

Firm

QUARTERLY COMMENTARY

September 30, 2022

Assets*	\$3,673 MM
Employee Ownership	100%
Avg Years Inv Experience	26
Inception	2009
Location	Los Angeles, CA

Granite Small Core Equity

Assets*	\$1,644 MM
Turnover (12 months)	52%
Cash	4.08%
Benchmark	Russell 2000® Total
Inception	August 1, 2007

Portfolio Management & Experience

Lead Portfolio Manager

Jeffrey J. Hoo, CFA 25 Years
Principal, Portfolio Manager

Co-Portfolio Managers/Analysts

Peter O. Lopez 29 Years
Principal, Portfolio Manager

Joshua D. Shaskan, CFA 28 Years
Principal, Portfolio Manager

Pankaj R. Chandak, CFA 10 Years
Principal, Portfolio Manager

Emerson T. Whitley, CFA 18 Years
Principal, Research Analyst

Jeanne S. Wong, CFA 21 Years
Principal, Research Analyst

Andrew Magill, CFA 6 Years
Research Analyst

Supporting Team

Geoffrey I. Edelstein, CFA 30 Years
Principal, Portfolio Manager

Edward S. Han 29 Years
Principal, Portfolio Manager

Gary U. Rolle, CFA 56 Years
Principal, Portfolio Manager

Erik U. Rolle 20 Years
Principal, Portfolio Manager

Solmaz Emami, CFA 18 Years
Principal, Trader, Research Analyst

3rd Quarter Review

Nearly all major equity indices declined again in the third quarter amid significant volatility due to the continued headwind from tightening monetary policy resulting from persistently high inflation. The S&P 500 Total Return (including dividends) index declined 4.9% in the third quarter, the Dow Jones Industrial Average fell 6.7%, while the tech-heavy Nasdaq and smaller-capitalization Russell 2000 Indices declined by 4.1% and 2.2% respectively. Over the past year, the market has given back much of the gains that were enjoyed during Covid, with many individual stocks declining back to or below their pre-Covid 2019 levels. Energy prices remain elevated from the ongoing war in Ukraine. The U.S. Dollar continues to strengthen as the Federal Reserve (Fed) raises rates, [which attracts more demand for the currency]. This is creating pressure on multinational companies' overseas earnings and makes U.S. goods less competitive as earnings in foreign currencies are translated back into more valuable Dollars. Earnings reports and guidance from companies will be a key focal point for investors exiting the year. The market declines thus far have chiefly been driven by multiple compression in equities. Looking forward, we believe the risk to stock prices could stem more from potential reductions in earnings results and projections. Concerns have grown that current consensus estimates may still be too high considering the pressures from inflation, tightening monetary policy, continued dollar strength, lingering supply chain challenges, and an increasingly challenging consumer and business demand backdrop.

Fed Chair Jerome Powell pushed back against any narrative that a pivot to a more relaxed monetary policy would materialize soon. His messaging, along with the remainder of the key Fed Governors, during the quarter was clear: more tightening will be needed to fight inflation back down to their 2% target level. Inflation measures remain significantly higher than desired levels. Recent core (excluding food and energy) Consumer Price Index (CPI) readings remain more elevated than expected or hoped, continuing to rise month-over-month, while the annualized core CPI inflation also increased greater than expectations. The Fed's preferred measure of inflation, the Personal Consumption Expenditures (PCE) price index's core reading also remains elevated, indicating further tightening potentially to come. Consistent with their messaging, the Fed raised rates another 75 basis points at each of the July and September meetings, bringing the current fed funds rate to a range of 3.00-3.25%, the highest level since early 2008. The Fed has made clear that its utmost priority is ensuring inflation subsides, even if such policy actions risk causing job losses and a recession. It now projects the federal-funds rate will reach 4.4% by year-end. These rate increases are intended to cool demand and help bring down the rate of inflation. The risk is that if the Fed moves too far, they may tip the economy into a recession.

The labor market has stayed resilient, giving the Fed permission to keep pressing rates higher for the time being while remaining true to their dual mandate of price stability and maximum employment. The health of the labor market provides some optimism that a so-called "soft landing", where the Fed's interest rate increases serve to cool inflation while not causing a severe recession, may still be possible for the U.S. economy.

Small Core Equity Investment Strategy

Granite's Small Core Equity portfolio returned -1.8% (gross) and -2.1% (net), outperforming the Russell 2000 Index which returned -2.2% during the third quarter. On an annualized basis, the strategy has returned -30.0% over one year, +6.2% over five years and +10.2% over ten years net of fees as of September 30, 2022. This remains the worst YTD performance of small caps in the 42-year history of the index. It was a volatile quarter for stocks, initially up handily in July by over 10% to down measurably in September by 10%. This was also the first quarter in the past eight quarters that growth stocks outperformed value stocks. The portfolio benefitted from allocations and what we believe to be strong security selection in Technology, Industrials and Basic Materials. Health Care and Energy were our worst performing sectors. Our underweight to Financials detracted from an allocation standpoint despite positive security selection.

In the third quarter there were effectively two very distinct periods of performance. The first being a continuation of the "bear market" rally off the June lows driven by expectations of peaking inflation and relief from the Federal Reserve tightening cycle, followed by a reverse to fresh 2022 lows as higher-than-expected summer inflation data and "hawkish" Federal Reserve rhetoric post the Jackson Hole economic symposium elevated recession fears. Strangely, in almost a mirror image of the first half of 2022, the mix of the two periods produced a quarter that definitively favored growth over value, and low-quality factors over traditional quality metrics. Factors such as low returns on equity, low returns on capital, no earnings, and even no sales led the market, while high dividend yields, low valuation, and cash flow lagged. Within the portfolio, trading for the quarter focused on upgrading quality, reducing industrial cyclicality and adding defensive growth while seeking companies that have adjusted to the new reality of a restrained financing environment.

On a positive note, we are seeing several indicators of inflation beginning to moderate if not reverse. Key indicators such as lumber prices, used car prices, oil and shipping/container rates have declined recently. Consumer confidence improved somewhat quarter over quarter as gasoline prices declined nationally.

* Assets include assets managed directly by Granite (AUM) and advisory-only assets (AUA). Granite had assets under management of \$2,505MM firm-wide and \$1,165MM in the Granite Small Core Equity strategy as of September 30, 2022. This is not a recommendation to buy or sell a particular security. Please see the performance disclosure at the end for additional information on Granite's Small Core Equity composite.

While everyone who wants a job has one, real wages have eroded with inflation. Within the Small Core Equity portfolio, we continue to maintain our allocation toward the industrial economy with diversified positions that we believe will benefit from de-globalization as we see more regional localization of supply chains. We remain underweight Real Estate and banks, as well as pharma/biotech but with a weighting towards companies with approved products or commercial operations. We are overweight medical equipment as well as software.

Three of the most significant positive contributors to performance during the quarter for Granite's Small Core Equity strategy included:

Livent shares surged after reporting robust earnings and announcing a significant capacity expansion project. We think Lithium can sustain higher prices for multi-year periods given the demand/supply imbalance caused by the structural demand from EV battery production.

Axonics is a medical technology company with a novel implantable sacral neuromodulation (SNM) device to treat patients with bladder and bowel dysfunction. They are competitively positioned in this large very underpenetrated space with only one other competitor. Their latest launch of a non-rechargeable device achieved strong initial traction and levelled the playing field against industry incumbent. Axonics is poised to capture greater market share due to its device's user-friendly features and firm's superior customer service. Their 2021 acquisition of Contura and its flagship product Bulkamid was a strong strategic fit. Bulkamid is a urethral bulking agent for treatment of urinary stress incontinence and is highly complementary to the SNM device and leverages the same call points.

Agilisys reported strong earnings results including an uptick in subscription growth driven by add-on upsells as well as new product adoption of its PMS (Property Management System) module. Agilisys has performed well relative to other technology stocks during a volatile year for the sector. We believe Agilisys has executed well and built an impressive track record of profitable growth.

Three of the most significant negative contributors to performance during the quarter for Granite's Small Core Equity strategy included:

Certara is a provider of software and services to the life science industry, with offerings aimed at facilitating the effective and efficient development of therapeutics. Certara's core competency is in biosimulation, which is the mathematical modeling and simulation of the impact of drugs on virtual patients. Their differentiated biosimulation-based analyses enjoyed healthy growth but their unique regulatory service offerings to smaller biotech companies experienced slower conversions due to the macroeconomic headwinds resulting in delayed clinical trials or canceled trials from a reallocation of funding. The stock underperformed although we believe the fundamentals remain strong.

Cryoport is a leading cryogenic logistics provider for cellular and high-value biologic therapies and provides cold chain logistics solutions to the temperature sensitive materials in the Life Science industry. Cryoport is an attractive pure play in the expanding cell and gene therapy space, without the clinical and regulatory risks. Stock did not perform well due to the uncertainty of the macro environment and biotech funding headwinds impacting their customers. We continue to like Cryoport's first-mover advantage in providing advanced shipping solutions to players in the fast growing cell gene therapy space, with numerous clients expecting regulatory approvals leading to commercialization in 2023.

Helmrich & Payne's stock price pulled back in the third quarter along with crude oil prices. We continue to be holders as HP offers what we believe to be the most attractive risk/reward profile in the oil field services (OFS) industry through the cycle. We also view that North American unconventional drilling demand will be more robust through the cycle considering strong balance sheets and capital discipline exhibited by E&Ps.

New purchases for the Small Core Equity portfolio during the quarter included the following:

American Eagle Outfitters, Inc. was purchased in the portfolio after the stock fell to a level that indicated an undervaluation for the apparel retailer. American Eagle is an apparel retailer with brands American Eagle, Aerie, and Todd Snyder. The company has struggled in recent months as the company's gross margins slipped and the multiple of the stock decreased to 5x EBITDA. At this level we found the stock to be attractive given expectations of inventory improvement and spending cuts by management. The company has a strong digital strategy and will be closing unproductive stores in the coming years to bolster profitability.

Freshpet Inc., was purchased into the portfolio after the stock reached attractive levels for this growth pet food company. Freshpet continues to dominate the premium fresh food category however it has struggled in recent years in meeting the strong demand for its products. Freshpet has delivered top decile sales growth but struggled with manufacturing and sourcing enough supply. We believe management needs to do a better job of keeping up with the complexities of the business and we feel that they are on the way to doing just that. They have identified three areas of investment that will go a long way in allowing them to increase margins and overall profitability.

Quarterly Attribution

July 1, 2022 to September 30, 2022

INDUSTRY CONTRIBUTORS

	Average Weight	Total Return	Total Effect
Basic Materials	7.95	3.35	0.42
Consumer Discretionary	12.47	-1.69	0.38
Consumer Staples	1.88	-5.27	0.11
Energy	5.14	0.45	-0.37
Financials	8.69	0.35	0.10
Health Care	15.95	-7.47	-2.44
Industrials	21.56	-0.22	0.47
Real Estate	5.11	-8.63	0.41
Technology	12.52	4.27	1.29
Utilities	5.06	-2.49	0.20
[Cash]	3.67	0.65	-0.07

COMPANY CONTRIBUTORS

	Average Weight	Total Return	Contr. to Return
Top Contributors			
Livent Corporation	2.53	35.08	0.58
Axonics, Inc.	2.60	24.30	0.49
Agilisys, Inc.	2.02	17.09	0.33
Arcosa, Inc.	1.39	23.29	0.27
Credo Technology Group Holdi...	0.54	27.74	0.29
Bottom Contributors			
Certara, Inc.	1.36	-38.12	-0.49
OptimizeRx Corporation	0.40	-43.15	-0.35
CryoPort, Inc.	2.72	-21.37	-0.49
Helmerich & Payne, Inc.	2.96	-13.62	-0.42
Tandem Diabetes Care, Inc.	0.91	-28.41	-0.42

Portfolio Characteristics

	Granite	Index
Wtd. Avg. Mkt Cap (\$M)	\$2,977	\$2,527
Median Mkt Cap (\$M)	\$2,610	\$917
P/E (Forward 12 mos)	20.66	10.45
P/E (Trailing 12 mos)	22.18	10.46
Price/Book	2.35	1.74
EPS Growth (3-5 Years)	39.92	14.94
Active Share	94.46	--
# of Securities	60	1,970

Purchases & Sales

New Purchases

Freshpet Inc
Carpenter Technology Corporation
Tandem Diabetes Care, Inc.

Complete Sells

Hain Celestial Group, Inc.
Credo Technology Group Holding Ltd.
Beacon Roofing Supply, Inc.

Carpenter Technology manufactures products, parts, and components made of specialty materials, alloys, and titanium. Carpenter made structural improvements to their cost structure post-COVID. We expect Carpenter to continue to benefit from Aerospace recovery while also improving free cash flow and their ROIC profile.

Additional new purchases for the Small Core Equity portfolio during the quarter included Hercules Capital, ICF International, Sweetgreen, and Tandem Diabetes Care.

Complete sales for the Small Core Equity portfolio during the quarter included the following:

American Asset Trust became source of cash as we didn't see a path to full recovery in its earning potential given the headwind to office markets.

Hain Celestial Group was sold out of the portfolio after failing to realize the vast potential of its brand portfolio. With continued supply constraints and other extenuating circumstances, profit gains have failed to materialize for the management team. Hain's exposure to Europe is our biggest concern as fuel costs remain a major consideration. Hain has fairly significant supply exposure to the continent. At this juncture we feel there is a better near-term opportunity in other names that have had diminishing multiples.

Beacon Roofing Supply was sold out of the portfolio after several years of positive returns. We have liked the management, roofing fundamentals and other aspects of this distributor. Unfortunately, with increasing interest rates we have become concerned with housing related stocks and felt we could find better opportunities elsewhere. Given our strong history with this company, it is likely we would revisit this stock in the right market environment.

Additional sales for the Small Core Equity portfolio during the quarter included Credo Technology Group, OptimizeRx, Pediatrix Medical Group, and Univar Solutions.

Small Core Equity Market Outlook

2022 has been a tough year so far for most asset classes and certainly for small cap equities. As we begin the fourth quarter all eyes will be on the federal reserve, their impact on the growth rate of the economy, and the inevitable follow through to earnings estimates. The market desperately wants to see a pause or at least a deceleration in monetary tightening in order to look across the valley to a better earnings environment in the future and the federal reserve seems clear that they will not deviate from their current tightening cycle until they see clear evidence of a change in the path of inflation. Something will need to change.

Fortunately, all of the real time data seem to suggest to us that both growth and inflation should be coming down as we move through the following months and quarters. Housing activity has certainly reflected the higher rates and is showing clear evidence of price declines, but with a considerable lag before this will be measured in core inflation. Commodities were down significantly in the third quarter and if current levels hold will feed back into core inflation in the year ahead. Most consumer driven sectors, such as autos, goods, and even services are showing early indicators of slowing demand leading to a peaking in prices. CEOs are broadly planning for a recession by slowing hiring plans and targeting modest layoffs, which should be an indicator that wage inflation will begin to cool down over the next year. Healthcare as calculated in the core measures of inflation (a combination of rates and services covered) is actually already a known known due to recent plan enrollment season and will turn from a significant contributor to core inflation to a near 1% drag on core CPI in the year ahead. All of this seems to suggest to us that inflation, while nowhere close to the federal reserve's 2% target, should be moving significantly lower over the next 12 to 24 months providing a potential opportunity for the federal reserve to slow its policy response.

Meanwhile, real growth is slowing, but nominal growth should remain positive enough to support earnings growth for the broad universe of companies. It is possible that the reasonably decent results our companies are currently producing may last longer than the market assumes, and the caution companies have been consistently communicating throughout the year may have already been discounted to some degree by the forward looking market. It is worth highlighting that at current price levels and estimates small cap equity valuations are squarely in the "fair" zone relative to interest rates on an absolute basis and historically low relative to large cap equities. In fact, small cap equities as a percentage of the total market cap of all equities are currently less than 4% of the total, a low level only seen in the early 1930s and for a moment in 2020. Of course, third quarter earnings season starts in the weeks ahead and it is widely expected that management teams will use this moment as an opportunity to lower the expectations bar for the balance of the year and into 2023, so the consensus belief is to wait for the potential forthcoming earnings reset. Where we would differentiate our belief from the current pessimism running through markets is to simply state that the risk reward has dramatically improved, and we are finding attractive opportunities to deploy capital back into our existing positions and into a growing wish list of companies positioned to perform in the next investment cycle that we envision in the years ahead. It has been and may continue to be a turbulent time for stocks, but we continue to be focused on our process: discovering new ideas throughout the small cap universe, promoting new ideas from our cold to our hot wish list, seeking balance in valuation and timing throughout our portfolios.

Economic Outlook

The market remains volatile as investors increasingly anticipate a recession on the horizon. Economies around the world are in the process of normalizing from the many distortions caused by the pandemic. Supply chains faced immense challenges and labor availability was strained. Government stimulus boosted demand, and paired with the supply chain bottlenecks and shortages, further fueled inflation. Unwinding the stimulus bubble created during the crisis poses a headwind to growth, and as fiscal and monetary policy tighten to curb inflation, we believe a recession of some kind is likely to materialize, if one is not already underway. Globally, the war in Ukraine has placed further upward pressure on the price of food, energy, and other commodities. China's continued zero Covid policy negatively impacting global supply chains, continues to weigh on global growth expectations. Despite these uncertainties, we think we have likely seen the peak levels of inflation in aggregate, as several drivers of inflation have begun to abate. Some companies have issued profit warnings as demand for certain goods has faded from pandemic-era highs. As the threat of the virus recedes and financial conditions tighten, we expect more labor supply to release into the job market and further alleviate some of the pressures caused by labor shortages. Commodity prices retreated somewhat during the quarter, further supporting this view.

The risks we monitor include supply chain challenges, political dynamics in Washington, and geopolitics including Ukraine, China and Iran. We are also monitoring the risk of an inflation overshoot or policy error by the Fed. The emergence of new and more concerning COVID variants is a risk, though currently none appear to jeopardize reopening economies worldwide as of now. The benefit of the market declines of the past year is that valuations have reset in many exciting growth areas, providing new investment opportunities. Despite the difficult environment, strong secular themes around Digital Transformation of both the consumer and the enterprise, Artificial Intelligence, 5G wireless networks, the Genomic Revolution in healthcare, Health and Wellness in the consumer, and industrial technology/Internet of Things have accelerated this past year and will continue to remain driving forces in the economy and in our portfolios.

As long-term investors, we remain focused on the fundamentals of the companies in which we invest. Our philosophy centers around identifying companies that demonstrate a differentiated value proposition with identifiable catalysts supported by sustainable business models and superior management teams that can weather more challenging environments such as the one we find ourselves in now. Granite maintains the view that investment opportunities will be rewarded based on the fundamental high-quality characteristics we seek in every investment opportunity, irrespective of the economic cycle.

S&P 500 Index TR: The S&P 500 TR index is a basket of 500 stocks that are considered to be widely held. The S&P 500 Index TR is weighted by market value, and its performance is thought to be representative of the stock market as a whole. The S&P 500 Index TR is one of the most commonly used benchmarks for the overall U.S. stock market. S&P 500 TR is a total return index adjusted for distributions (i.e., assuming that all distributions are reinvested).

The Consumer Price Index (CPI) measures the change in prices paid by consumers for goods and services. The CPI reflects spending patterns for each of two population groups: all urban consumers and urban wage earners and clerical workers.

The Personal Consumption Expenditures Price Index is a measure of the prices that people living in the United States, or those buying on their behalf, pay for goods and services. The change in the PCE price index is known for capturing inflation (or deflation) across a wide range of consumer expenses and reflecting changes in consumer behavior.

Definitions

Active Share: Active Share measures the percentage of equity holdings in a representative portfolio that differ from the index constituents. It is calculated by summing the absolute difference of the weight of each holding in the representative portfolio versus the index and dividing by two.

Earnings Per Share (EPS): Earnings Per Share (EPS) is a company's profits per share of common stock.

Estimated 3-5 Year Earnings Growth Rate: indicates the long-term forecasted EPS growth of the companies in the representative portfolio, calculated using the weighted average of the available 3-to-5 year forecasted growth rates for each of the stocks in the representative portfolio provided by FactSet estimates.

Median Market Cap: The midpoint of the market capitalization (market price multiplied by the number of shares outstanding) of the stocks in a representative portfolio. Half the stocks in the representative portfolio will have higher market capitalizations; half will have lower.

Price/earnings Ratio (P/E): Price/earnings (or P/E) ratio is a comparison of the company's closing stock price and its trailing 12-month earnings per share.

Price to Book: The price-to-book ratio (P/B Ratio) is a ratio used to compare a stock's market value to its book value. It is calculated by dividing the current closing price of the stock by the latest quarter's book value per share.

Weighted Average Market Cap: The weighted average of market capitalization (market price multiplied by the number of shares outstanding) of the stocks in a portfolio.

Sources: Granite Investment Partners, LLC; FactSet; eVestment Alliance

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Attribution based on a representative Small Core Equity Composite account (gross of fees) for the period ending September 30, 2022. The holdings identified do not represent all of the securities purchased, sold or recommended. Source for attribution is FactSet Portfolio Analysis. Average portfolio weight represents the average of the daily weights for the security during the attribution period, and securities listed may not have been held for the entire period. Total effect for sector-level attribution represents individual securities in the account that contributed or detracted relative to the individual security contribution in the benchmark. The attribution analysis presented may be based on preliminary results and as such may be based on unreconciled holdings. Attribution results are based on an end-of-day pricing and do not take into effect calculation of intra-day trading. A full list of holdings and an explanation of the calculations and methodology used in the report are available upon request. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Small Core Equity composite inception date: August 1, 2007. Returns for periods greater than 12 months have been annualized. Returns presented in the attribution tables and in the commentary are gross and net of investment advisory fees and include the reinvestment of all income. Gross-of-fee performance will be reduced by investment advisory fees and other expenses that may be incurred in the management of the account. Net-of-fee returns are calculated by deducting a model management fee, 1/12th of the top tier of the fee schedule (1.00%), from the monthly gross composite return. Actual performance results may vary from this example. The index has been selected for comparison purposes only. Individual account holdings may differ significantly from the securities in the index, and the volatility of the index may be materially different from individual account performance. You cannot invest directly in an index. The Russell 2000 Index is market-cap weighted and measures the performance of the small-cap segment of the U.S. equity universe. The Russell 2000® Index is a subset of the Russell 3000® Index representing approximately 8% of the total market capitalization of that index. It includes approximately 2,000 of the smallest securities based on a combination of their market cap and current index membership. The benchmark definition and returns have been taken from published sources. Granite utilizes best efforts that content provided is compiled or derived from sources believed to be reliable, and accurate, but makes no representations thereof and accepts no liability whatsoever for any loss arising from use or reliance on these contents. This material is deemed supplemental and complements the Small Core Equity Composite performance and disclosure which is available upon request. Past performance is no guarantee of future results.

Strategy inception date: August 1, 2007. Portfolio characteristics reflect a representative Small Core Equity strategy account as of September 30, 2022, and are subject to change without notice. Individual account holdings may vary based on restrictions, substitutions, cash flows and other factors. Source for portfolio characteristics and sector weights: FactSet. This material is deemed supplemental and complements the All Cap Equity strategy performance and disclosure, which are integral part of this presentation and is available upon request.

*The assets shown on the first page include assets managed directly by Granite and advisory-only assets. Granite had assets under management of \$2,505 MM firm-wide and \$1,165 MM in the Small Core Equity strategy as of September 30, 2022. More information about the advisor, including its investment strategies and objectives, can be obtained by visiting www.granitepartners-llc.com. A copy of Granite's disclosure statement (Part 2 of Form ADV) is available without charge upon request. Please contact us at info@granitepartners-llc.com or 310-933-3199 if you would like to receive this information.

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