



## Portfolio Commentary

## Navigator® SMID Cap Core U.S. Equity

## Portfolio Manager



**Tony Soslow, CFA®**  
Co-Head of Equity

## Top Contributors as of December 31, 2022

Company Name	Avg. Weight (%)	Contribution to Return (%)
Atkore Inc	3.24	1.11
United Therapeutics Corporation	2.46	0.69
EMCOR Group, Inc.	2.64	0.65

## Top Detractors as of December 31, 2022

Company Name	Avg. Weight (%)	Contribution to Return (%)
Generac Holdings Inc.	0.25	-0.55
Stride, Inc.	1.35	-0.47
Lantheus Holdings Inc	0.45	-0.26

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.

## December's Equity Losses Typify 2022's Weak Year

## Market Review

Equity markets resumed their decline in December as relative performance amongst the indices continued in rank order. As 10-year U.S. Treasury yields advanced from 0.27% to 3.88%, it was not surprising that the Russell 1000 Value and MSCI ACWI Ex-US declined less (-4.1% and -2.0%, respectively) while the Russell 1000 Growth and Russell 2000 fell the most (-7.7% and -6.5%, respectively). The U.S. central bank's lifting of the Fed Funds Target Rate lower bound by "just" 0.50% to 4.25% did little to assuage equity investors as higher rates provide meaningful competition to equities and reduce the net present value of future cash flows. For perspective, a year earlier, the lower bound was 0% and 10-year Treasuries yielded just 1.63%.

For the year, the Russell 1000 Growth Index declined 29.14%, dragged down by large companies in the Communications, Consumer Discretionary, and Information Technology sectors. Despite the rapid increase in interest rates throughout the year, U.S. large-cap value's decline of just 7.6% speaks to its relative value at the beginning of the year, the steadiness of its earnings growth, and its lower duration characteristics. More of its value is in the "here and now" and not in the distant future.

Although the Navigator® equity portfolios all experienced losses during 2022, their focus on what we believe are higher quality and more antifragile companies helped mitigate the extreme declines associated with high-flying/expensive or low-quality company indices.

Surprisingly, the decline in the Core PCE in November to 4.7% did little to alter the Fed's spoken resolve to slow or soften the rate or level of forthcoming interest rate hikes. Chairman Jerome Powell appears hellbent – insistently sticking to his 2% inflation target as tight labor markets hover near full employment.

Recognizing that goods inflation has clearly peaked and also acknowledging that current housing services inflation clearly lags the decline in new rent trends, my hope is that the Fed will not fixate on the other services inflation dominated by wage trends. As Fed policy does little or nothing to alter labor supply, continuing to focus on the level of wage growth may potentially lead them to a hiking regime that produces an undesired hard landing.

## Fourth Quarter Portfolio Highlights

- The Navigator® SMID Cap portfolio remains fully invested with 53.5% of the portfolio in mid-cap stocks with the balance in small-cap stocks and cash.
- As the economic slowdown pushes earnings estimates lower for a growing portion of portfolio holdings, we must balance the portfolio between what we believe are high quality companies, which continue to benefit from their current business trends and those highly antifragile, undervalued companies that we believe will survive the current downturn and thrive during the next economic recovery.

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



- Financials, Healthcare, Industrials, and Information Technology represent our largest sector weights, each greater than 14%.
- Our positioning in Information Technology and Healthcare helped relative performance, while positioning in Consumer Discretionary and Financials acted as a drag.
- During the quarter, the three most recent adds to the portfolio were Shoe Carnival, Allison Transmission, and Integra Lifesciences. The three most recent exits were Cracker Barrel, Dorman Products, and Stride.
- The top three contributors to absolute portfolio return in the were Atkore, United Therapeutics, and EMCOR. The top three detractors were Generac, Stride, and Lantheus Holdings.

## Positioning and Outlook

While portfolios began the quarter defensively positioned to withstand the impact of higher interest rates, continued Fed tightening, and slowing earnings growth, each strategy outperformed their respective benchmarks in a strong equity market.

International equity performance advanced as dollar strength earlier in the year combined with extreme relative valuations enhanced their attractiveness. As inflation begins to recede and Fed tightening intensity wanes, portfolios

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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-

will need to take a more aggressive stance – focusing on those companies which can withstand a decline in earnings growth rates and higher financing rates and then thrive in the upcoming recovery and Fed pause.

Thus far, the earnings recession has "rolled" from large ticket consumer discretionary to software and then to hardware and semiconductors. Industries dependent on financing or the financing of customer projects have also been harmed such as drug discovery, housing, and materials. As Staples, steady Healthcare providers, and Energy have successfully navigated the slowdown, we believe their relative price gains now make them vulnerable to a drop-off in demand, profit margin deterioration, or a shift to depressed sectors beginning their cyclical rebound.

Although our focus on more antifragile companies helped portfolios both decline less in Q3 and advance more in Q4, we acknowledge a need to adjust portfolios later in the year as earnings declines trough and Fed determination to contain inflation potentially shifts back to full employment. As noted last quarter, the decline in P/E ratios for our Small Cap, SMID Cap and ADR/International Equity strategies to near 12 and thus offer earnings yields (a historically important component of long-term returns) over 8%, gives us confidence that returns from 2022Q3 forward will approximate those of a typical market cycle.

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 Russell 1000 Value Index measures the performance of the large-cap value segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell 1000 companies with lower price-to-book ratios and lower expected growth values.

The Russell 1000 Growth Index measures the performance of the large-cap growth segment of the U.S. equity universe. It includes those Russell 1000 Index companies with higher price-to-book ratios and higher forecasted growth values.

The Russell 2000 Index measures the performance of the 2000 smallest U.S. companies based on total market capitalization in the Russell 3000, which represents approximately 10% of Russell 3000 total market capitalization.

The MSCI ACWI ex USA Index is a float-adjusted market capitalization index that is designed to measure the combined equity market performance of large- and mid-cap securities in developed and emerging market countries excluding the United States.

The core PCE price index measures the prices paid by consumers for goods and services without the volatility caused by movements in food and energy prices to reveal underlying inflation trends as a guarantee, promise, assurance, or representation as to the future.

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.

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