

Small Cap Value SMA Commentary

3rd Quarter 2026

Investment Objective

The Sterling Capital Small Cap Value SMA seeks long-term capital appreciation. The portfolio employs a value investment approach to invest primarily in common stock of small-capitalization companies (those with market capitalizations that are below the market capitalization of the largest company in the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Index). We believe that undervalued companies with good earnings prospects have superior appreciation potential with reasonable levels of risk. Quantitatively, we focus on a stock's fundamental valuation relative to its peers. Qualitatively, we seek to identify business catalysts which will serve to drive future earnings growth, increase investor interest, and expand valuation.

Performance	QTR	YTD	1Y	3Y	5Y	10Y
Sterling (Gross)	-8.55%	14.82%	16.67%	18.39%	10.97%	11.19%
Sterling (Net)	-9.25%	12.33%	13.31%	14.98%	7.75%	7.97%
Index	-7.26%	13.58 %	16.42%	16.04%	7.90%	9.61%

Key Quarterly Performance Notes

- The portfolio posted a total return of -8.55% (gross of fees) and -9.25% (net of fees) during the three-month period ended 09.30.2026.
- The portfolio underperformed the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index by 129 bps (on a gross basis) and 199 bps (on a net basis) during the quarter.
- **Absolute Performance Drivers:** Within the portfolio, holdings in the Materials, Energy, and Health Care sectors performed the best on an absolute basis. Holdings within the Consumer Discretionary, Communication Services, Industrials, Consumer Staples, and Utilities sectors lagged.
- **Relative Performance Drivers:** On a sector basis, relative outperformance during the third quarter was driven by positive stock selection within the Information Technology, Materials, and Real Estate sectors along with positive allocation effect from the portfolio's underweight exposure to the Consumer Discretionary sector. Negative stock selection within Industrials, Consumer Discretionary, and Consumer Staples sectors along with negative allocation effect stemming from the portfolio's underweight exposure to the Health Care sector served as a drag on portfolio performance.

Bps = basis points. ¹The composite inception date is 12.31.2001. Data is as of 09.30.2026. Performance results prior to 08.01.2015 are considered "predecessor performance" and were achieved by the investment team when they were part of the Stratton Management Company. The benchmark is the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index. Performance is preliminary and is annualized for periods longer than one year. Net of fees performance returns are preliminary and are presented net of the investment management fees and trading expenses. Gross of fees performance returns reflect the deduction of trading costs: a client's return will be reduced by the management fees and other expenses it may incur. Investment management fees are described in SCM's Form ADV 2A. Performance reflects the reinvestment of interest income and dividends and realized capital gains. The performance presented represents past performance and is no guarantee of future results. Performance is compared to an index: however, the volatility of an index varies greatly and investments cannot be made directly in an index. Market conditions vary from year to year and can result in a decline in market value due to material market or economic conditions. Please refer to the attached GIPS Composite Report for additional disclosures. Net returns are calculated by deducting the highest applicable wrap fee of 3.00% annually from the gross composite return. Sources: Bloomberg L.P.; eVestment Alliance; Sterling Capital Management Analytics.

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Market Commentary

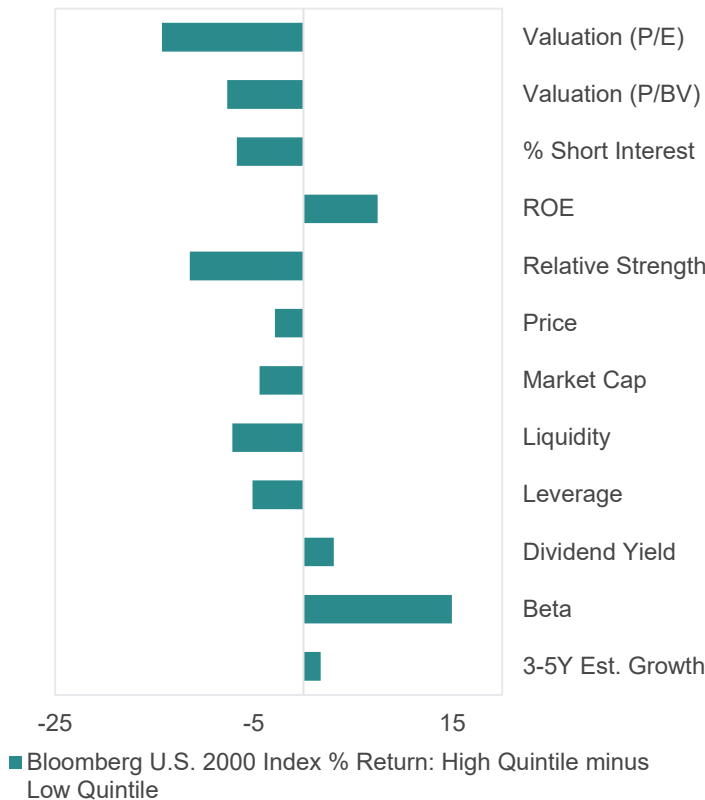
Small Cap Market Review

- Small cap equities, represented by the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Index, posted a total return of -7.80% in the third quarter. After a strong first half, small caps pulled back as the interim agreement between the U.S. and Iran broke down in early July. Markets remained volatile as negotiations proceeded in fits and starts throughout the quarter, while the prolonged disruption in the Strait of Hormuz drove a sharp rise in oil prices that kept inflation elevated. Against this backdrop of persistent inflation and a resilient labor market, the Federal Reserve (Fed) raised its policy rate by 25 bps in September, its first increase in more than three years, and signaled the potential for an additional hike before year end. Leadership shifted back toward large caps, as mega cap technology names rebounded on strong earnings and continued artificial intelligence (AI)-related capital spending, while small cap AI infrastructure names lagged following a rotation away from the group in July. Despite the quarter's decline, small caps remain roughly in line with large caps year to date. Notably, the pullback was not accompanied by a deterioration in small cap fundamentals, as aggregate earnings and free cash flow continued to grow during the period.
- Within small cap equities, the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index outperformed its Growth counterpart by 89 basis points, as lower multiple stocks generally held up better in the decline. Low volatility, value and quality factors led small caps during the quarter while momentum, size and liquidity underperformed.
- Within the broad small cap benchmark, the Energy sector was the only positive sector, with the Health Care sector also outperforming during the quarter, while the Industrials, Information Technology, Materials, and Consumer Discretionary sectors experienced the sharpest declines.

Outlook

- Geopolitics and monetary policy remain the key variables in the near term. Elevated energy prices tied to the ongoing conflict in Iran appear to have kept inflation above the Fed's target. We believe the path of rates will depend heavily on whether inflation normalizes. In our view, the upcoming midterm elections add another layer of policy uncertainty heading into year end.
- Despite the pullback during the quarter, small cap fundamentals appear to remain constructive. Small cap earnings and free cash flow growth outpaced large caps during the quarter, and the domestic buildout across manufacturing, defense, and power infrastructure appears to continue to support demand for many of the U.S.-focused industrial companies in our universe.
- In a higher rate environment, balance sheet strength and cash flow durability become increasingly important. With valuations more attractive following third quarter weakness, we continue to seek higher-quality, value equities with above-peer-average earnings and cash flow prospects, which we believe are well positioned for the long term despite a potentially volatile period ahead.

Factor Performance:
Small Cap Equity Market



The above chart depicts the performance of the constituents of the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index based on relative composite fundamental characteristics. The benchmark for this composite is the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index. For illustrative purposes only, characteristics are also shown for the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index in order to provide additional information on the broader small-cap equity market. For each characteristic, the constituents of the index are sorted and grouped into quintiles. The bar adjacent to each characteristic listed shows the performance of the stocks in the highest quintile relative to the performance of those in the lowest quintile. Terms and definitions can be found on page 4. Source: Bloomberg L.P.



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Performance Attribution Analysis

Top Contributors:

- CACI Intl CI-A
- Affiliated Managers Group, Inc.
- Chord Energy Corp.
- Qorvo, Inc.
- Northern Oil & Gas, Inc.

Bottom Contributors:

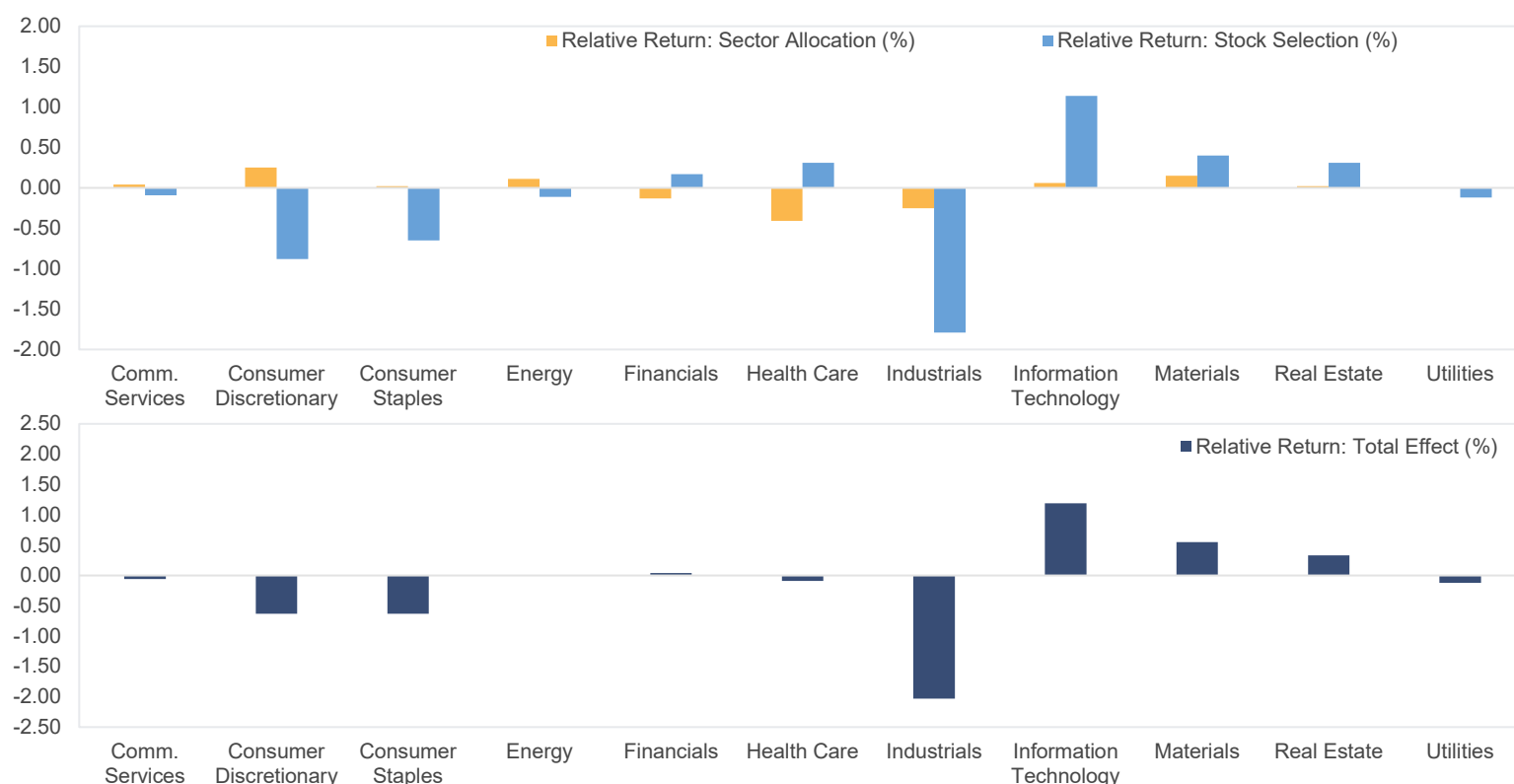
- MasTec, Inc.
- EnerSys
- Garrett Motion, Inc.
- Casey's General Stores, Inc.
- Meritage Homes Corp.

Relative Contributors

- Positive stock selection within the Information Technology sector as portfolio holdings ePlus, PTC, and Qorvo outperformed sector peers during the period.
- Positive stock selection within the Materials sector along with positive allocation effect due to the portfolio's underweight exposure to the sector relative to the benchmark.
- Positive stock selection within the Real Estate sector, led by outperformance from portfolio holding First Industrial Realty.

Relative Detractors

- Negative stock selection within the Industrials sector with portfolio holdings lagging sector peers during the period.
- Negative stock selection within the Consumer Staples sector as portfolio holdings Casey's General Stores and Performance Food Group underperformed sector peers.
- Negative stock selection within the Consumer Discretionary sector due to portfolio holding Garrett Motion lagging compared to sector peers.



CI-A = Class A Common Stock. Data is as of 09.30.2026. Sources: FactSet; Sterling Capital Management Analytics. Attribution source: FactSet. Attribution results are shown for illustrative purposes only.

Important Information & Disclosures

Past performance is not indicative of future results. Any type of investing involves risk and there are no guarantees that these methods will be successful. Economic charts are provided for illustrative purposes only. The information provided herein is subject to market conditions and is therefore expected to fluctuate.

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Performance is preliminary and is annualized for periods longer than one year. Net of fees performance returns are preliminary and are presented net of the investment management fees and trading expenses. Net returns are calculated by deducting the highest applicable wrap fee of 3.00% annually from the gross composite return. Gross of fees performance returns reflect the deduction of trading costs: a client's return will be reduced by the management fees and other expenses it may incur. Investment management fees are described in SCM's Form ADV 2A. Performance reflects the reinvestment of interest income and dividends and realized capital gains. The performance presented represents past performance and is no guarantee of future results. Performance is compared to an index: however, the volatility of an index varies greatly and investments cannot be made directly in an index. Market conditions vary from year to year and can result in a decline in market value due to material market or economic conditions. Please refer to the attached GIPS Composite Report for additional disclosures.

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Technical Terms: the below technical terms are sourced from Corporate Finance Institute.

Price-to-earnings ratio (P/E ratio) is the ratio for valuing a company that measures its current share price relative to its per-share earnings.

Price-to-book (P/B) ratio is the ratio to the market value of a company's shares (share price) over its book value of equity.

Return on equity (ROE) is the measure of a company's net income divided by its shareholders' equity.

Beta measures the volatility of returns relative to the entire market. It is used as a measure of risk and is an integral part of the capital asset pricing model. A company with a higher beta has greater risk and also greater expected returns.

The volatility of an index varies greatly. All indices are unmanaged and investments cannot be made directly in an index.

The Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index is a float market-cap-weighted benchmark of the lower 2000 in capitalization of the Bloomberg U.S. 3000 Index that provides exposure to companies with superior value factor scores based on their earnings yield, valuation, dividend yield, and growth.

The Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Growth Index is a float market-capitalization-weighted benchmark that specifically tracks the performance of small-cap United States equities displaying higher growth characteristics.

The Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Index is a float market-cap-weighted benchmark of the lower 2000 in capitalization of the Bloomberg U.S. 3000 Index.

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Sterling Capital Small Cap Value SMA

	Total Gross Return	Total Net Return	Benchmark Return	3Y Composite Std. Dev. (Gross)	3Y Benchmark Std. Dev.	Composite Dispersion	Number of Portfolios	Composite AUM (MM)	Total Firm AUM (MM)
2025	12.68%	9.42%	8.96%	17.31%	20.43%	Not Calculable	18	\$185	\$69,234
2024	14.75%	11.43%	9.01%	21.42%	24.29%	Not Calculable	2	\$187	\$66,160
2023	18.89%	15.46%	17.93%	20.39%	22.71%	Not Calculable	1	\$261	\$66,746
2022	-13.59%	-16.15%	-11.70%	25.44%	30.70%	Not Calculable	1	\$317	\$62,842
2021	33.29%	29.49%	31.49%	23.05%	28.56%	Not Calculable	1	\$523	\$75,309
2020	2.22%	-0.78%	9.71%	24.31%	29.93%	Not Calculable	1	\$490	\$70,108
2019	25.79%	22.18%	20.92%	14.98%	17.09%	Not Calculable	1	\$975	\$58,191
2018	-13.59%	-16.14%	-16.34%	14.99%	16.97%	Not Calculable	1	\$961	\$56,889
2017	14.37%	11.07%	8.54%	13.00%	15.00%	Not Calculable	1	\$1,184	\$55,908
2016	26.51%	22.88%	31.33%	14.08%	16.16%	Not Calculable	1	\$1,277	\$2,984

Benchmark: Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index

Composite Creation Date: 09.30.2011

Inception Date: 12.31.2001

- Consists of all discretionary separately managed small capitalization equity portfolios managed in the relative value style. SCM's small capitalization equity accounts invest primarily in companies similar to the market capitalization of the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Index.
- The material risks of this strategy include, but are not limited to, the following: Market Risk, Management Risk, Market Disruption and Geopolitical Risk, Company Specific Risk, Equity Securities Risk. For a full list of strategy risks, please reference Sterling Capital Management's Form ADV, Part 2A.
- Sterling Capital Management LLC (SCM) claims compliance with the Global Investment Performance Standards (GIPS®) and has prepared and presented this report in compliance with the GIPS standards. SCM has been independently verified for the periods 01/01/2001-12/31/2024. The verification report(s) is/are available upon request. 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 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. Verification does not provide assurance on the accuracy of any specific performance report. Benchmark returns are not covered by the report of the independent verifiers. GIPS® is a registered trademark of the CFA Institute. CFA Institute does not endorse or promote this organization, nor does it warrant the accuracy or quality of the content contained herein.
- SCM is a registered investment advisor with the U.S. Securities & Exchange Commission (SEC). Registration does not imply a certain level of skill or training. SCM manages a variety of equity, fixed income and multi-asset portfolios. Prior to January 2001, SCM was a wholly-owned subsidiary of United Asset Management (UAM). In January 2001, SCM purchased all the assets and business of Sterling Capital Management Company from UAM to become an employee-owned firm. In April 2005, BB&T Corporation (BB&T) purchased a majority equity ownership stake in SCM. In October 2010, the management group of SCM entered into an agreement with BB&T that reduced and restructured management's interest in SCM. Additionally, BB&T Asset Management merged into SCM. In January 2013, CHOICE Asset Management merged into SCM. In August 2015, eight new employees joined SCM via Stratton Management Company following the close of BB&T's purchase of Susquehanna Bancshares. In December 2019, BB&T and SunTrust Banks, Inc. Holding Company merged as equals to form Truist Financial Corporation (Truist). SCM was then a wholly-owned subsidiary of Truist. In August 2020, eight new employees joined SCM via the Investment Advisory Group of SunTrust Advisory Services. In July 2024, Guardian Capital U.S. Asset Management (formerly Guardian Capital LLC), a wholly-owned subsidiary of Guardian Capital Group Limited (Guardian), completed the acquisition of SCM from Truist. In March 2026, Desjardins Group completed its acquisition of Guardian Capital Group Limited. SCM is now an indirect, wholly-owned subsidiary of Desjardins Global Asset Management Inc., which is part of the Desjardins Group.
- The performance presented represents past performance and is no guarantee of future results. Market and economic conditions vary from year to year and can result in a decline in market value due to material market or economic conditions. Please refer to the slide titled "Performance" for the one-, five-, and ten-year returns of the composite.
- A complete list of all of SCM's composites and SCM's broad distribution pooled funds and their descriptions is available upon request. Policies for valuing investments, calculating performance, and preparing GIPS Composite Reports are available upon request.
- Performance reflects reinvested interest income and dividends and realized and unrealized capital gains and losses. Valuations and performance are reported in U.S. dollars. Periodic time-weighted returns are geometrically linked. Returns are not calculated net of non-reclaimable withholding taxes due to immaterial dollar amounts. Effective 1/1/22, composite returns are calculated by weighting the individual portfolio returns using beginning of period market values. From 8/1/15-1/1/22, composite returns were asset weighted using the average capital base method that reflects both beginning market value and cash flows and uses the aggregate method. Prior to 8/1/15 composite returns were calculated by weighting the individual portfolio returns using beginning of period market values. Performance results prior to 8/1/15 are considered "predecessor performance" and were achieved by the Relative Value Team when they were part of the Stratton Management Company.
- Gross of fees returns are presented before management fees but after all trading costs. Net returns are calculated by deducting the highest applicable wrap fee of 3.00% annually from the gross composite return. Since inception, the composite contains only non-wrap accounts.
- The appropriate benchmark is the Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index since inception, effective 6/30/26. The Bloomberg U.S. 2000 Value Index is a float-adjusted, market-capitalization-weighted benchmark that measures the performance of small-cap U.S. companies exhibiting value characteristics, representing the lower 2000 in capitalization of the broader Bloomberg U.S. 3000 Index. Prior to 6/30/26, the benchmark was the Russell 2000® Value Index.
- The annual composite dispersion presented is measured by an asset-weighted standard deviation calculation method of all portfolios in the composite for the entire year, and is calculated using gross of fee returns. It is not meaningful when there have been less than six portfolios in composite for entire calendar year. The 3-year annualized standard deviation measures the variability of the composite and benchmark returns over the preceding 36-month period. The composite 3-year standard deviation is calculated using gross of fee returns. It is not required to be presented when a full three years of composite performance is not yet available.