

# Portfolio Commentary

# MID CAP GROWTH

## Market Review

Turbulence has been the prevailing theme of 2022. Investors are grappling with inflation and a drawn-out conflict between Russia and Ukraine, forces that have damaged asset valuations and stunted economic growth. While the summer months offered some respite, negative sentiment intensified in September. The downward trend of stocks accelerated and bond yields increased as the Federal Reserve (Fed) reinforced its commitment to taming inflation, even at the cost of a potential recession. Energy prices, driven up by international sanctions on Russia, have receded from their highs. However, the coming winter is unlikely to bring more relief, particularly as Europe faces energy prices that have been as high as 10x typical levels. Despite these headwinds, the US economy continues to show strength and the consumer remains fundamentally strong, in our view.

On the inflation front, continued price increases have caused concern, particularly as inflation has broadened out to “stickier” categories like shelter. In response, the Fed is aggressively raising short term interest rates and shrinking its bond holdings. Bond yields reflect the Fed’s vigor and the markets are anticipating a 2023 recession.

Market sentiment is undoubtedly negative, to the point that even “good news” is viewed in a negative light. For instance, August’s unemployment rate of 3.7% is seen as inflationary. However, the US labor market is moving back into balance, with employment at pre-COVID levels and labor force participation creeping higher. An expanding labor pool is deflationary and may indicate the beginning of the end of the “great resignation.” Help wanted signs hang from auto repair shops, restaurants, and health care

facilities. With recent reports suggesting over eleven million unfilled positions, ample opportunity awaits those seeking employment.

Improving supply chains and falling commodity costs indicate we are past peak inflation. Though shelter inflation remains at concerning levels, housing prices and apartment rent growth show signs of turning over. While markets believe the Fed will ultimately keep inflation in check, caution is warranted. Consumers are spending more money on food, fuel, and shelter than in the recent past.

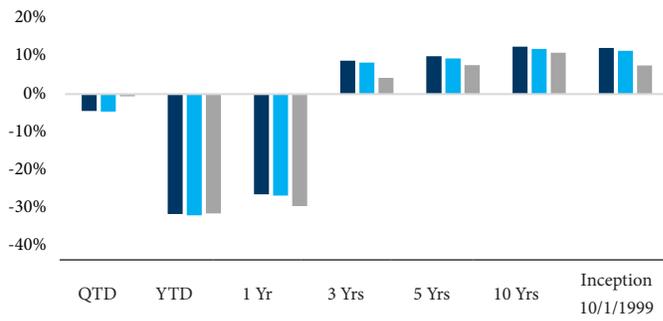
While the domestic economy finds its footing, Europe faces a difficult winter. An over-reliance on Russian natural gas and a premature focus on green energy policies have left the Continent with exorbitant energy and utility costs. Government policies will lessen the out-of-pocket pain for their citizens, but the fundamental energy shortfall is not easily fixed. Elevated fuel costs are likely to dampen consumer discretionary spending and are already curtailing industrial production. U.S. companies with European exposure will feel the chill.

## Performance Overview

The Congress Mid Cap Growth Portfolio (“the Portfolio”) returned -4.5% (gross of fees) and -4.6% (net of fees) during the quarter while the Russell Midcap Growth Index (“the Index”) returned -0.7%.

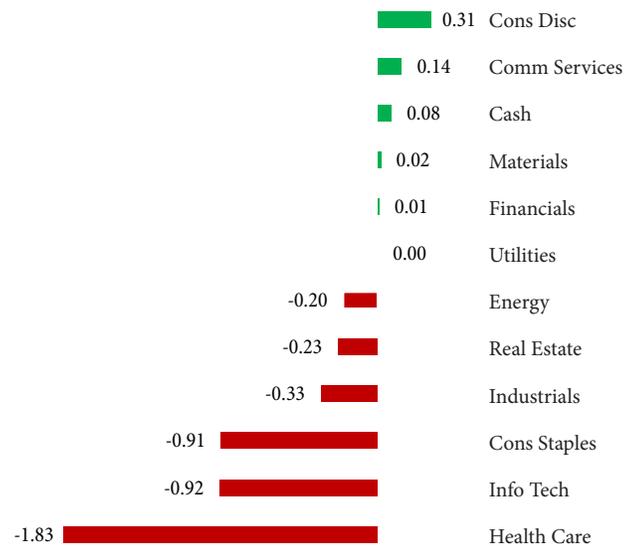
The Portfolio benefited from security selection in Consumer Discretionary and an underweight allocation to Communication Services. However, security selection in Health Care, Information Technology, Consumer Staples, and Industrials detracted from performance during the quarter.

**Average Annualized Performance % as of 9/30/2022**



Performance is preliminary and subject to change at any time.

**% Total Effect Portfolio vs. Index<sup>1</sup>**  
(6/30/2022 - 9/30/2022)



Data is as of 9/30/2022. Sources throughout this presentation: Congress Asset Management, FactSet, Russell Investments, and Morningstar Direct. The information throughout this presentation is for illustrative purposes and is subject to change at any time. Holdings and sector weightings are subject to change and should not be considered investment advice or a recommendation to buy or sell a particular security. Actual holdings may vary by client. Past performance does not guarantee future results. Gross performance shown does not reflect the deduction of investment management fees and certain transaction costs, which will reduce investment performance. This information is supplemental to the GIPS Report. Performance returns of less than one year are not annualized. This managed account strategy involves risk, may not be profitable, may not achieve its objective, and may not be suitable or appropriate for all investors. Investors should consider the investment objectives, risks, and fees of this strategy carefully with their financial professional before investing. Frank Russell Company (“Russell”) is the source and owner of the trademarks, service marks and copyrights related to the Russell Indexes. Neither Russell nor its licensors accept any liability for any errors or omissions in the Russell Indexes and/or underlying data contained in this communication. No further distribution of Russell data is permitted without Russell’s express written consent. Russell does not promote, sponsor or endorse the content of this communication. <sup>1</sup>The information shown is for a representative account as of 9/30/2022. Actual client account holdings and sector allocations may vary.

## 3Q 2022 Attribution Highlights

### Overall Contributors

- Security selection in Consumer Discretionary
- Underweight allocation to Communication Services

### Overall Detractors

- Security selection in Health Care, Information Technology, Consumer Staples & Industrials

### Top 5 Contributors/Detractors

STOCK	AVG. WEIGHT%	CONTRIBUTION%
Paycom Software, Inc.	2.61	0.33
Keysight Technologies, Inc.	2.73	0.27
Deckers Outdoor Corporation	2.34	0.26
IDEX Corporation	2.84	0.23
Raymond James Financial, Inc.	2.91	0.20

**Paycom Software, Inc. (PAYC)** is a leader in payroll and human capital management applications focused on enabling small and mid-market businesses to better manage the employment life cycle. The company continues to deliver impressive recurring revenue growth due to strong demand and lead generation, as PAYC's marketing campaigns have successfully led to larger contracts. The company is also benefiting from a strong labor market and rising interest rates.

**Keysight Technologies, Inc. (KEYS)** is a global leader in the electronic and communication test and measurement space. KEYS continues to benefit from increased investment in newer technologies such as 5G from its wireless customers, electric/autonomous vehicles, and high-speed internet connection in its wireline customers. Order growth is outpacing revenue growth, giving the company confidence in its forward guidance. Margins also improved as the company increased pricing to offset the inflationary environment and control operating expenses.

**Deckers Outdoor Corporation (DECK)** is a footwear and apparel company focused on casual lifestyle and high-performance use. Its portfolio of brands includes UGG, HOKA, Teva, and Sanuk. The Hoka launch continues to perform well as DECK grows the brand's direct-to-consumer and international channels. The brand is also showing share gains across markets, channels, and with younger consumers.

**IDEX Corporation (IEX)** is a diversified engineered products company serving high-growth niche markets. The company experienced order growth outside of its Fire and Safety business unit and continues to gain market share. The Health and Science Technology business continues to benefit from strong secular trends such as next-generation sequencing. The Fluid and Metering Technologies business is experiencing demand from the energy and agriculture markets. The company's price-to-cost spread is also improving and will likely drive margin expansion in the back half of the year.

**Raymond James Financial, Inc. (RJF)** is an investment bank and financial services company. RJF reported solid quarterly results driven by a mix of organic loan growth and higher bank fees, offsetting lower investment banking activity. RJF is also benefiting from the positive impact of rising interest rates on net interest income.

### Bottom 5 Contributors/Detractors

STOCK	AVG. WEIGHT%	DETRACTION%
Azenta, Inc.	1.83	-0.82
Church & Dwight Co., Inc.	2.31	-0.51
STERIS PLC	2.59	-0.46
Horizon Therapeutics PLC	2.28	-0.45
West Pharmaceutical Services, Inc.	2.32	-0.39

**Azenta, Inc. (AZTA)** is a leading global provider of life science sample exploration and management solutions for the life sciences market. Azenta negatively preannounced its fiscal third quarter results and subsequently noted slowing trends in key parts of its life sciences business. Management also announced the acquisition of B Medical, an international temperature-controlled storage and transportation solutions company with significant operations in Africa.

**Church & Dwight Co., Inc. (CHD)** develops, manufactures, and markets household, personal care, and specialty products. The company had disappointing results from discretionary brands such as Waterpik and FLAWLESS. Despite repeatedly implementing increased pricing, CHD's margins have been impacted by inflation.

**STERIS PLC (STE)** is a leading provider of infection prevention and procedural products and services. Steris's fiscal first quarter results showed a slowing of organic growth to 6% due to a slower than expected hospital procedure recovery and supply chain constraints. The company also lowered its full-year organic growth guidance and fiscal year EPS guidance to reflect the incremental negative impact of foreign currency exchange rates.

**Horizon Therapeutics PLC (HZNP)** develops therapies for orphan diseases, specifically uncontrolled gout and thyroid eye disease. Growth of the company's key Tepezza drug slowed to 6% year over year, prompting management to lower fiscal year revenue and earnings guidance sharply. As a result, management announced an expansion and refocusing of sales efforts and a renewed emphasis on targeting new patient populations.

**West Pharmaceutical Services, Inc. (WST)** is a leading manufacturer of containment and delivery systems for injectable drugs and other healthcare products. West's second quarter was highlighted by continued strong core growth. However, management lowered the fiscal year estimate for COVID-related product sales as they have seen demand for these products slow more than previously forecasted. West is also experiencing a negative foreign currency impact on both the top and bottom lines.

### 3Q 2022 Transaction Summary

#### Sector Allocation Changes

- None

#### Purchased

- Deckers Outdoor Corp. (DECK) - Consumer Discretionary
- Ulta Beauty, Inc. (ULTA) - Consumer Discretionary

#### Sold

- Burlington Stores, Inc. (BURL) - Consumer Discretionary
- Etsy, Inc. (ETSY) - Consumer Discretionary

## Purchased

**Deckers Outdoor Corporation (DECK)** is a footwear and apparel company focused on casual lifestyle and high-performance use. Its portfolio of brands includes UGG, HOKA, Teva, Sanuk, and others. The company has done a good job of diversifying its portfolio and pushing into the direct-to-consumer channel which will be accretive to its margins. The UGG brand has room to expand internationally and into different seasonal offerings, while its HOKA brand offers potential superior growth as the brand is early in its adoption cycle. DECK has a clean balance sheet and generates significant free cash flow, which has been historically used to repurchase shares.

**Ulta Beauty, Inc. (ULTA)** is a beauty retailer whose products include makeup, skincare, and fragrances. ULTA is the largest beauty retailer in the U.S. and is expected to continue to outpace the industry as it has for the past decade. Store growth, expanded services in its store base, increased e-commerce penetration, and its new partnership with Target are key pillars of its expansion plans. The company has exclusive product lines and a growing loyalty membership program that should support growth and gains in customer wallet share.

## Sold

**Etsy, Inc. (ETSY)** operates an online global marketplace for unique and creative goods such as shoes, clothing, bags, and accessories. Dilutive acquisitions and a weakening macro environment have weighed on the company's revenue growth and margins. The company continues to make investments in its platform, resulting in further margin dilution. ETSY has also increased the fee it charges sellers, or take rate, which has been divisive in the seller base and has the potential to cause sellers to leave the platform.

**Burlington Stores, Inc. (BURL)** is a national off-price retailer of high-quality branded merchandise at discount prices. BURL has experienced disappointing inventory headwinds for several quarters in a row which has caused the company to underperform its peers. These headwinds have been self-inflicted and there is now less confidence that management will be able to navigate the difficult environment ahead of the company. Additionally, persistent higher inflation will have a greater impact on BURL's customer base.

## Positioning

Investments are predicated on a company's future prospects rather than economic or market cycles. We seek companies with strong fundamentals, emphasizing earnings growth consistency, free cash flow, and solid balance sheet metrics. There were two purchases and two sales during the quarter, and they are reflective of this philosophy.

## Outlook

As economic challenges abound, attention has turned to corporate earnings. Doubts are mounting about companies' abilities to maintain margins either through price increases or operational efficiencies. Employment costs are rising and supply chain issues are forcing many companies to rely on higher cost options such as increasing inventory and/or moving operations closer to home. The prospect of higher costs and higher interest rates has increased market volatility and weighed on returns. So far this year the S&P 500 has lost 1% or more in a week 21 times, a grim milestone that has been exceeded only three times in the last 30 calendar years.

The immediate economic outlook is uncertain and stock market valuations and interest rate trends reflect this reality. The U.S. ten-year Treasury note now yields about 3.8%, up from 1.5% at year end. We believe the increased yield will be enough to dampen inflation to a more reasonable level in 2023. While the US consumer won't escape inflation unscathed, consumers, in general, are well-positioned to absorb price increases, and the strong labor market is contributing to rising compensation.

How hard or soft the coming landing will be is unclear, and the stock market is likely to react to a combination of corporate earnings and the U.S. ten-year yield. As such, market swings are expected to continue. Ultimately, intermediate- and longer-term economic prospects will be heavily influenced by the consumer and his or her spending priorities. Looking through the noise, we continue to believe that a portfolio of established growth companies offers the best prospects for long-term capital appreciation.

**Congress Asset Management Co.**  
**Mid Cap Growth Composite**  
**1/1/2012 - 12/31/2021**

Year	Total Return Gross of Fees%	Total Return Net of Fees%	Russell Mid Cap Growth Return % (dividends reinvested)	Composite Gross 3-Yr annualized ex-post St Dev (%)	Russell Mid Cap Growth 3-Yr annualized ex-post St Dev (%)	Number of Portfolios	Gross Dispersion %	Total Composite Assets End of Period (\$ millions)	Total Firm Discretionary Assets End of Period (\$ millions)	Total Firm Advisory-Only Assets End of Period (\$ millions)	Total Firm Assets End of Period # (\$ millions)
2021	30.6	30.0	12.7	18.3	20.2	719	0.41	3,243	12,778	8,018	20,796
2020	32.0	31.4	35.6	19.8	21.5	629	1.14	2,729	10,746	5,523	16,269
2019	35.8	35.2	35.5	12.8	13.9	558	0.49	954	8,445	4,083	12,528
2018	-3.5	-3.9	-4.8	12.2	12.8	506	0.45	850	7,102	3,132	10,234
2017	17.7	17.2	25.3	10.8	10.9	447	0.65	763	7,272	3,274	10,546
2016	13.9	13.3	7.3	12.0	12.2	105	0.54	431	5,693	2,445	8,139
2015	1.9	1.4	-0.2	11.4	11.3	50	0.42	221	5,941	1,153	7,094
2014	13.0	12.4	11.9	10.8	10.9	41	0.51	145	6,328	1,121	7,449
2013	37.9	37.3	35.7	13.2	14.6	35	0.38	84	6,489	978	7,467
2012	10.4	9.8	15.8	17.0	17.9	26	0.46	43	6,755	743	7,498

#The "Total Firm Assets" column includes unified managed account (UMA) assets

Congress Asset Management claims compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS®) and has prepared and presented this report in compliance with the GIPS standards. Congress Asset Management has been independently verified for the periods 1/1/96 – 12/31/21. A firm that claims compliance with the GIPS standards must establish policies and procedure 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 and pooled fund 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. The Mid Cap Growth Composite has had a performance examination for the periods 10/1/99 – 12/31/21. The verification and performance examination reports are available upon request.

Firm Information: Congress Asset Management Co. (CAM) is an investment advisor registered with the Securities and Exchange Commission under the Investment Advisors Act of 1940. Registration does not imply a certain level of skill or training. CAM manages a variety of public equity, private equity, fixed income and ETF managed portfolios for private and institutional clients. CAM acquired Prelude Asset Management, LLC on March 15, 2010. CAM merged with Congress Capital Partners, LLP on June 30, 2015. CAM acquired certain strategies of Century Capital Management, LLC on September 15, 2017.

Composite Characteristics: The creation and inception date of the Mid Cap Growth Composite is October 1, 1999, which reflects the first full month in which an account was fully invested in the strategy and met the inclusion criteria. The composite includes all fully discretionary portfolios with a value over \$100 thousand (US dollars) managed in the mid cap growth style for a minimum of one full month. The mid cap growth strategy invests in the equity of high quality companies with market capitalizations between \$800 million and \$15 billion (at the time of purchase) exhibiting consistent earnings growth. Accounts with wrap commissions are excluded from the composite. Prior to January 1, 2016 the composite minimum was \$500 thousand (US dollars). Prior to September 1, 2005 the composite did not include private client accounts or accounts with less than \$1 million. The primary composite benchmark is the Russell Midcap Growth Index. The benchmark returns are not covered by the report of independent verifiers. Closed account data is included in the composite as mandated by the standards in order to eliminate a survivorship bias. The % of the composite represented by non-fee paying accounts at annual period end was 100% 1999-2001, 36% in 2002, 20% in 2003, 15% in 2004, 13% in 2005, 22% in 2006 and 18% in 2007. A list of composite descriptions, a list of broad distribution pooled funds, and a list of limited distribution pooled fund descriptions are available upon request.

Calculation Methodology: Valuations and returns are computed and stated in U.S. dollars. Gross of fees returns are calculated gross of management and custodial fees and net of transaction costs. Prior to 2007 net of fees returns were calculated by reducing gross returns by 1/4th of the highest management fee in the Mid Cap Growth Composite, which was 1.00%, applied quarterly. Effective January 1, 2007 net of fees returns are calculated using actual management fees. The composite results portrayed reflect the reinvestment of dividends, capital gains, and other earnings when appropriate. Accruals for equity securities are included in calculations. Internal dispersion is calculated using the asset-weighted standard deviation of annual gross-of-fees returns of those portfolios that were included in the composite for the entire year. For those years when less than six portfolios were included in the composite for the full year, no dispersion measure is presented. The three-year annualized ex-post standard deviation measures the variability of the composite and the benchmark returns over the preceding 36-month period.

Fee Schedule: The firms' individual account fee schedule is as follows: 1.00% for first \$1 million, 0.80% for next \$4 million, 0.60% for next \$5 million. Management fees for individual accounts with assets under management exceeding \$10 million, and for institutional accounts are negotiated. The individual account fee schedule may be subject to negotiation where circumstances warrant. As fees are deducted quarterly, the compounding effect will increase the impact of the fees by an amount directly related to the gross account performance. For example, an account earning a 10% annual gross return with a 1% annual fee deducted quarterly would earn an 8.9% annual net return due to compounding. The management fee schedule and expense ratio for the Mid Cap Growth Fund Institutional Shares is 0.60% and 0.79%, respectively. The management fee schedule and expense ratio for the Mid Cap Growth Fund Retail Shares is 0.60% and 1.04%, respectively. The management fee schedule for the Mid Cap Growth Collective Investment Trust is 0.68%.

Other Disclosures: Policies for valuing investments, calculating performance, and preparing GIPS Reports are available upon request. Past performance does not guarantee future results. This performance report should not be construed as a recommendation to purchase or sell any particular securities held in composite accounts. Market conditions can vary widely over time and can result in a loss of portfolio value. GIPS® is a registered trademark of CFA Institute. CFA Institute does not endorse or promote this organization, nor does it warrant the accuracy or quality of the content contained herein.