

Value Opportunities • Value Equity Strategies

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

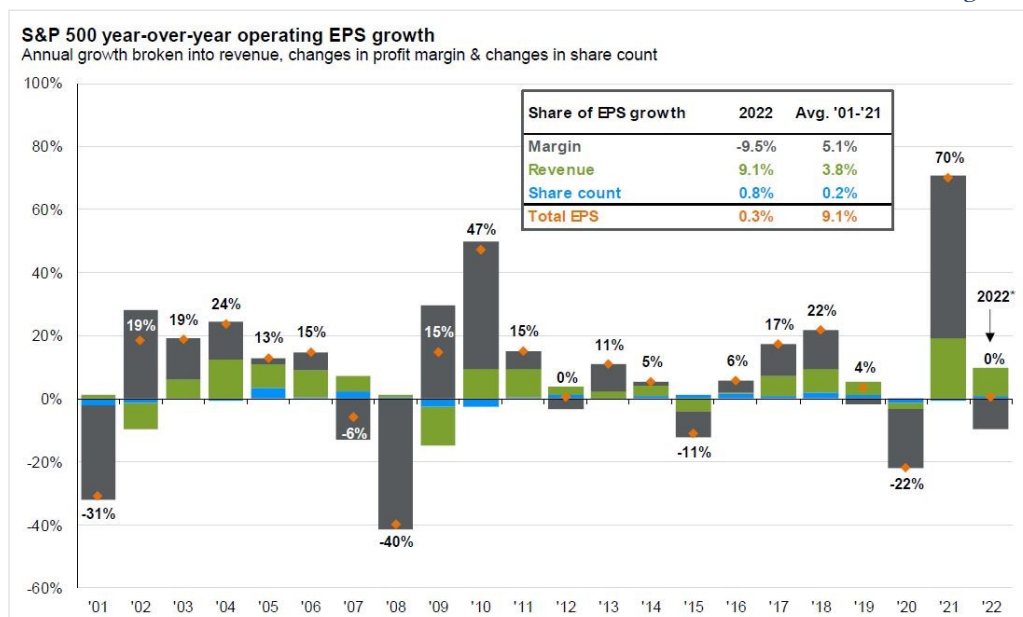
“Waiting for the bottom is folly. What, then, should be the investor’s criteria? The answer’s simple: if something’s cheap — based on the relationship between price and intrinsic value — you should buy, and if it cheapens further, you should buy more.”

- Howard Marks, co-founder at Oaktree Capital Group LLC

The broad equity markets remain in bear market territory as investors continue to grapple with inflation and the ensuing monetary policy response. The Federal Reserve remains adamant that it will take the necessary actions needed to curtail inflation, and while market participants appear reticent of that fact, they are eager for the Fed to pivot toward friendlier monetary policy. This is apparent in the handful of market rallies, five thus far in 2022, that were precipitated by a weak economic data point and lifted the markets between 6% and 17%. These rallies have proven to be short-lived as inflation remains stubbornly elevated and the Fed steadfast in its monetary policy tightening. The Fed has raised the federal funds rate in 2022 from a floor of 0-0.25% to 3.00-3.25%, with the latest increase of 75 bps in late September. The net effect has been upward pressure on longer rates as the 10-year Treasury yield is up from 1.52% at the beginning of the year to 3.83% at quarter end, which has weighed on equity markets and resulted in three consecutive quarters of negative returns for the broad market, as measured by the S&P 500 Index (Q1 -4.6%, Q2 -16.1%, and Q3 -4.9%). Such a poor start to the year was last witnessed in 2008 and leaves the S&P 500 down 23.9% for the year.

The policy tools available to the Federal Reserve to stem inflation, and inflation expectations, are limited and primarily influence demand through the level of rates and/or liquidity (Quantitative Easing/Tightening). Thus far in 2022, the policy effects have been limited as the drawdown in equity markets has been driven primarily by a contraction in the multiple that investors are willing to pay for earnings. As reflected by this first chart from J.P. Morgan Asset Management (Figure 1), revenue and earnings growth have remained positive despite the sharp pullback in the equity markets. Meanwhile, the chart on the next page (Figure 2), also from J.P. Morgan Asset Management, shows the sharp decline in the forward P/E from over 22x to 15.15x. This reflects the dramatic shift in sentiment, as well as concern, for future demand and earnings as Fed policy operates with a lag.

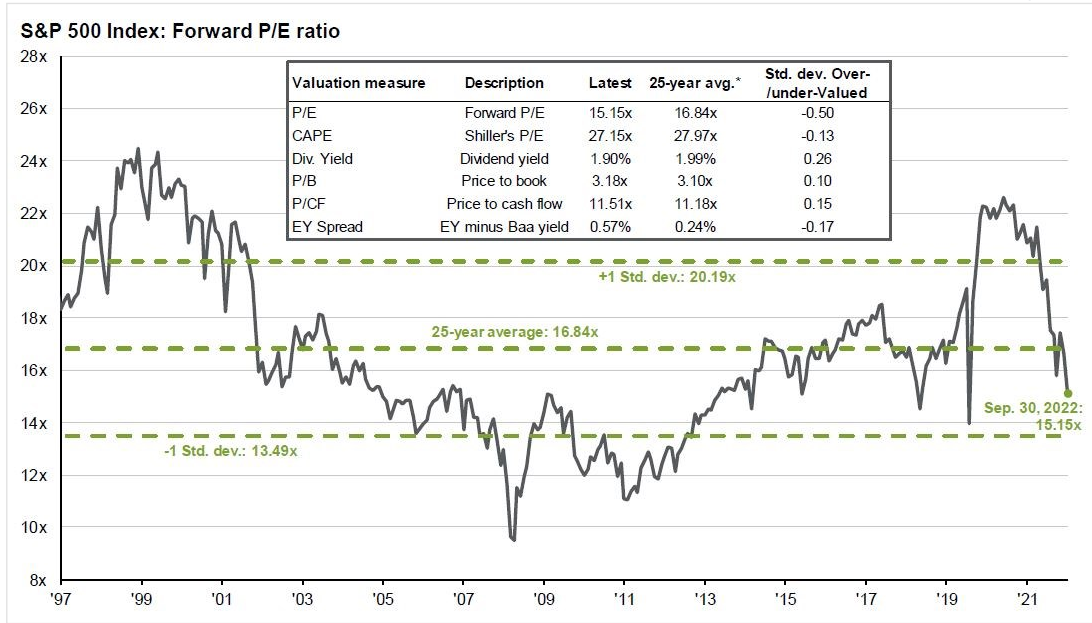
Figure 1



(Chart source: J.P. Morgan Asset Management; Guide to the Markets®, U.S. 4Q2022, as of September 30, 2022)

Market Commentary continued...

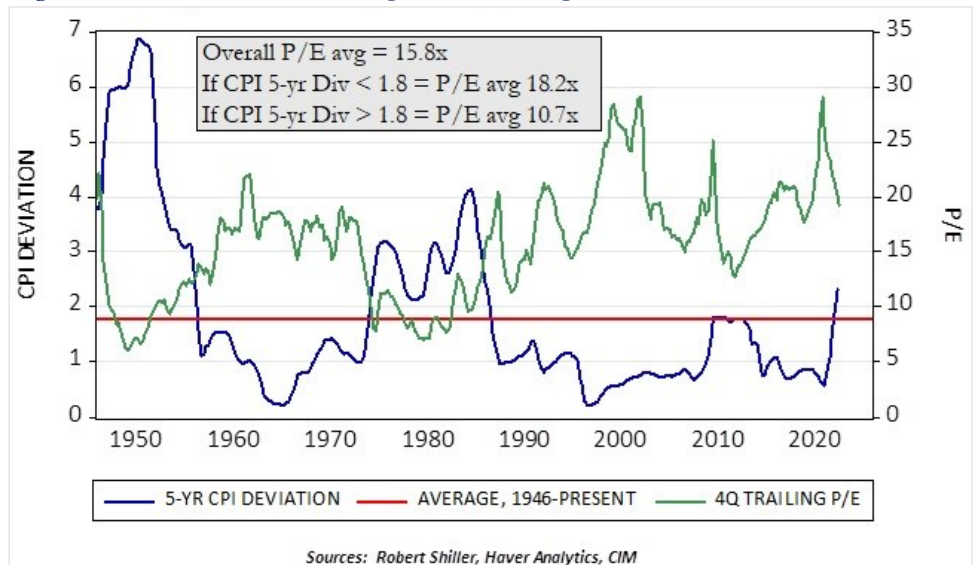
Figure 2



(Chart source: J.P. Morgan Asset Management; Guide to the Markets®, U.S. 4Q2022, as of September 30, 2022)

For investors, the importance of containing inflation is rather straightforward as the present value of a dollar returned in the future is worth less in an inflationary environment. As inflation rises, a higher required return is sought, which elevates the discount rate and lowers the present valuation, i.e., lower earnings multiple. If inflationary expectations become engrained, behavior also changes as purchasing an item at today's price is more advantageous than waiting and paying a higher price later. This lifts current demand and puts additional pressure on supply, causing prices to move even higher and thus triggering an inflation spiral.

Figure 3 4Q S&P 500 Trailing P/E & Rolling 5-Year CPI Standard Deviation



This chart from the Confluence Investment Management macro team (Figure 3) shows the negative impact on P/E multiples during periods of volatile or uncertain inflation. The graph maps the deviation of the Consumer Price Index (CPI) from the five-year rolling CPI and reflects an inverse relationship of lower multiples when the deviation is higher. Investors naturally prefer lower levels of inflation, and inflation expectations, as reflected by the higher multiples afforded in those environments.

Reining in inflation and expectations of inflation has been the policy aim of the Federal Reserve's actions to date. While the impact to the economy will take time to be fully felt, the key issue is how staunch Fed Chair Powell will remain should inflation stay elevated and the economy retracts. The answer may not lie with economics but rather behavioral science as his desire to remain in good stead in Washington is also a factor. For equity investors, the market declines have been sharp and broad-based, with the Energy sector as the exception, and now provide even more compelling valuations for long-term investors. Fortunately, these types of environments often create opportunities for long-term, fundamental investors to uncover some great companies trading at attractive valuations.

Strategy Commentary

Confluence Value Opportunities posted a loss of 9.4% in the third quarter and is down 27.2% year-to-date, trailing the S&P 500 Index which was down 4.9% in the quarter and 23.9% for the year. [Net-of-fees returns for the same periods were -10.1% QTD and -28.8% YTD. See disclosures on last page for fee description; actual investment advisory fees may vary.]

The stock market continued to sell off in the third quarter of 2022, with high inflation and rising interest rates as the primary culprits. Over the past 25 years, stock market sell-offs have usually been met by the “Fed put” (interest rate cuts) to support asset prices, but now inflation is holding the Fed’s feet to the fire to stay the course on higher interest rates. With the dramatic increase in the federal funds rate in 2022 and core inflation hopefully pulling back, the U.S. could have a real (i.e., above-inflation) interest rate in 2023, which would be a return to pre-2008 normalcy and may give the Fed an opportunity to pause.

More specifically, the pullback has been primarily an adjustment to the multiple that equity investors were willing to pay for earnings as revenue and earnings growth remained positive (see previous charts in **Market Commentary** section). The multiple adjustments combined with the geopolitical issues surrounding Russia and oil supplies have negatively impacted investor sentiment but benefited the Energy sector. We have included an excerpt from J.P. Morgan’s *Guide to the Markets*[®] as of September 30, 2022 (*Figure 4*), which reflects the sector weightings and performance of the indexes and reveals that the defensive sectors (Utilities, Consumer Staples, and Health Care) fared relatively well, while Energy was up a whopping 34.9%, far outperforming the other sectors.

Figure 4 Returns and Valuations by Sector

	Energy	Materials	Financials	Industrials	Cons. Disc.	Tech.	Comm. Services*	Real Estate	Health Care	Cons. Staples	Utilities	S&P 500 Index
S&P weight	4.5%	2.5%	11.0%	7.9%	11.7%	26.4%	8.1%	2.8%	15.1%	6.9%	3.1%	100.0%
Russell Growth weight	1.6%	1.4%	3.0%	7.2%	17.1%	42.9%	7.4%	1.6%	12.2%	5.7%	0.0%	100.0%
Russell Value weight	7.8%	4.1%	20.0%	10.0%	6.0%	8.8%	8.0%	4.8%	17.3%	7.2%	6.0%	100.0%
Russell 2000 weight	6.1%	4.0%	17.3%	14.8%	10.2%	12.8%	2.7%	6.4%	18.9%	3.4%	3.4%	100.0%
QTD	2.3	-7.1	-3.1	-4.7	4.4	-6.2	-12.7	-11.0	-5.2	-6.6	-6.0	-4.9
YTD	34.9	-23.7	-21.2	-20.7	-29.9	-31.4	-39.0	-28.8	-13.1	-11.8	-6.5	-23.9

(Source: J.P. Morgan Asset Management; *Guide to the Markets*[®], U.S. 4Q2022, as of September 30, 2022)

Confluence’s Value Opportunities strategy has trailed the S&P 500 year-to-date primarily due to holdings in the Industrials sector (Clarivate and Gates Industrial) and lack of exposure to the Energy and Health Care sectors. This was partially offset by outperformance from our Consumer Discretionary holdings as Booking Holdings was sold at a nice gain in April and Dollar Tree continues to execute on price points above \$1, bringing more product selection and value at a time when consumers really need it. From a company-specific perspective, the strongest contributors were Dollar Tree and J&J Snack Foods (a new position in the second quarter), while the weakest contributors were Gates Industrial, Vontier, and NXP Semiconductors, which all have some cyclical and automotive-related exposure. Upon closer examination, the weakest performers year-to-date have valuations that are extremely attractive for quality growing businesses, with price-to-forward-earnings multiples of 10.3x, 7.6x, 5.3x, and 10.6x for Clarivate, Gates, Vontier, and NXP, respectively. [See contribution data on the next page.]

As shown in the previous “Forward P/E ratio” chart (*Figure 2*), valuations in aggregate (around 15x earnings) have reverted to levels that should begin to provide some downside support. This is especially true in our Value Opportunities portfolio, which is currently trading around 12x earnings for a collection of companies that we believe are higher quality than the S&P 500 in aggregate and have potential catalysts to unlock that value. We are always looking to purchase these types of companies at a discount to intrinsic value, and while there were no changes to the portfolio during the quarter, we are currently evaluating many attractive opportunities.

Outlook

With price-to-earnings multiples now back to more reasonable levels, the next area of focus will be the earnings outlook over the next six months as the rapid increase in the fed funds rate starts to take hold. Ironically, with the economy at full capacity (supply chain, labor, etc.), high demand, which is usually a good thing, can be detrimental because it drives higher inflation. Stated another way, strong economic demand is a good problem to have if the Fed can just get inflation in check without causing a severe recession.

Looking forward, as recession fears and the bear market drag on, at some point enough investors will capitulate to cause a bottom in the market and a base for growth from there. In the meantime, we continue to focus on owning high-quality companies that have pricing power, conservative balance sheets, and the ability to compound earnings over the long term. The current outlook is filled with uncertainty and anxiety in real time, but in hindsight these periods usually provide opportunities to buy great businesses at attractive prices.

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Contribution¹

(YTD as of 9/30/2022)

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.	11.78	0.84
J & J Snack Foods Corp.	3.80	0.10
Booking Holdings Inc.	Sold	(0.39)
Healthcare Services Group Inc.	Sold	(0.40)
Markel Corp.	11.67	(1.36)
Bottom 5		
Frontdoor Inc.	Sold	(3.12)
Clarivate plc	7.22	(3.54)
Gates Industrial Corp. plc	8.96	(3.69)
Vontier Corp.	7.68	(3.89)
NXP Semiconductors N.V.	11.54	(4.23)

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

Performance Composite Returns² (For Periods Ending September 30, 2022)

	Since Inception**	20-Year*	15-Year*	10-Year*	5-Year*	3-Year*	1-Year	YTD	QTD
Value Opportunities									
Pure Gross-of-Fees ³	9.1%	9.4%	7.3%	8.4%	(1.9%)	(3.8%)	(24.3%)	(27.2%)	(9.4%)
Max Net-of-Fees ⁴	6.0%	6.3%	4.2%	5.2%	(4.8%)	(6.7%)	(26.5%)	(28.8%)	(10.1%)
S&P 500	6.0%	9.8%	8.0%	11.7%	9.2%	8.1%	(15.5%)	(23.9%)	(4.9%)
Russell 3000 Value	6.6%	8.7%	5.7%	9.1%	5.1%	4.3%	(11.8%)	(18.0%)	(5.6%)

Calendar Year	Pure Gross-of-Fees ³	Max Net-of-Fees ⁴	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%

*Average annualized returns

See performance disclosures on last page.

**Inception is 4/1/2000

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)

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Disclosures

Market & Strategy Commentary—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.

Investment or investment services mentioned may not be suitable to an investor and the investor should seek advice from an investment professional, if applicable. It is important to review your investment objectives, risk tolerance, and liquidity needs before choosing an investment style or manager. All investments carry a certain degree of risk, including possible loss of principal, that investors should be prepared to bear. Equity securities are subject to market risk and may decline in value due to adverse company, industry, or general economic conditions. There can be no assurance that any investment objective will be achieved or that any investment will be profitable or avoid incurring losses.

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.

1 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.

2 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, 2021. 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.

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The Value Opportunities Strategy was inception 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.

³ Pure gross returns are shown as supplemental information to the disclosures required by the GIPS® standards.

⁴ 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.