



AIM LVI NEWSLETTER

# THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME



## WELCOME

Applied Investment Management (AIM) was created in the fall of 1995 to provide students with live portfolio management experience. Today, AIM manages a portfolio of approximately \$26 million.

Throughout the semester, students perform fundamental security analysis on two equities and collectively determine the composition of the final portfolio to mimic the process of a professional portfolio management team.

<b>2</b>	Faculty Welcome	<b>3</b>	Alumni Interview	<b>4</b>	Guest Speakers	<b>5</b>	Trip Highlights
<b>8</b>	Campus News	<b>10</b>	Primary Research	<b>11</b>	Final Portfolio Decisions	<b>15</b>	Portfolio Performance
		<b>17</b>	Analyst Profiles	<b>22</b>	Interview Transcript		



**JASON REED**

*Assistant Finance Department  
Chair & Wade Family Associate  
Teaching Professor of Finance*



**JEFF BERGSTRAND**

*Professor of Finance, Concurrent  
Professor of Economics, Concurrent  
Professor in the Keough School of  
Global Affairs*

**AIM LVI**



## KIMBERLY FLYNN (AIM VII)

Managing Director at XA Investments

*Kimberly Flynn, CFA is a founder and Managing Director of XA Investments where she is responsible for all product and business development activities. XA Investments has a proprietary closed-end platform and a consulting practice to assist clients with developing US and UK registered closed-end funds. Previously, Kim was Senior Vice President and Head of Product Development for Nuveen Investments' Global Structured Products Group.*

*Kim received her MBA degree from Harvard University and her BBA in Finance and Business Economics, summa cum laude, from the University of Notre Dame in 1999. Kim earned the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation and is a member of the CFA Institute and CFA Society of Chicago. Kim was recently selected to serve on the Notre Dame Wall Street leadership committee. She also serves as secretary of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Women's board executive committee and on the advisory board of Youth Guidance's Becoming A Man program. She is an active member of the University Club of Chicago and the Harvard Club of New York City. For the full transcript of our interview with Kim, see page 22.*

---

**"EARLY IN YOUR CAREER, IT IS ABOUT GETTING PRACTICE AND EXPERIENCE. AS SOON AS PRACTICAL WHEN I BECAME A SENIOR ANALYST OR ASSOCIATE, I WOULD TRY TO GET SOMEONE JUNIOR WORKING WITH ME TO STAFF ON PROJECTS. IN MY VIEW, THE ONLY WAY TO LEARN TO BE A MANAGER IS TO GET EXPERIENCE AND TRAIN SOMEONE."**

---

**LEADERSHIP**

---

**LEVERAGING  
EDUCATION**

---

**"I ENTERED NOTRE DAME KNOWING THAT I WANTED TO GO INTO BUSINESS AND STUDIED FINANCE AND COMPUTER APPLICATIONS. AT NOTRE DAME, I WAS GROUNDED IN FACTS, FIGURES AND TERMINOLOGY. DURING MY MBA STUDIES, I LEARNED HOW TO THINK AND DEVELOP ACTION PLANS BY APPLYING WHAT I HAD LEARNED AT NOTRE DAME. FOR ME BUSINESS SCHOOL (MBA) WAS NOT ABOUT PICKING UP ANY NEW SKILLS OR KNOWLEDGE, IT WAS ABOUT APPLYING IT..."**

---

**"FOR ME, ASSET MANAGEMENT HAS PROVEN TO BE A GREAT FIELD WITH MANY DIFFERENT CAREER PATHWAYS AND OPPORTUNITIES. A CAREER IN ASSET MANAGEMENT HAS ALLOWED ME TO BALANCE MY CAREER GOALS WITH MY PERSONAL GOALS IN A WAY THAT MAY HAVE BEEN MORE CHALLENGING IN INVESTMENT BANKING OR MANAGEMENT CONSULTING."**

---

**SUSTAINABLE  
CAREER PATH**

---

*Like previous AIM classes, we hosted several speakers over the course of the semester. AIM is fortunate to hear from extremely successful individuals across the investing world. The class incorporates these insights into our discussions and portfolio decisions.*



## **DRAGO DIMITROV, CFA**

**INVESTOR, ASYMMETRY VENTURES**

Drago transitioned to venture capital after earning his MBA from Booth last summer. An investor, entrepreneur, web developer, and author of the book *What Does This Company Do? Understanding a Business and its Risks*, Drago shared lessons he has learned on improving one's ability to "think precisely" with the class. Students enjoyed learning about how to detect the underlying patterns and "rules" in the investment process that most seasoned professionals intuitively understand, but younger analysts only discover through experience, typically through a lengthy process of trial and error. After spending a portion of the semester discussing artificial intelligence's impact on our portfolio, Drago's opinion on the growing technology was extremely helpful for our collective understanding.



## **BRIAN D'ARCY**

**PARTNER, SIXTH STREET**

While on campus in March as a guest of Notre Dame's Institute for Global Investing, Brian was able to make time to speak with our class. Brian acts as the CEO of Sixth Street's Broker Dealer and is the head of the firm's Capital Formation and Strategy team. Brian gave the class a fantastic summary of the market dynamics behind the recent banking crisis, and helped us consider what might be most important for us as investors. He shared valuable insights he has picked up throughout his career, from working at Goldman Sachs during the 2008 financial crisis to his time at TPG, and now Sixth Street.

**"IT WAS FANTASTIC TO HEAR DRAGO'S THOUGHTS ON CAREER PROGRESSION, SOCIAL STRUCTURES, AND THOUGHTS ON AI. HIS PREDICTIONS FOR THE FUTURE OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE WERE A NICE ADDITION TO MY RESEARCH ON THE TECHNOLOGY AND ITS IMPACT ON OUR PORTFOLIO, ESPECIALLY FOR MY STOCK, ALPHABET."**

**MAX FORBES**



AIM LVI traveled to Chicago in February and visited 6 firms in total. Students enjoyed the chance to hear about a wide variety of different investing strategies across public and private equity.

## FIRM AND SPEAKER HIGHLIGHTS

### **William Blair**

*Vivian Lin Thurston, Richard Reznick, Chris Ehley*

William Blair Investment Management employs disciplined, analytical research processes across a wide range of strategies, including U.S. equity, non-U.S. equity, and emerging markets debt. Portfolio Manager Vivian Lin Thurston, CFA, Equity Analyst Richard Reznick, Ph.D., and Equity Analyst Chris Ehley, CFA, spoke to the class about developing evidence-based, fundamentally-driven investment theses. AIM analysts loved learning about how to effectively communicate complex ideas, ask the right questions to discover core value drivers, and how to have conviction when the market has a completely opposite view. The class also enjoyed the beautiful views of Chicago from the office.



### **Ariel Investments**

*John Rogers and Panel*

Ariel Investments is a global value-based asset management firm founded in 1983, headquartered in Chicago. AIM analysts were excited to learn about Ariel's four core values of Active Patience, Independent Thinking, Focused Expertise, and Bold Teamwork. We heard from a panel of experienced investors and spoke to the firm's founder and CEO, John Rogers. We learned about their "slow and steady" investment model, how to take a contrarian view, and trusting your intuition when there is a good buying opportunity. The class especially loved admiring the turtle figurines that were scattered throughout the firm, a nod to the firm's investing strategy.

## **Aleyeska Investment Group**

*Anu Parekh, Jim Hoeg*

Aleyeska Investment Group manages a fundamental equity, market neutral strategy that invests across most major sectors in the U.S., including consumer, technology, healthcare, financials, industrials and energy. AIM analysts enjoyed speaking to the firm's founder, Anu Parekh, and partner Jim Hoeg. The class was inspired by the speakers' perspectives on maintaining curiosity as a critical driver of success, learning something new from every experience, and mindfully managing a healthy work-life balance.

## **Riverspan Partners**

*Dave Thomas, Brian Finn*

Riverspan Partners is a Chicago-based private equity group formed by John Gilligan and Dave Thomas focusing on middle-market businesses with a focus on industrials. We had the chance to speak with Dave (AIM XV) and associate Brian Finn (ND '20) about their private market investing strategy, recent trends in capital deployment, and the current fundraising environment. The Riverspan team graciously treated the class to delicious Crumbl cookies at the office.

## **Gate City Capital Management**

*Michael Melby*

To close out Friday's firm visits, the class heard from Michael Melby, founder and portfolio manager at Gate City Capital Management. Mike (AIM XV) described his "boots on the ground" investing strategy that involves close diligence of potential portfolio companies. He led students through a case study of Unit Corporation, an Oklahoma-based oil and gas business. His technique has earned him a competitive edge within micro-cap investing, and the class was impressed with Gate City's phenomenal returns. The session was held in Notre Dame's Railway Exchange building, where the University hosts its Chicago program for graduate and executive business students.

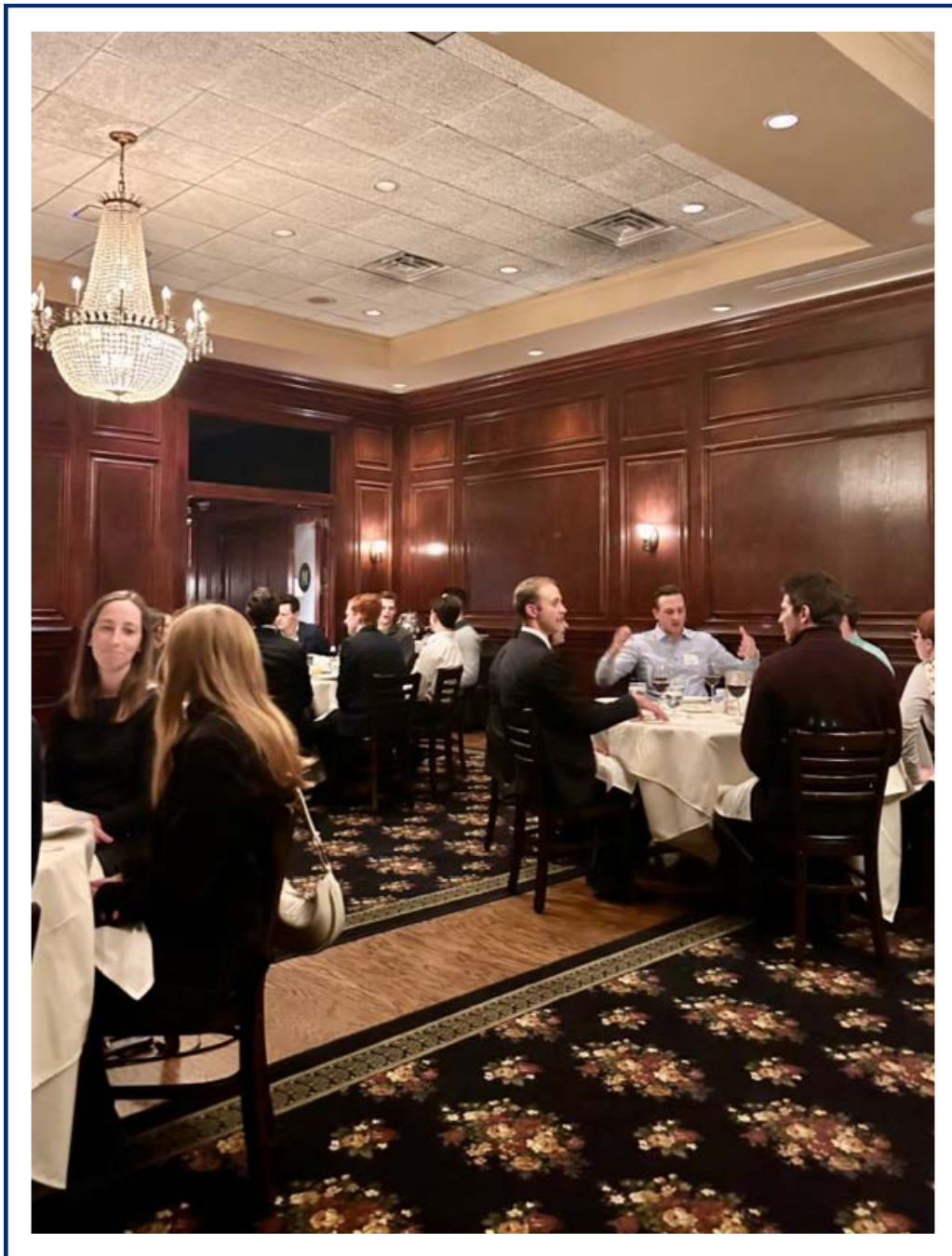
## **The 81 Collection**

*Vijen Patel*

[The 81 Collection](#) is a venture fund for "un-sexy" industries that have traditionally been overlooked by investors and yet are critical for economic growth. Founded by Vijen Patel (AIM XXV), the 81 Collection raised its inaugural \$41M fund late last year. Vijen, who founded the dry-cleaning service Pressbox (now Tide Cleaners), shared his inspiring story about the joys and trials of entrepreneurship with the class. We were all reminded of the power of grit and what it really means to find fulfillment in one's career.

## AIM CLASS DINNER

During the Chicago trip, current AIM analysts and alumni came together at the semi-annual AIM Alumni Reception & Dinner, hosted at Maggianos in Downtown Chicago. Attendees enjoyed a wonderful night filled with delicious food and drinks, discussing a variety of topics from company selection to career discernment advice. Alumni had the chance to reminisce about their former AIM stocks and reunite with former classmates. Students were happy to cap a long day of firm visits with a hearty meal and lighthearted conversation.



*Read on to learn about some happenings around campus from this past semester, including exciting new food delivery technology, a golf outing, and news from football and men's basketball!*

## ROBOTS STORM THE NOTRE DAME CAMPUS



Notre Dame's pre-order food app, Grubhub, introduced over 30+ autonomous food delivery robots to campus this spring. The robots are on campus via a partnership with Grubhub and Starship Technologies. These robots are designed to withstand various weather conditions and can travel up to 4 mph, carrying the equivalent of three grocery bags. The offering allows an additional option for students and staff to have an efficient and hassle-free food delivery experience with a robot delivery anywhere on the Notre Dame campus.

## AIM CLASSES MEET ON THE GOLF COURSE



AIM LVI's self-appointed social chair, Jay Brockhoff, organized a golf outing for the class and was joined by past AIM classes LV & LIV. The event occurred on April 21st at Notre Dame's Burke Golf Course and was a great way for students to connect with past AIM students and classmates outside of Mendoza.



## SPORTS CORNER: BREY RETIRES, CHANGES AT QB

After 23 years leading the Fighting Irish men's basketball team, head coach Mike Brey stepped down at the end of the 2022-23 season. Brey left as the winningest coach in the program's history, leading the Irish 13 NCAA tournament appearances during his tenure. Reports have surfaced that Brey is set to join the NBA's Atlanta Hawks coaching staff next year.



Since beating South Carolina in the Gator Bowl to close out the 2022 football season, Marcus Freeman's team has seen some roster shakeups. Wake Forest QB Sam Hartman transferred to ND in January in the wake of Drew Pyne's departure to Arizona State. Hartman sits atop the QB depth chart as Tyler Buchner recently followed former offensive coordinator Tommy Rees to Alabama. Running back Logan Diggs has also entered the transfer portal.



After a successful rookie year with the NFL's Baltimore Ravens, former ND safety Kyle Hamilton returned to campus to finish his degree. He took classes in digital marketing and finance this semester.

## OUR LADY OF THE LAKE WORLD PEACE PLAZA OPENS



A new area on campus opened this year in memory of University master builder Bill Pulte. Located just west of the Grotto, the Our Lady of the Lake World Peace Plaza is meant to be a place of reflection, prayer, and peace to all who visit Notre Dame's campus.

# FIELD RESEARCH BRINGS VALUABLE INSIGHTS



*Luke visited a local AutoZone to check out the store traffic and noticed an O'Reilly's across the street*



*Griffin ordered some Domino's one late night in the BIC and performed a taste test against Papa John's & Pizza Hut. Domino's won!*



*Peter visited T.J. Maxx and Ross Stores and utilized his sense of smell to see the success of TJ Max*



*Max visited Stryker's Kalamazoo headquarters and toured the grounds*



*Jay visited a local Cintas location to see the uniform services provider in action*



*Michael visited local Murphy USA locations and filled up his tank with the cheap gas*

The 25-Position AIM LVI portfolio includes 13 positions inherited from the prior class and 12 new positions. Current analysts are excited to pass this portfolio to AIM LVII and see how it evolves in future classes.

**BUY  
DECISIONS**

**Inherited**

- Alphabet
- Amazon.com
- American Tower Corporation
- BioLife Solutions Inc.
- Enterprise Product Partners
- Mastercard Inc
- Microsoft Corporation
- Salesforce
- Taiwan Semiconductor
- Verisk Analytics
- Verra Mobility Corporation
- Workday
- Zoetis Inc.

**Newly Proposed**

- Crown Holdings
- Enhabit Inc
- ICF International
- IDT Corporation
- Live Nation Entertainment
- Mondelez International
- Perimeter Solutions
- Palo Alto Networks
- Stryker
- The TJX Companies
- United Rentals
- Warner Brothers Discovery

**SELL  
DECISIONS**

**Inherited**

- AutoZone
- Cirrus Logic
- Deere & Company
- Domino's Pizza
- Estée Lauder Companies
- Intuit
- Masco Corporation
- Meta Platforms
- Micron Technology
- Raytheon Technologies
- Willis Towers Watson Limited
- Weyerhaeuser Company

**Newly Proposed**

- Albemarle
- Canada Goose
- Chewy
- Cintas Corporation
- CrowdStrike
- Delta Airlines
- Graphic Packaging
- Lending Tree
- Manchester United
- Movado Group
- Murphy USA
- Six Flags Entertainment
- Tesla

## Alphabet

An exceptional search advertising moat rooted in user data and AI advantages coupled with the firm's emerging opportunities in connected TV via YouTube will drive profits in the future



**AMERICAN TOWER®**

REIT with strong recurring revenue streams and consistent margins in the growing communications infrastructure industry



Entrenched market share in both established and emerging geographies, as well as multiple realistic catalysts for upside recognition



Macroeconomic tailwinds related to Russia's fuel supply contraction and China's reopening to boost continued growth of the company's petrochemical and refined products business

## amazon

Despite the threat of shrinking IT budgets to their cloud services business, Amazon's competitive advantage in retail fulfillment is world-class



Promising growth potential in the budding cell processing industry led by a highly experienced management team



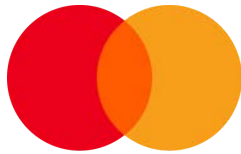
Trades at a deep value despite possessing competitive advantages in the highly fragmented home health & hospice space



Long-standing government agency relationships position ICF to win in its domains of expertise that are aligned with high growth areas of the government budget



Sum-of-the-parts play featuring a group of small, competitively-advantaged growth businesses within a larger declining company where value will be realized through spin-offs



**mastercard**

Outsized international presence compared to Visa makes this the right player in the rapidly digitizing payments processing space



With the most popular brands and high pricing power in the snack food industry, Mondelez is poised well for outperformance compared to their peers



Long-time sole provider of fire retardant to the U.S. government will prove to be necessary in the fight against the effects of the climate crisis



Uncertainty around the DOJ's antitrust investigation create an attractive entry point for the clear leader in the live entertainment and ticketing industry



Exposure to AI will prove to be a favorable synergy with the company's integrated suite of productivity tools



With the most robust, effective, and complementary product suite, Palo Alto is well-positioned to be a winner of vendor consolidation as cyberattacks increase in volume and sophistication



Low customer churn, strong cross-selling capabilities, and a long runway to cut costs positions Salesforce to deepen its moat in the CRM market

# stryker

Extremely diverse product portfolio and leadership in surgical robotics makes it a vendor of choice for cost-conscious hospitals and outpatient facilities



Customer-first strategy makes it the leader in the off-price retail industry which will be buoyed by tailwinds related to spending preferences



Recent refocus on insurance-only analytics allows the company to leverage its highly defensible moat and market share dominance



Control of a third of the world's entertainment content while trading at a discount to peers makes the company a bargain buy



Leader in the "winner-take-most" semiconductor industry where high barriers to entry have created an oligopoly



Rising rates and a looming recession will lead more companies to rent equipment to avoid large capital outlays



Strong market penetration, high customer retention rate, and recent international expansion are promising as more tollways become cashless and payments move online



High switching costs and ongoing innovation spend cements the company's status as the leader among human capital management

# zoetis

A profit leader and favorite of veterinarians in the growing animal health industry

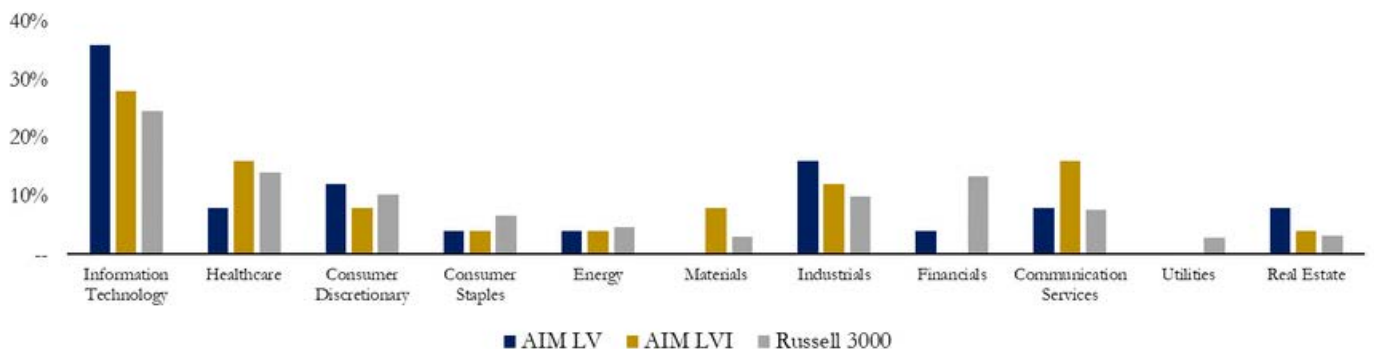
## CUMULATIVE PERFORMANCE

The AIM portfolio is benchmarked against two indices: the Russell 3000 and the S&P 500. As of March 31, 2023, the portfolio has achieved an annual return of 11.9% since inception, 2.7% higher than the Russell 3000 and the S&P 500. The portfolio performed extremely well over the past five years, achieving an annualized return of 15.3%, while beating the Russell 3000 and S&P 500 over the last ten years, five years, twelve months, and six months. The graph below shows the cumulative value of \$1 invested at inception for the AIM portfolio, S&P 500, and Russell 3000.



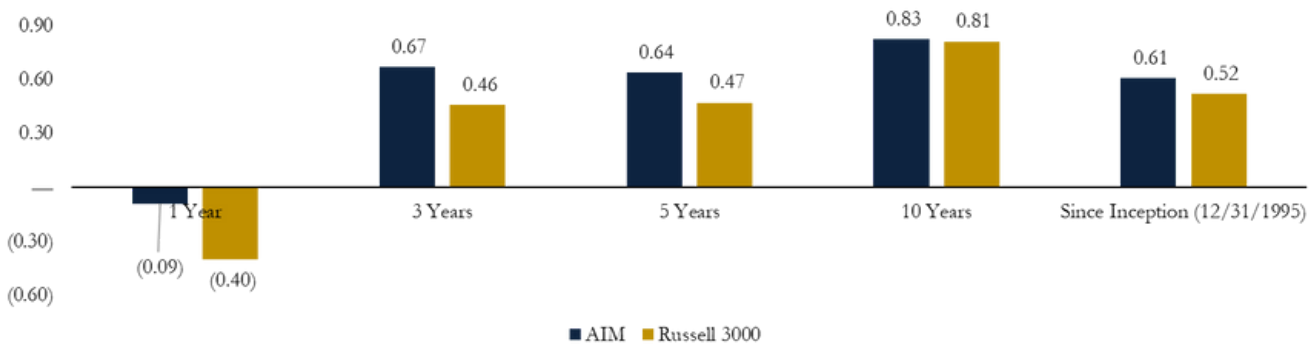
## AIM LVI SECTOR ALLOCATION

The inherited portfolio was overweight in information technology and underweight in health care relative to the Russell 3000 benchmark. Much of our outperformance in the last three months came from our information technology and industrials holdings. The current portfolio is now overweight in information technology, healthcare, and communication services

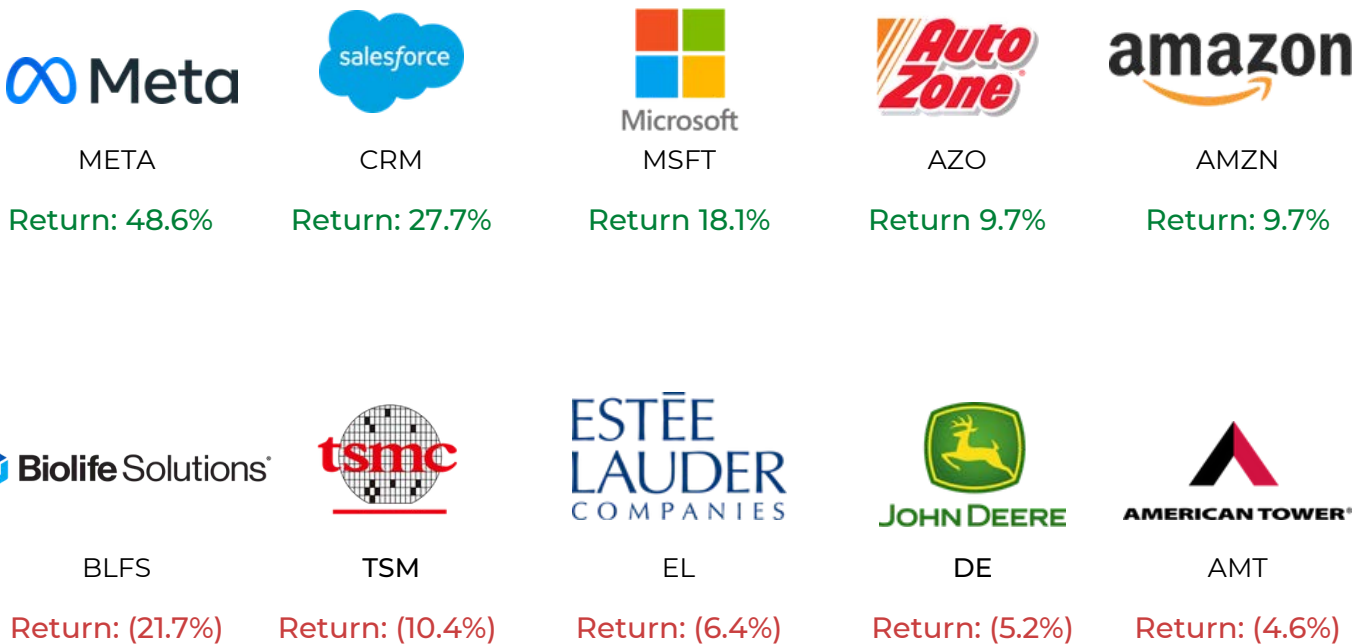


## SHARPE RATIO

AIM consistently outperforms its benchmark across all time horizons even when accounting for the risk profile of the portfolio. We have a higher Sharpe Ratio than the Russell 3000 benchmark since inception and for all reporting periods. This risk-adjusted performance is also reflected in a rolling monthly alpha of 20 bps since inception.



## TOP AND BOTTOM PERFORMERS (3 MONTH)







**JOHN BOBZIEN**

EY-Parthenon  
Meta Platforms, Delta Air Lines



**JAY BROCKHOFF**

Baird  
Workday, Cintas



**GRIFFIN CASELLA**

Houlihan Lokey  
Dominos, Mondelez



**WILL DELAMATER**

BMO  
Zoetis, Live Nation



**MACKENZIE DEVINE**

Evercore  
Mastercard, Warner Brothers Discovery



**PATRICK FELDMEIER**

GTCR  
Amazon, Perimeter Solutions



## LUKE FIELDING

Jefferies  
BioLife Solutions, Six Flags



## MAX FORBES

Goldman Sachs  
Alphabet, Stryker



## VISHRUT KHANDELWAL

Sixth Street  
Raytheon, IDT Corporation



## NAT LANDAU

Bank of America  
Weyerhaeuser, Lending Tree



## LUKE LANIGAN

Evercore  
AutoZone, Crown Holdings



## MEGAN LULLEY

Goldman Sachs  
Enterprise Products Partners, Palo Alto



**CHRISTIAN MATURANA GENSKOWSKI**

PPG  
Microsoft, Albemarle



**MICHAEL MCGRATH**

Truist  
Taiwan Semiconductor, Murphy USA



**PETER MORRISROE**

Raymond James  
Verra Mobility, CrowdStrike



**PETER MURRAY**

Brentwood Capital Advisors  
American Tower, TJX Companies



**DIANNA O'HARA**

Undecided  
Masco, Chewy



**NICO PEREZ IGUARAN**

UBS  
Willis Towers Watson, Manchester United



**NABEEL SAAD**

Undecided  
Micron, Graphic Packaging



**SEAN SEIDL**

BMO  
Salesforce, ICF International



**PAVEL SORKIN**

Caterpillar  
Deere & Company, Tesla



**JAKE STAPLETON**

Midland Trust  
Intuit, United Rentals



**MATT WOLFF**

William Blair  
Estee Lauder, Enhabit



**KELLEY WRIGHT**

Guggenheim  
Cirrus Logic, Movado



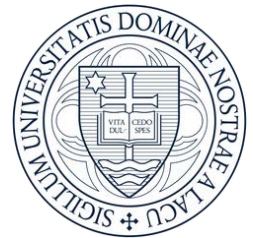
## HOPE YUAN

PJT

Verisk Analytics, Canada Goose

THE MENDOZA COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

THE UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME



APPLIED INVESTMENT MANAGEMENT LVI



# KIMBERLY FLYNN

Managing Director at XA Investments

*Kimberly Flynn, CFA is a founder and Managing Director of XA Investments where she is responsible for all product and business development activities. XA Investments has a proprietary closed-end platform and a consulting practice to assist clients with developing US and UK registered closed-end funds. Previously, Kim was Senior Vice President and Head of Product Development for Nuveen Investments' Global Structured Products Group.*

*Kim received her MBA degree from Harvard University and her BBA in Finance and Business Economics, summa cum laude, from the University of Notre Dame in 1999. Kim earned the Chartered Financial Analyst (CFA) designation and is a member of the CFA Institute and CFA Society of Chicago. Kim was recently selected to serve on the Notre Dame Wall Street leadership committee. She also serves as secretary of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Women's board executive committee and on the advisory board of Youth Guidance's Becoming A Man program. She is an active member of the University Club of Chicago and the Harvard Club of New York City.*

---

**Interviewer: As students, many of us have limited knowledge of alternative investment funds, such as closed-end-funds (CEFs), commodity pools, and business development companies (BDCs). Could you describe the work you do in product development and the difference between various product offerings?**

- Notre Dame students don't realize there are so many different career paths and opportunities in asset management for finance majors. My career has been focused on product development where I help portfolio managers build a product and then raise capital. My expertise is in the problem solving associated with launching registered closed-end funds. The types of products that we build are complex products built for retail investors and are registered with the SEC so they have a layer of governance. Listed CEFs, BDCs, interval funds and tender offer funds are all different types of registered closed-end funds.
- Closed-end funds are sister structures to a mutual fund or ETF which are forms of registered funds. Mutual funds and ETFs have liquidity limitations where a maximum of 15% of the portfolio can be held in illiquid investments. So how does an asset manager package up private credit or private equity for retail investors? Those types of alternative investments only fit in certain registered fund structures like the closed-end fund. The real benefit is that these product structures fit illiquid alternatives while providing investors some form of limited liquidity.
- Individual investors want access to institutional alternatives. Alternative investments are typically packaged in a private fund wrapper and sold to large institutional investors such as pension funds or endowments like the Notre Dame endowment. Retail investors have smaller investment minimums and do not want the complications of a K-1 tax form. Registered closed-end funds such as interval funds are ways for these individual investors to access alternatives.

- The burden for saving for retirement now falls on the shoulders of each retiree. The pool of defined benefit assets is continuing to shrink over time. Most individual investors do not have pensions but rather defined contribution plans such as 401Ks. I direct my retirement assets through Fidelity and don't have a professional money manager which is like many Americans. Being able to provide access to alternatives through these types of registered fund vehicles is very important.
- My firm has proprietary closed-end funds where we serve as the investment advisor. We also serve as a consultant to asset managers who are looking to launch new registered funds with alternative investment strategies.

**Interviewer: After graduating Notre Dame, you went to Harvard for your MBA and you also earned your CFA designation. What was your thought process at every step of the way?**

- I entered Notre Dame knowing that I wanted to go into business and studied Finance and Computer Applications. At Notre Dame, I was grounded in facts, figures and terminology. During my MBA studies, I learned how to think and develop action plans by applying what I had learned at Notre Dame. For me business school (MBA) was not about picking up any new skills or knowledge, it was about applying it. The Harvard case method taught me problem solving and forward planning. During the MBA course of studies, my focus was more on strategy and leadership objectives. If someone wants to be an entrepreneur or a CEO of a large company, it is highly valuable to pursue an MBA.
- For young professionals, the CFA program is a terrific self-study program for career advancement. I started studying for the CFA charter in my 3rd year of investment banking at Morgan Stanley. For finance professionals that do not want to take two years away from the workplace, the CFA program can be a great option. The CFA program is challenging and exam pass rates have gone down in recent years. CFA candidates must spend 150-250+ hours studying for the exam. Notre Dame students who join an investment banking program may struggle to make the free time to pursue a CFA charter.
- The CFA network is fairly concentrated within the fields of finance and asset management. In contrast, by enrolling in an MBA program you get the opportunity to spend time with people from many different industries with various roles from non-profit heads to venture capitalists. The MBA network is much more powerful given the shared experience than a self-study program like the CFA program.

**Interviewer: Let's now talk about leadership. You had leadership roles at HBS and currently serve as Managing Director at XA Investments. For those who are looking to develop their leadership skills, what advice can you give about best practices for managing people?**

- Early in your career, it is about getting practice and experience. As soon as practical when I became a Senior Analyst or Associate, I would try to get someone junior working with me to staff on projects. In my view, the only way to learn to be a manager is to get experience and train someone. Young managers become better because they learn how hard it is to transfer knowledge and to teach. When I came out of my MBA program, I started as an Associate on the product development team at Nuveen Investments. I did not have an analyst assigned to work with me and I knew that needed to change. All young leaders need a chance to practice their managerial skills.

- At Notre Dame, I served as President of the Notre Dame Junior Achievement group and Co-President of the Finance Club. At HBS, I served as President of the HBS Volunteers group. It was great fun and great experience to serve in these roles.
- MBA programs seek out students who demonstrate leadership and specifically continuity of leadership over time - showing that you consistently sought those leadership opportunities out. I now serve as the head of our asset management business and it wasn't a huge shift as I had that mentality from the beginning.

**Interviewer: Could you share more about how you developed your investment frameworks and strategy as you gained experience in the product development space?**

- My approach to investing is similar to how an asset allocation expert or Chief Investment Officer would think. I have had very rich experiences with a variety of asset classes for both traditional and alternative investment strategies. I could talk about private equity, currency forwards, commodity futures, or farmland investing as if I was a portfolio manager. However, that is not the capacity or the role that I play in the process. My role is to be an advocate for the portfolio manager by building unique investment products and raising capital.
- My product development work is spent focused mostly on alternative investments and rethinking traditional portfolio allocation frameworks such as the 60/40 stock/bond mix. If investors want different sources of risk and return, alternatives are a good way to deliver income and additional total return. Many US investors exhibit a bias in their investment portfolios with an overweight to US equities. My focus of the last few years has been trying to open up access to alternatives. From an investment philosophy perspective, how can you achieve an optimal asset allocation if you are only investing in US public equities?
- We seek to build new investment products where we see investor demand. We try to anticipate where advisors are moving money and build a product around it. We don't always get the timing right, but when people wanted energy MLPs in 2012 we built a registered product around it. When people wanted an inflation hedge in 2022, we built a farmland product. The work that we do at XA Investments is always timely and being driven by the dynamics in the capital markets.

**Interviewer: Any specific products where you see demand going forward?**

- The trend we see is alternative managers trying to access the growing retail marketplace. If you are an alternative manager and you have an illiquid strategy, retail investors cannot buy your private funds. They don't meet the minimums. The largest alternative investment firms including Blackstone, Apollo, and KKR are all building new types of registered funds to allow retail investors to access alternatives. We will see a lot more growth in these alternative registered fund structures.

**Interviewer: We'd love to hear about a favorite moment that you might remember from AIM, or from your college experience at large.**

- I lived on campus all four years in Lyons Hall and have life-long friends from the dorm. My husband Leo Flynn is also a Notre Dame finance graduate ('99) and was in AIM at the same time. My best friend Jennifer Sweeney was also in AIM and married a fellow AIM classmate. We are a small club of married AIM couples



- As a leader in the Notre Dame Finance Club, we took several trips to Wall St. and met with ND alumni. I have many fond memories of these trips along with the AIM NYC trip. These experiences were eye opening and convinced me to enter investment banking upon graduation. I was lucky to be recruited by several Notre Dame alumni to intern and then work full-time at Morgan Stanley in the Chicago office.

**Interviewer: As we're here at the Woman's Investing Summit, could you talk about your experience as a woman in finance? Have you noticed any changes in representation in the field since you came out of school?**

- When I was at Notre Dame, I was one of the top two finance students. Being a woman in finance or being different from other ND students did not occupy my thoughts. I was always treated fairly and with kindness and respect.
- While Morgan Stanley recruited largely diverse groups of students and a fairly high percentage of women, those numbers start to decline as women become more senior. As a banking analyst, it was clear there were a lack of senior women in investment banking and a lack of female role models with families. While there are more women overall in asset management than investment banking, women are still in the minority in asset management (especially areas like portfolio management). I have been blessed to have had many great male mentors and male sponsors who have propelled my career forward.
- For me, asset management has proven to be a great field with many different career pathways and opportunities. A career in asset management has allowed me to balance my career goals with my personal goals in a way that may have been more challenging in investment banking or management consulting. My husband and I both work full-time and have together made conscious career decisions to ensure that we have quality time with our two children Teddy and Rose.

# SPEED ROUND

## **Favorite Hobby**

Snow skiing

## **Favorite Restaurant**

Ever (Chicago)

## **Most Important Skill in Business**

Writing skills

## **Favorite Place on Campus**

St. Ed's, my husband's dorm that my son Edward is in part named after

## **Favorite Class at Notre Dame**

Freshman year honors humanities class where I learned to write

## **Favorite Professor at Notre Dame**

Katherine Spiess

## **Your 2023 Notre Dame Football Prediction**

I'm a Marcus Freeman fan so hoping for a strong 2023 season. With that said, I am a realist so I believe 2023 will have its rough patches and 2024 will be a bit better with all the new talent being recruited

