



Portfolio Commentary

Navigator® Small Cap Core U.S. Equity

Portfolio Manager



Tony Soslow, CFA®
Co-Head of Equity

Top Contributors as of September 30, 2022

Company Name	Avg. Weight (%)	Contribution to Return (%)
UFP Industries, Inc.	1.74	0.50
Synaptics Incorporated	0.78	0.29
Pinnacle Financial Partners, Inc.	2.59	0.26

Top Detractors as of September 30, 2022

Company Name	Avg. Weight (%)	Contribution to Return (%)
Photronics, Inc.	0.92	-0.71
Duckhorn Portfolio, Inc.	1.37	-0.58
Malibu Boats, Inc. Class A	0.74	-0.43

Source: Factset. For illustrative purposes only. Past performance does not guarantee future results. The holdings identified do not represent all of the securities purchased, sold or recommended for advisory clients. In the chart above, "weight" is the average percentage weight of the holding during the period, and "contribution" is the contribution to overall performance during the period. To obtain the calculation methodology and a list showing every holding's contribution to the overall composite during the period, contact: PortfolioAnalytics@ccmg.com.

Fed's Inflation Focus and Earnings Downtraff Drive Equities Lower

Market Review

The global equity bear market resumed in uniformity in September as most broad indices declined nearly 9%. Continuing their fight against headline inflation, the U.S. Central Bank lifted the federal funds rate 0.75% for the 3rd consecutive meeting to 3.00-3.25%. Markets anticipate continued tightening into Q1 2023 as the battle to drive high headline inflation back down to 2.00% remains the U.S. Central Bank's stated singular purpose. Just as Mike Tyson famously said – "Everyone has a plan until they get punched in the mouth," We anticipate that the Fed's plan may again get interrupted by changes in economic or credit conditions. To this end, Vice Chairwoman Lael Brainard said last week (potentially in reaction to either rumored Credit Suisse solvency issues and/or U.K. pound weakness) – "the risks may be getting more balanced."

Profit Margin Cycle Interrupted

After expanding for nearly ten years on the back of declining interest rates, lower tax rates, and cost benefits from offshoring and trade, Institutional Brokers' Estimate System (IBES) earnings data suggest that S&P 500 profit margins peaked in Q2 2021. With interest rates higher, credit spreads wider, labor market tightness, Russian-Ukraine supply constraints, and U.S.-China trade relations weakened, can we expect profit margins to resume their prior uptrend? We believe profit margin expectations in both the current earnings slowdown and future recovery will meaningfully determine ending Price to Earnings ("P/E") and P/Cash Flow ratios and thus impact how we value equities and their cycle returns moving forward. At first glance, the current low international, small, and mid-cap P/E ratio of 12.5 appears to be a great potential starting point for long-term investors, especially if long-term inflation matches market expectations and recent history of near 3%.

Third Quarter Portfolio Highlights

- Navigator® Small Cap remains fully invested with 59.1% of the portfolio in small-cap stocks with the balance in mid-cap stocks and cash.
- The portfolio continues to focus on those anti-fragile small-cap companies which we believe will continue to see strong business momentum despite rising inflation and tight labor market conditions.
- Consumer Discretionary, Financials, Healthcare, Industrials, and Information Technology represent our largest sector weights, each greater than 10%.
- Our positioning in Industrials and Financials helped relative performance, while our positioning in Healthcare and Consumer Discretionary acted as a drag.
- During the quarter, to benefit from improving business fundamentals, we added Voya Financial, Sprouts Farmers Market, and Exelixis. The three most

Past performance is not indicative of future results.
This is not a recommendation to buy or sell a particular security. Please see attached disclosures.



recent exits were Taylor Morrison, Amphastar Pharmaceuticals, and The Duckhorn Portfolio.

- The top three contributors to absolute portfolio return in the quarter for the Small Cap portfolio were UFPI Industries, Synaptics, and Pinnacle Financial Partners. The top three detractors for absolute portfolio return were Photonics, The Duckhorn Portfolio, and Malibu Boats.

Positioning and Outlook

Portfolios began the quarter well-positioned for rising corporate finance rates, a consumer constrained by higher food and energy costs, and continued Fed tightening. Our focus on anti-fragile companies helped portfolios decline less than their benchmarks, however, our Small and SMID Cap strategies could not overcome a surge in biotech early in the quarter. As the Fed remains determined to contain inflation,

we continue to anticipate additional tightening, slower economic growth, growing inventories, and a continuation of the negative earnings revision cycle. As prices have declined and both the Fed tightening and earnings revision cycle are maturing, we have growing confidence that equity investors could expect typical equity market cycle returns from this point forward. P/E ratios for our Small Cap, SMID Cap and ADR/International Equity strategies near 12 and thus offer earnings yields – a historically important component of long-term returns – over 8%. As upward changes in finance rates tends to hurt both high duration and fragile companies the most – and we don't know the precise end and impact of Fed tightening – we are continuing to prefer companies with more consistent and less cyclical cashflows.

The views expressed are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of Clark Capital Management Group. The opinions referenced are as of the date of publication and are subject to change due to changes in the market or economic conditions and may not necessarily come to pass. There is no guarantee of the future performance of any Clark Capital investments portfolio. Material presented has been derived from sources considered to be reliable, but the accuracy and completeness cannot be guaranteed. Nothing herein should be construed as a solicitation, recommendation or an offer to buy, sell or hold any securities, other investments or to adopt any investment strategy or strategies. For educational use only. This information is not intended to serve as investment advice. This material is not intended to be relied upon as a forecast or research. The investment or strategy discussed may not be suitable for all investors. Investors must make their own decisions based on their specific investment objectives and financial circumstances. Past performance does not guarantee future results.

This document may contain certain information that constitutes forward-looking statements which can be identified by the use of forward-looking terminology such as "may," "expect," "will," "hope," "forecast," "intend," "target," "believe," and/or comparable terminology (or the negative thereof). Forward looking statements cannot be guaranteed. No assurance, representation, or warranty is made by any person that any of Clark Capital's assumptions, expectations, objectives, and/or goals will be achieved. Nothing contained in this document may be relied upon as a guarantee, promise, assurance, or representation as to the future.

Equity securities are subject to price fluctuation and possible loss of principal. Stock markets tend to move in cycles, with periods of rising prices and periods of falling prices. Certain investment strategies tend to increase the total risk of an investment (relative to the broader market). Strategies that concentrate their investments in limited sectors are more vulnerable to adverse market, economic, regulatory, political, or other developments affecting those sectors

The volatility (beta) of a client's portfolio may be greater or less than its respective benchmark. It is not possible to invest in these indices. The securities of mid-cap companies may be subject to more abrupt or erratic market movements and may have lower trading volumes.

Antifragile companies are those which possess a large majority of strong balance sheet, income statement and other metrics such as debt-to-equity, gross margins, earnings variability - which have shown to demonstrate less stock price volatility on a going forward basis. Companies with poor credit metrics, high financial and operating leverage high historically been more fragile to adverse changes in economic and earnings conditions.

The S&P 500 measures the performance of the 500 leading companies in leading industries of the U.S. economy, capturing 75% of U.S. equities. Index returns include the reinvestment of income and dividends. The returns for these unmanaged indexes do not include any transaction costs, management fees or other costs. It is not possible to make an investment directly in any index.

The price-to-earnings ratio is the ratio for valuing a company that measures its current share price relative to its earnings per share (EPS). The price-to-earnings ratio is also sometimes known as the price multiple or the earnings multiple.

Foreign markets are any markets outside of a company's own country. Selling in foreign markets involves dealing with different languages, cultures, laws, rules, regulations and requirements.

Clark Capital Management Group, Inc. is an investment adviser registered with the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission. Registration does not imply a certain level of skill or training. More information about Clark Capital's advisory services and fees can be found in its Form ADV which is available upon request. CCM-508