on fully discretionary accounts under management, including those accounts no longer with the firm. Past performance is not indicative of future results. The U.S. Dollar is the currency used to express performance. Returns are presented gross and net of all fees and include the reinvestment of all income.

- <sup>3</sup> Pure gross returns are shown as supplemental information to the disclosures required by the GIPS® standards.
- <sup>4</sup> Net-of-fee performance was calculated using the highest applicable annual bundled fee of 3.00% applied quarterly (2.75% prior to 7/1/08). This fee includes brokerage commissions, portfolio management, consulting services and custodial services. The Confluence fee schedule for this composite is as follows: 1.00% on the first \$500,000; 0.90% on the next \$500,000; and 0.75% over \$1,000,000. There are no incentive fees. Clients pay an all-inclusive fee based on a percentage of assets under management. The collection of fees produces a compounding effect on the total rate of return net of fees. Bundled fee accounts make up 100% of the composite for all periods. Actual investment advisory fees incurred by clients may vary. Wrap fee schedules are provided by independent wrap sponsors and are available upon request from the respective wrap sponsor.

A complete list of composite descriptions is available upon request. Policies for valuing investments, calculating performance, and preparing GIPS Reports are available upon request. The annual composite dispersion is an equal-weighted standard deviation, using gross-of-fee returns, calculated for the accounts in the composite for the entire year. The three-year annualized standard deviation measures the variability of the composite gross returns over the preceding 36-month period. The Value Opportunities Composite contains fully discretionary Value Opportunities wrap accounts. Value Opportunities is a concentrated, value-based, bottom-up portfolio that utilizes stocks from all market capitalizations with a focus on near-term catalysts. Catalysts include reorganizations, turnarounds, and other unique situations that are anticipated to come to fruition in approximately 6-18 months. This short-term investment time frame often leads to high turnover. Because of the concentrated positions, the portfolio is more susceptible to movements of any one holding.

\*\*Results shown for the year 2000 represent partial period performance from April 1, 2000, through December 31, 2000. N/A-Composite Dispersion: Information is not statistically meaningful due to an insufficient number of portfolios in the composite for the entire year. N/A-3yr Std Dev: Composite does not have 3 years of monthly performance history.

#### About Confluence Investment Management LLC

Confluence Investment Management is an independent Registered Investment Advisor located in St. Louis, Missouri, that provides professional portfolio management and advisory services to institutional and individual clients. Confluence's investment philosophy is based upon independent, fundamental research that integrates evaluation of market cycles, macroeconomics and geopolitical analysis with the firm's value-driven, company-specific approach. The portfolio management philosophy begins by assessing risk and follows through by positioning clients to achieve their income and growth objectives.

#### Confluence Value Equities Investment Committee

Mark Keller, CFA Tom Dugan, CFA John Wobbe Dustin Hausladen Blair Brumley, CFA
Daniel Winter, CFA Tore Stole Joe Hanzlik Kaisa Stucke, CFA Brett Mawhiney, CFA

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT A MEMBER OF OUR SALES TEAM:

Ron Pond, CFA | West Michael Kelnosky | North-Central Jim Taylor | Mid-South Wayne Knowles Jason Gantt | East National Sales Director Sr. Regional Sales Director Sr. Regional Sales Director Regional Sales Director Regional Sales Director (314) 526-0914 (314) 526-0759 (314) 526-0364 (314) 526-0622 (314) 526-0469 wknowles@confluenceim.com rpond@confluenceim.com mkelnosky@confluenceim.com igantt@confluenceim.com jtaylor@confluenceim.com

20 ALLEN AVE., STE. 300, ST. LOUIS, MO 63119 • (314) 743-5090 WWW.ConfluenceInvestment.com