

## Investment Perspectives

December 2025

# Discovering Mid Caps

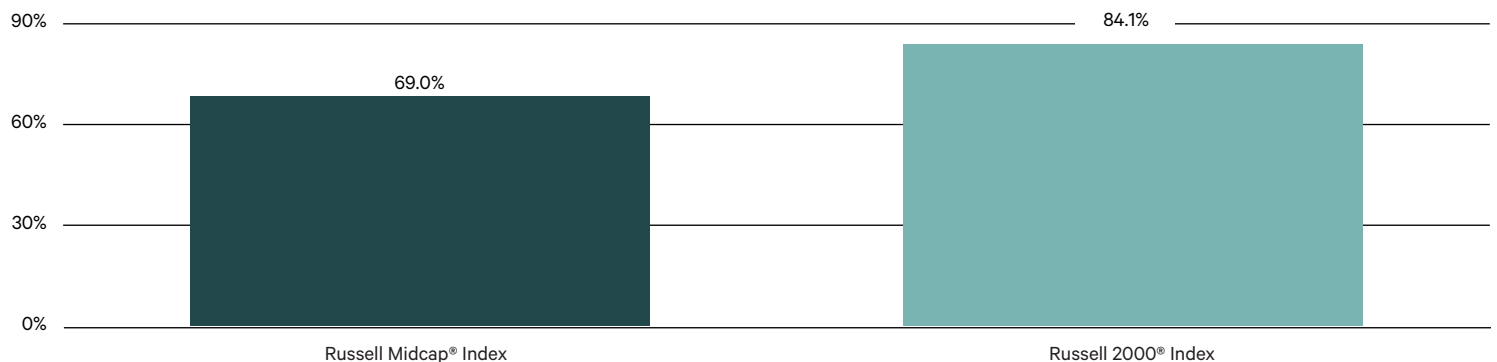
*We believe the mid-cap segment of the equity market is an overlooked category, falling between headline-grabbing and widely followed large caps and small caps known for their high growth potential. In our experience, mid-caps—generally defined as companies between \$2 billion and \$10 billion in market capitalization, with some reaching north of \$30 billion—have historically outperformed both small and large caps, but don’t get much investor attention. We have found that the lines between market-cap categorizations can be blurry, which could lead many investors to believe that owning stocks in the large and small categories provides sufficient exposure across the overall spectrum. In fact, data point to a clear underrepresentation of the mid-cap asset class. Mid caps make up about 18% of the overall equity market<sup>1</sup>, but actual investments into the asset class only account for about 10.7% of all invested assets<sup>2</sup>.*

*In our view, those investors lacking a dedicated allocation to mid caps may be missing a crucial segment. Mid-cap stocks have had an impressive run over the past couple of decades and they have shown to be a positive addition to a mixed portfolio of equities, both in terms of boosting portfolio returns and lowering risk.*

## Historical Long-Term Outperformance Driven by Fundamental Strengths

As we see it, mid-cap stocks have strong fundamental characteristics that position the asset class as having some of the best attributes of its large- and small-cap counterparts. Large caps may be well established and more likely to pay dividends but may have limited growth potential. Small caps may come with the allure of outsized growth but may exhibit more volatility and greater dependence on debt. We think mid caps find their place in between: they are small enough that they may experience relatively high growth rates but mature enough that they have established business plans, stability and experienced management.

### EARNINGS VARIABILITY – PAST 10 YEARS<sup>3</sup>



1. Data as of December 31, 2025. Data is obtained from FactSet and is assumed to be reliable.

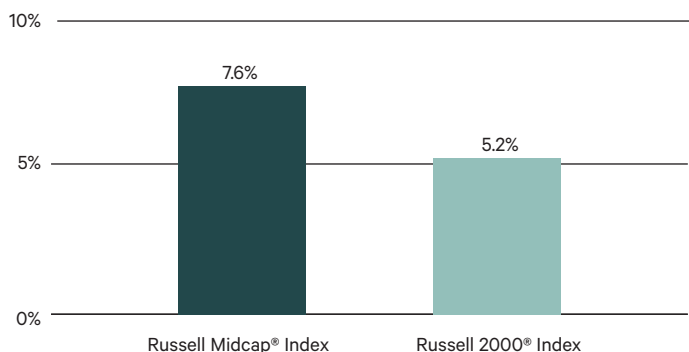
2. Data as of December 31, 2025. Data is obtained from Strategas and is assumed to be reliable.

3. Data presented in the chart above is for the period ending December 31, 2025. Data is obtained from BNY Mellon and is assumed to be reliable. Other principal consultant firms may use different algorithms to calculate selected statistics. Estimates are based on certain assumptions and historical information. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

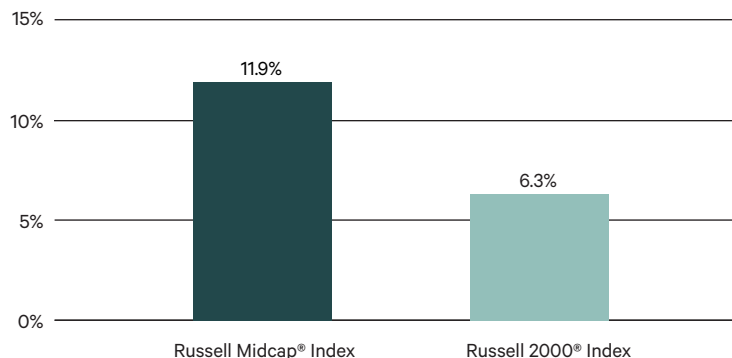
The comparison of earnings variability shows that mid-cap companies exhibit more consistency in profitability relative to their small-cap peers.

Mid caps also have shown higher income potential than small caps while exhibiting a greater ability to generate capital, another indication of their strong financials.

**DIVIDEND PER SHARE GROWTH – PAST 10 YEARS**



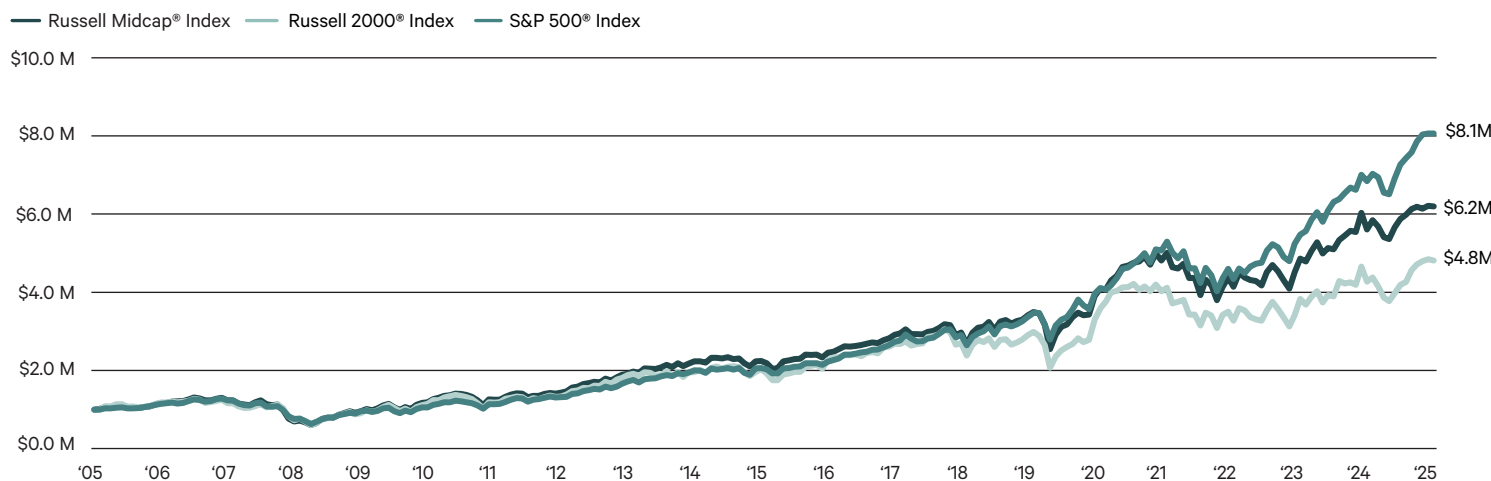
**CAPITAL GENERATION<sup>4</sup>**



Data presented in the charts above is for the period ending December 31, 2025. Data is obtained from BNY Mellon and is assumed to be reliable. Other principal consultant firms may use different algorithms to calculate selected statistics. Estimates are based on certain assumptions and historical information. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

These fundamental characteristics of mid-cap stocks are key reasons behind their steady outperformance over the past 20 years relative to their larger and smaller peers.

**GROWTH OF \$1 MILLION**



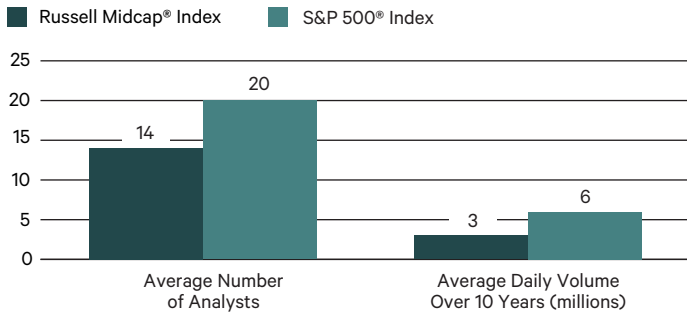
Data presented is for the 20 years ending December 31, 2025. Data is obtained from FactSet Research Systems and is assumed to be reliable. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

## The Value of Active Management

Data indicate that mid-cap equities constitute an overlooked area of the stock market, creating opportunities to add value with active management. Mid caps, for instance, receive significantly less research coverage than large caps, as measured by the number of analysts covering member companies of the respective indices. Trading activity echoes this notion, as large caps experienced average daily volume of 6.5 million shares over the past 10 years, more than double that of mid caps at 2.5 million.

4. Capital generation represents the rate at which companies generate equity capital.

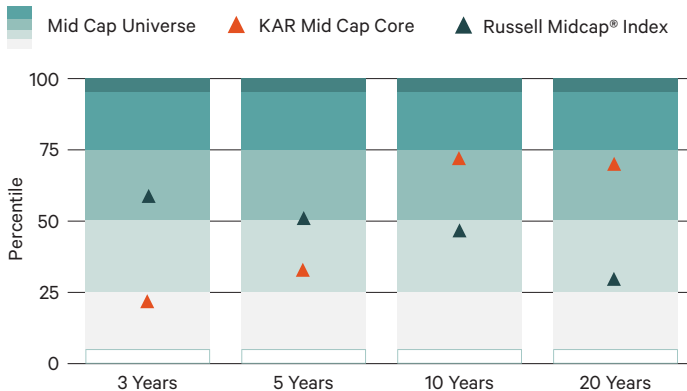
**LESS COVERAGE, ACTIVITY IN MID SEGMENT**



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Furthermore, the analysis on this page compares passive investing in the mid-cap category, represented by the Russell Midcap Index, against active investing, with manager return breakdowns shown in quartiles. It is clear that the passive approach lags at least half of all active managers across the time periods.

**MID CAP UNIVERSE COMPARISON - ANNUALIZED RETURNS**



Data presented is for the period ending December 31, 2025. The eVestment Mid Cap Core Universe includes 257, 249, 211 and 148 managers for the 3, 5, 10 and 20 Year time periods, respectively, categorized in the mid cap core asset class by eVestment. KAR does not pay any fees to be included in the eVestment Mid Cap Core Universe or for the ranking itself. KAR does pay fees for the use of certain products and services provided by eVestment. eVestment rankings are based on gross of fee returns. Gross of fee returns will be reduced by investment managements fees and other expenses that may be incurred in the management of the account. Management fees are described in KAR's Form ADV Part 2A, which is available upon request and can also be found at <https://kayne.com/wp-content/uploads/ADV-Part-2A.pdf>. Returns could be reduced or losses incurred due to currency fluctuations. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

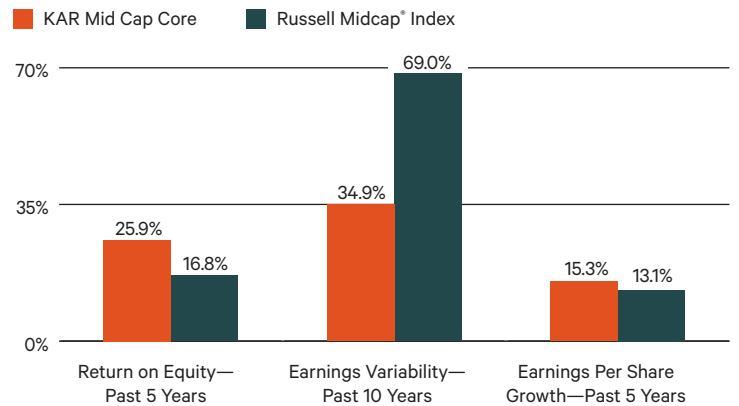
For instance, over the past 20 years, the index gained 9.49% versus the median return of 9.99% among the 148 managers studied. We believe this suggests there is the potential for greater returns in active management than in passive participation. This chart also includes the returns of the KAR Mid Cap Core strategy across the relevant time periods since inception. For the 5-year period, passive

investment via the index gained 8.67%, while the KAR Mid Cap Core strategy returned 6.45% gross of fees and 5.08% net of fees. In our view, this clearly illustrates there is room for higher performance in active management and particularly via the KAR strategy.

**Why Kayne Anderson Rudnick?**

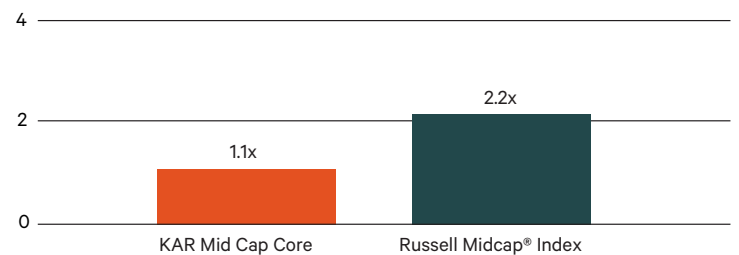
The KAR Mid Cap Core strategy, since its inception in January 2000, has been capturing that very opportunity for greater risk-adjusted returns in active management by sticking to a disciplined research process and strict guidelines for quality investments. We believe that the quality of the underlying businesses owned create a portfolio with solid fundamental characteristics that can lead to strong relative performance in both good and bad markets.

**FUNDAMENTAL CHARACTERISTICS**



Data presented is for the periods ending December 31, 2025. Data is obtained from BNY Mellon and is assumed to be reliable. Other principal consultant firms may use different algorithms to calculate selected statistics. Estimates are based on certain assumptions and historical information. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

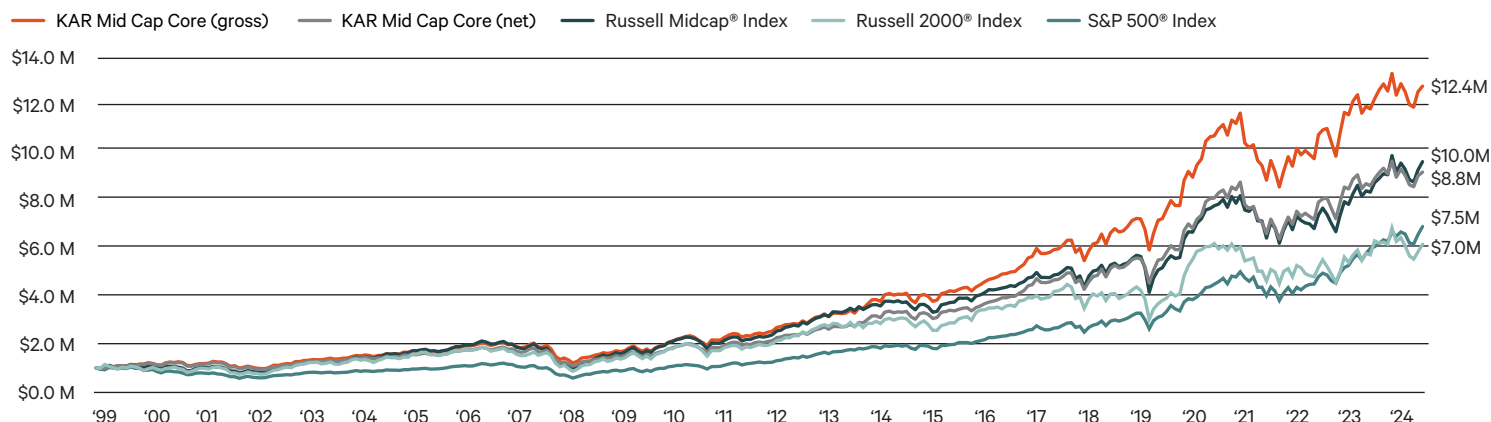
**DEBT/EBITDA\***



\*KAR utilizes the interquartile method when calculating Debt/EBITDA. The interquartile method excludes outliers from an aggregate statistic such as weighted average. The interquartile method does not assume that data from the top or bottom of the distribution are outliers—only the extreme ends are excluded—and that it can be applied consistently as a quantitative method for most fundamental characteristics. Debt/EBITDA utilizes net debt for the calculation. Data presented is for the period ending December 31, 2025. Data is obtained from FactSet Research Systems and is assumed to be reliable. Other principal consultant firms may use different algorithms to calculate selected statistics. Estimates are based on certain assumptions and historical information. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

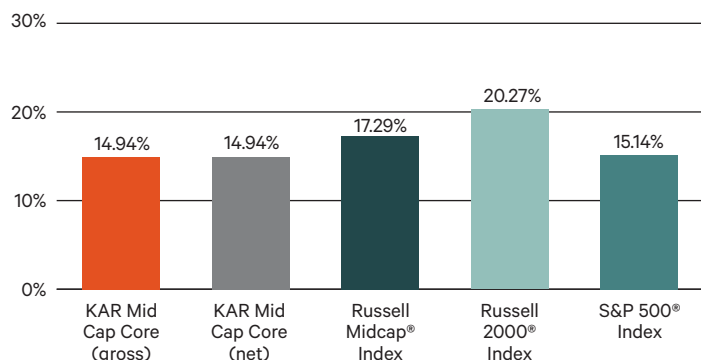
We believe that we are laying the groundwork for greater returns for our investors when we concentrate on finding quality businesses and constructing a strong portfolio. Such commitment has allowed the KAR Mid Cap Core portfolio to exhibit meaningful outperformance with less risk since inception relative to its benchmark and the large- and small-cap indices.

**GROWTH OF \$1 MILLION**



The chart reflects cumulative returns for KAR Mid Cap Core since inception of December 31, 1999 through December 31, 2025. Data is obtained from FactSet Research Systems and is assumed to be reliable. This information is being provided by Kayne Anderson Rudnick Investment Management, LLC (“KAR”) for illustrative purposes only. This material is deemed supplemental and complements the performance and disclosure presented below. Fees presented on the Disclosure page could vary from the assumed fee in the net-of-fee calculation, as actual fees paid by a particular client account differ depending on a variety of factors including, but not limited to, business unit and size of mandate. The fee used on the Disclosure page utilizes an assumed maximum fee across the firm’s business units, which is further detailed on that page. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.** Returns could be reduced, or losses incurred, due to currency fluctuations.

**STANDARD DEVIATION**



Data presented is for the period since inception of January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2025. Data is obtained from FactSet Research Systems and is assumed to be reliable. Please see important disclosures below regarding gross and net performance. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results.**

**ANNUALIZED RETURNS**

	1 Year	5 Years	10 Years
KAR Mid Cap Core (gross)	1.66%	6.45%	12.15%
KAR Mid Cap Core (net)	0.35%	5.08%	10.71%
Russell Midcap® Index	10.60%	8.67%	11.01%

**Conclusion**

From our perspective, the risk-return profile provided by the mid-cap segment is far from middling. In our view, the analyses highlight the strong fundamentals of the asset class, which help to contribute to greater returns. We believe mid-cap stocks merit a meaningful allocation in any well-diversified equity portfolio.

The performance figures presented above are final. Any net of fees returns shown reflect the payment of investment management fees and in some instances, other fees and expenses, while any gross of fees returns shown do not. For any gross of fees returns shown, a client’s return will be reduced over time by the investment management fees and other expenses their account incurs over time as a client are compounded. All rates of return include reinvested dividends and other earnings. Current performance may be lower or higher than the performance data shown. To the extent actual performance results are shown in comparison to an index, the index is not actively managed and does not reflect the deduction of any investment management or other fees and expenses. While the securities comprising any such index are not identical to those in the composite, KAR believes this comparison may be useful in evaluating performance. Indices are not available for direct investment. **Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Returns could be reduced, or losses incurred, due to currency fluctuations.**

# Disclosure

Year	Composite Gross Return (%)	Composite Net Return (%)	Russell Midcap <sup>*</sup> Index Return (%)	Composite 3-Yr Std Dev (%)	Benchmark 3-Yr Std Dev (%)	Number of Accounts	Internal Dispersion (%)	Composite Assets (\$ Millions)	Firm Assets (\$ Millions)
2015	3.37	2.03	(2.44)	11.96	11.00	15	0.44	40	8,095
2016	12.32	10.88	13.80	12.31	11.72	22	0.36	79	9,989
2017	26.13	24.53	18.52	10.76	10.51	72	0.23	170	14,609
2018	(3.21)	(4.46)	(9.06)	11.33	12.15	181	0.30	352	17,840
2019	32.17	30.50	30.54	12.49	13.08	323	0.39	700	25,685
2020	27.08	25.47	17.10	18.88	22.13	362	1.03	1,214	39,582
2021	26.42	24.82	22.58	17.65	20.84	467	0.27	1,946	47,269
2022	(19.04)	(20.11)	(17.32)	21.10	23.95	584	0.30	1,738	33,531
2023	23.75	22.17	17.23	18.95	19.38	692	0.54	2,799	41,186
2024	6.13	4.77	15.34	19.17	20.25	891	0.20	4,336	45,494

The Russell Midcap<sup>®</sup> Index and Russell 1000<sup>®</sup> Index are trademarks/service marks of Frank Russell Company. Russell<sup>®</sup> is a trademark of Frank Russell Company.

KAR (as defined below) claims compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS<sup>®</sup>) and has prepared and presented this report in compliance with the GIPS<sup>®</sup> standards. KAR has been independently verified for the period from January 1, 1999 through December 31, 2024.

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, 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.

The Mid Cap Core Composite has had a performance examination for the period from January 1, 2000 through December 31, 2024. The verification and performance examination reports are available upon request.

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The composite includes all fully discretionary institutional and pooled Mid Cap Core Portfolios. Mid Cap Core Portfolios are invested in equity securities with market capitalizations consistent with the Russell Midcap<sup>®</sup> Index, that have market control, rising free cash flow, shareholder-oriented management, strong consistent profit growth and low-debt balance sheets. For comparison purposes, the composite is measured against the Russell Midcap<sup>®</sup> Index. The Russell Midcap<sup>®</sup> Index is a market capitalization-weighted index of the 800 smallest companies in the Russell 1000<sup>®</sup> Index, which comprises the 1,000 largest U.S. companies. The index is calculated on a total-return basis with dividends reinvested. Benchmark returns are not covered by

the report of the independent verifiers. The inception date of the composite is January 2000. The composite was created in January 2000. Policies for valuing investments, calculating performance, and preparing GIPS Reports are available upon request. The firm’s list of composite descriptions, list of broad distribution pooled fund and the list of limited distribution pooled funds descriptions are available upon request.

The model management fee used for the net returns in this table is 1.30% for all periods presented. The standard Institutional management fee schedule currently in effect is as follows: 0.75% for the first \$25 million; 0.65% on the next \$25 million; 0.55% on the next \$50 million; 0.50% on the balance. The maximum Wealth Advisory Services Fee in effect is 1.30% for all assets, which breaks out as follows: 1.00% for the first \$3 million; 0.80% on the next \$2 million; 0.70% on the next \$5 million; 0.60% on the balance; with an additional 0.30% for any assets invested in separately managed accounts strategies. The standard investment advisory fee schedule currently in effect for clients not engaging in Wealth Advisory Services is 1.00%. Actual management fees charged may vary depending on applicable fee schedules and portfolio size, among other things. Additional information may be found in Part 2A of Form ADV, which is available on request. The performance information is supplied for reference. Past performance is no guarantee of future results. Results will vary among accounts. The U.S. dollar is the currency used to express performance. Returns are presented net of transaction fees and include the reinvestment of all income. Gross returns will be reduced by investment management fees and other expenses that may be incurred in the management of the account. Model net returns have been calculated by deducting 1/12th of the highest tier of the standard management fee schedule in effect for the respective period from the gross composite returns on a monthly basis.

Internal dispersion is calculated using the asset-weighted standard deviation of annual gross returns for accounts in the composite for the entire year. For those years when less than five accounts were included for the full year, no dispersion measure is presented. The three-year annualized ex-post standard deviation measures the variability of the composite (using gross returns) and the benchmark for the 36-month period.

## GLOSSARY

**Earnings Variability (Past 10 Years):** Measures the variability of annual earnings per share over the last 10 years. **Debt/EBITDA:** Debt/EBITDA leverages a top-down approach and is calculated based on operating income – cost of sales – SGA (selling, general and administrative expenses) – other operating expenses + depreciation & amortization. **Standard Deviation:** Measures variability of returns around the average return for an investment portfolio. Higher standard deviation suggests greater risk.

## INDEX DEFINITIONS

The S&P 500<sup>®</sup> Index is a market capitalization-weighted index which includes 500 of the largest companies in leading industries of the U.S. economy. The indices are calculated on a total return basis with dividends reinvested. The indices are unmanaged, their returns do not reflect any fees, expenses, or sales charges, and are not available for direct investment.

