



**Al Frank**  
MUTUAL FUNDS

## **Statement of Additional Information**

Dated: May 1, 2025

### **Al Frank Fund**

### **Advisor Class Shares (Symbol: VALAX)**

This Statement of Additional Information (“SAI”) provides general information about the Al Frank Fund (the “Fund”), a series of Northern Lights Fund Trust II (the “Trust”). This SAI is not a prospectus and should be read in conjunction with the Fund’s current prospectus for Advisor Class shares of the Fund dated May 1, 2025 (the “Prospectus”), as supplemented and amended from time to time, which is incorporated herein by reference. To obtain a copy of the Prospectus free of charge, please write or call the Fund at the address or telephone number below:

**Al Frank Fund**  
**c/o Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC**  
**225 Pictoria Drive, Suite 450**  
**Cincinnati, OH 45246**  
**1-888-263-6443**

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## **The Trust**

The Al Frank Fund (the “Fund”) is a series of Northern Lights Fund Trust II, a Delaware statutory trust (the “Trust”) organized on August 26, 2010. The Fund was organized to acquire substantially all the assets of a predecessor fund, also known as the Al Frank Fund (the “Predecessor Fund”), a series of Advisors Series Trust, a Delaware statutory trust (the “Predecessor Trust”) effective January 18, 2013 (the “Reorganization”). The Reorganization was tax-free for the Fund and the Predecessor Fund and their respective shareholders.

The Trust is registered as an open-end management investment company. The Trust is governed by its Board of Trustees (the “Board” or “Trustees”). The Fund may issue an unlimited number of shares of beneficial interest. All shares of the Fund have equal rights and privileges. Each share of the Fund is entitled to one vote on all matters as to which shares are entitled to vote. In addition, each share of the Fund is entitled to participate equally with other shares (i) in dividends and distributions declared by the Fund and (ii) on liquidation to its proportionate share of the assets remaining after satisfaction of outstanding liabilities. Shares of the Fund are fully paid, non-assessable and fully transferable when issued and have no pre-emptive, conversion or exchange rights. Fractional shares have proportionately the same rights, including voting rights, as are provided for a full share.

The Fund is a diversified series of the Trust. The Fund’s investment objectives, restrictions and policies are more fully described here and in the Prospectus. The Board may add classes to and reclassify the shares of the Fund, start other series and offer shares of a new fund under the Trust at any time.

The Fund offers one class of shares: Advisor Class shares. Each share of the Fund is entitled to one vote on all matters as to which shares are entitled to vote. In addition, each share of the Fund is entitled to participate equally with other shares on a class-specific basis (i) in dividends and distributions declared by the Fund and (ii) on liquidation to its proportionate share of the assets remaining after satisfaction of outstanding liabilities. Shares of the Fund are fully paid, non-assessable and fully transferable when issued and have no pre-emptive, conversion or exchange rights. Fractional shares have proportionately the same rights, including voting rights, as are provided for a full share.

### **The Trust’s Agreement and Declaration of Trust - General**

Under the Trust’s Agreement and Declaration of Trust, each Trustee will continue in office until the termination of the Trust or his/her earlier death, incapacity, resignation or removal. Shareholders can remove a Trustee to the extent provided by the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “1940 Act”) and the rules and regulations promulgated thereunder. Vacancies may be filled by a majority of the remaining Trustees, except insofar as the 1940 Act may require the election by shareholders. As a result, normally no annual or regular meetings of shareholders will be held unless matters arise requiring a vote of shareholders under the Agreement and Declaration of Trust or the 1940 Act.

The Trust is not required to and does not intend to hold annual meetings of shareholders.

### **The Trust’s Agreement and Declaration of Trust – Shareholder Derivative Actions**

A shareholder may bring derivative action on behalf of the Trust only if the shareholder or shareholders first make a pre-suit demand upon the Trustees to bring the subject action unless an effort to cause the Trustees to bring such action is excused. A demand on the Trustees shall only be excused if a majority of the Board of Trustees, or a majority of any committee established by the Board to consider the merits of such action, has a personal financial interest in the action at issue.

Kovitz Investment Group Partners, LLC (the “Adviser”) serves as the investment adviser to the Fund.

## **Investment Policies, Strategies and Associated Risks**

The investment objective of the Fund is long-term capital appreciation. The investment objective of the Fund and the descriptions of the Fund's principal investment strategies are set forth under "Investment Strategies, Related Risks and Disclosure of Portfolio Holdings" in the Prospectus. The Fund's investment objective is not fundamental and may be changed without the approval of a majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Trust, although the Fund will provide shareholders with notice of any change to the Fund's investment objectives at least 60 days prior to such change.

The following pages contain more detailed information about the types of instruments in which the Fund may invest, strategies the Adviser may employ in pursuit of the Fund's investment objective and a summary of related risks.

### **Equity Securities**

By investing in stocks, the Fund may expose your investment to a sudden decline in a holding's share price or an overall decline in the stock market. In addition, as with any stock fund, the value of your investment in the Fund will fluctuate on a day-to-day cyclical basis with movements in the stock market, as well as in response to the activities of individual companies in which the Fund invests. In addition, individual companies may report poor results or be negatively affected by industry and/or economic trends and developments.

### **Common Stocks**

The Fund invests in common stocks. A common stock represents a proportionate share of the ownership of a company and its value is based on the success of the company's business, any income paid to stockholders, the value of its assets, and general market conditions. In addition to the general risks set forth in the Prospectus, investments in common stocks are subject to the risk that in the event a company in which the Fund invests is liquidated, the holders of preferred stock and creditors of that company will be paid in full before any payments are made to the Fund as holders of common stock. It is possible that all assets of that company will be exhausted before any payments are made to the Fund.

### **Preferred Stocks**

The Fund may invest in preferred stocks. A preferred stock is a blend of the characteristics of a bond and common stock. It can offer the fixed dividends of a bond and the equity ownership of a common stock. Unlike common stock, its participation in the issuer's growth may be limited. Preferred stock prices tend to fluctuate with changes in interest rates rather than the issuing company's business prospect. Preferred stock has priority claim over common stock in the receipt of dividends and in any residual assets after payment to creditors should the issuer be dissolved. Although the dividend is set at a fixed annual rate, in some circumstances it can be changed or omitted by the issuer.

### **Convertible Securities**

The Fund may invest in convertible securities. Traditional convertible securities include corporate bonds, notes and preferred stocks that may be converted into or exchanged for common stock, and other securities that also provide an opportunity for equity participation. These securities are convertible either at a stated price or a stated rate (that is, for a specific number of shares of common stock or other security). As with other fixed income securities, the price of a convertible security generally varies inversely with interest rates. While providing a fixed income stream, a convertible security also affords the investor an opportunity, through its conversion feature, to participate in the capital appreciation of the common stock into which it is convertible. As the market price of the underlying common stock declines, convertible securities tend to trade increasingly on a yield basis and so may not experience market value declines to the same extent as the underlying common stock. When the market price of the underlying common stock increases, the price of a convertible security tends to rise as a reflection of higher yield or capital appreciation. In such situations, the Fund may have to pay more for a convertible security than the value of the underlying common stock.

**Warrants**

The Fund may invest in warrants. Warrants are options to purchase equity securities at a specific price for a specific period of time. They do not represent ownership of the securities, but only the right to buy them. Hence, warrants have no voting rights, pay no dividends and have no rights with respect to the assets of the corporation issuing them. The value of warrants is derived solely from capital appreciation of the underlying equity securities. Warrants differ from call options in that the underlying corporation issues warrants, whereas call options may be written by anyone. Investments in warrants involve certain risks, including the possible lack of a liquid market for resale, potential price fluctuations as a result of speculation or other factors, and failure of the price of the underlying security to reach or have reasonable prospects of reaching a level at which the warrant can be prudently exercised (in which event the warrant may expire without being exercised, resulting in a loss of the Fund's entire investment therein).

**Small-Capitalization Companies**

The Fund may invest in companies with market capitalizations of less than \$1 billion (a "small-cap company"). Historically, stocks of small-cap companies have been more volatile than stocks of larger companies and are, therefore, more speculative than investments in larger companies. Among the reasons for the greater price volatility are the following: (1) the less certain growth prospects of small-cap companies; (2) the lower degree of liquidity in the markets for such stocks; and (3) the greater sensitivity of small-cap companies to changing economic conditions. Besides exhibiting greater volatility, small-cap company stocks may, to a degree, fluctuate independently of larger company stocks. Small-cap company stocks may decline in price as large company stocks rise, or rise in price as large company stocks decline. Due to these and other factors, small companies may suffer significant losses, as well as realize substantial growth. Thus, securities of small companies present greater risks than securities of larger, more established companies. You should therefore expect the value of the Fund's shares to be more volatile than the shares of a mutual fund investing primarily in larger company stocks.

Investments in small or unseasoned companies or companies with special circumstances often involve much greater risk than are inherent in other types of investments, because securities of such companies may be more likely to experience unexpected fluctuations in prices.

**Medium-Capitalization Companies**

The medium-capitalization companies ("mid-cap companies") in which the Fund may invest (\$1 - \$18 billion) may be more vulnerable to adverse business or economic events than larger companies. Historically, stocks of mid-cap companies have been more volatile than stocks of larger companies and may be considered to be more speculative than investments in larger companies. Thus, securities of mid-cap companies present greater risks than securities of larger, more established companies. You should consider that the value of the Fund's shares may be more volatile than the shares of a mutual fund investing primarily in larger company stocks.

**Investment Company Securities**

The Fund may invest in shares of other registered investment companies, including exchange-traded funds ("ETFs"), money market funds and other mutual funds, in pursuit of their investment objectives, subject to the limitations set forth in the 1940 Act. This may include investment in money market mutual funds in connection with the Fund's management of daily cash positions. Investments in the securities of other registered investment companies may involve duplication of management fees and certain other expenses. By investing in another investment company, the Fund will become a shareholder of that investment company. As a result, Fund shareholders indirectly will bear the Fund's proportionate share of the fees and expenses paid by shareholders of the other investment company, in addition to the fees and expenses Fund shareholders directly bear in connection with the Fund's own operations.

Section 12(d)(1)(A) of the 1940 Act generally prohibits the Fund from purchasing (1) more than 3% of the total outstanding voting stock of another fund; (2) securities of another fund having an aggregate value in excess of 5% of the value of the acquiring fund; and (3) securities of the other fund and all other funds having an aggregate value in excess of 10% of the value of the total assets of the acquiring fund. There are some exceptions, however, to these limitations pursuant to various rules promulgated by the SEC.

In accordance with Section 12(d)(1)(F) and Rule 12d1-3 of the 1940 Act, the provisions of Section 12(d)(1) shall not apply to securities purchased or otherwise acquired by the Fund if (i) immediately after such purchase or acquisition not more than 3% of the total outstanding stock of such registered investment company is owned by the Fund and all affiliated persons of the Fund; and (ii) the Fund is not proposing to offer or sell any security issued by it through a principal underwriter or otherwise at a public or offering price including a sales load that exceeds the limits set forth in Rule 2830 of the Conduct Rules of the Financial Industry Regulatory Authority ("FINRA") applicable to a fund of funds (i.e., 8.5%).

*Exchange-Traded Funds.* ETFs are open-end investment companies whose shares are listed on a national securities exchange. An ETF is similar to a traditional mutual fund, but trades at different prices during the day on a security exchange like a stock. Similar to investments in other investment companies discussed above, the Fund's investments in ETFs will involve duplication of management fees and other expenses since the Fund will be investing in another investment company. In addition, the Fund's investment in ETFs is also subject to its limitations on investments in investment companies discussed above. To the extent the Fund invests in ETFs which focus on a particular market segment or industry, the Fund will also be subject to the risks associated with investing in those sectors or industries. The shares of the ETFs in which the Fund will invest will be listed on a national securities exchange and the Fund will purchase or sell these shares on the secondary market at its current market price, which may be more or less than its net asset value ("NAV") per share.

As a purchaser of ETF shares on the secondary market, the Fund will be subject to the market risk associated with owning any security whose value is based on market price. ETF shares historically have tended to trade at or near their NAV per share, but there is no guarantee that they will continue to do so. Unlike traditional mutual funds, shares of an ETF may also be purchased and redeemed directly from the ETFs only in large blocks (typically 50,000 shares or more) and only through participating organizations that have entered into contractual agreements with the ETF. The Fund does not expect to enter into such agreements and therefore will not be able to purchase and redeem its ETF shares directly from the ETF.

### **Foreign Investments and Currencies**

The Fund may also invest in securities of foreign issuers ("foreign securities"), provided that they are publicly traded in the United States, including in American Depositary Receipts ("ADRs").

*American Depositary Receipts.* ADRs are depositary receipts for foreign securities denominated in U.S. dollars and traded on U.S. securities markets. These securities may not necessarily be denominated in the same currency as the securities for which they may be exchanged. These are certificates evidencing ownership of shares of a foreign-based issuer held in trust by a bank or similar financial institutions. Designed for use in U.S. securities markets, ADRs are alternatives to the purchase of the underlying securities in their national market and currencies. ADRs may be purchased through "sponsored" or "unsponsored" facilities. A sponsored facility is established jointly by the issuer of the underlying security and a depositary, whereas a depositary may establish an unsponsored facility without participation by the issuer of the depositary security. Holders of unsponsored depositary receipts generally bear all the costs of such facilities and the depositary of an unsponsored facility frequently is under no obligation to distribute shareholder communications received from the issuer of the deposited security or to pass through voting rights to the holders of such receipts of the deposited securities.

*Risks of Investing in Foreign Securities.* Investments in foreign securities involve certain inherent risks, including the following:

*Political and Economic Factors.* Investments in foreign countries involve a risk of local political, economic or social instability, military action or unrest, adverse diplomatic developments or other events (including, for example, military confrontations, war, terrorism, and disease/virus epidemics). Individual foreign economies of certain countries may differ favorably or unfavorably from the United States' economy in such respects as growth of gross national product, rate of inflation, capital reinvestment, resource self-sufficiency, diversification and balance of payments position. The internal politics of certain foreign countries may not be as stable as those of the United States. Governments in certain foreign countries also continue to participate to a significant degree, through ownership interest or regulation, in their respective economies. Action by these governments could include restrictions on foreign investment, nationalization, expropriation of goods or imposition of taxes, and could have a significant effect on market prices of securities and payment of interest. The economies of many foreign countries are heavily dependent upon international trade and are accordingly affected by the trade policies and economic conditions of their trading partners. Enactment by these trading partners of protectionist trade legislation could have a significant adverse effect upon the securities markets of such countries.

*Currency Fluctuations.* The Fund will invest only in securities denominated in U.S. dollars. For this reason, the value of the Fund's assets may not be subject to risks associated with variations in the value of foreign currencies relative to the U.S. dollar to the same extent as might otherwise be the case. Changes in the value of foreign currencies against the U.S. dollar may, however, affect the value of the assets and/or income of foreign companies whose U.S. dollar denominated securities are held by the Fund. Such companies may also be affected significantly by currency restrictions and exchange control regulations enacted from time to time.

*Taxes.* The interest and dividends payable on certain foreign securities of the Fund's portfolio may be subject to foreign withholding taxes, thus reducing the net amount of income available for distribution to the Fund's shareholders. Based on the principal investment strategies of the Fund, it is not expected that the Fund will be eligible to pass through to their shareholders any credits or deductions against their U.S. federal income tax with respect to any foreign withholding taxes paid by the Fund.

### **Short-Term Investments**

The Fund may invest in any of the following securities and instruments:

*Bank Certificates of Deposit, Bankers' Acceptances and Time Deposits.* The Fund may acquire certificates of deposit, bankers' acceptances and time deposits. Certificates of deposit are negotiable certificates issued against monies deposited in a commercial bank for a definite period of time and earning a specified return. Bankers' acceptances are negotiable drafts or bills of exchange, normally drawn by an importer or exporter to pay for specific merchandise, which are "accepted" by a bank, meaning in effect that the bank unconditionally agrees to pay the face value of the instrument on maturity. Certificates of deposit and bankers' acceptances acquired by the Fund will be dollar-denominated obligations of domestic or foreign banks or financial institutions which at the time of purchase have capital, surplus and undivided profits in excess of \$100 million (including assets of both domestic and foreign branches), based on latest published reports, or less than \$100 million if the principal amount of such bank obligations are fully insured by the U.S. Government. If the Fund holds instruments of foreign banks or financial institutions, they may be subject to additional investment risks that are different in some respects from those incurred by a fund that invests only in debt obligations of U.S. domestic issuers. See "Foreign Investments and Currencies" above. Such risks include future political and economic developments, the possible imposition of withholding taxes by the particular country in which the issuer is located on interest income payable on the securities, the possible seizure or nationalization of foreign deposits, the possible establishment of exchange controls, or the adoption of other foreign governmental restrictions which might adversely affect the payment of principal and interest on these securities.

Domestic banks and foreign banks are subject to different governmental regulations with respect to the amount and types of loans that may be made and interest rates that may be charged. In addition, the profitability of the banking industry depends largely upon the availability and cost of funds for the purpose of financing lending operations under prevailing money market conditions. General economic conditions as well as exposure to credit losses arising from possible financial difficulties of borrowers play an important part in the operations of the banking industry.

As a result of federal and state laws and regulations, domestic banks are, among other things, required to maintain specified levels of reserves, limited in the amount which they can loan to a single borrower, and subject to other regulations designed to promote financial soundness. However, such laws and regulations do not necessarily apply to foreign bank obligations that the Fund may acquire.

In addition to purchasing certificates of deposit and bankers' acceptances, to the extent permitted under their investment objectives and policies stated above and in their Prospectus, the Fund may make interest-bearing time or other interest-bearing deposits in commercial or savings banks. Time deposits are non-negotiable deposits maintained at a banking institution for a specified period of time at a specified interest rate.

*Savings Association Obligations.* The Fund may invest in certificates of deposit (interest-bearing time deposits) issued by savings banks or savings and loan associations that have capital, surplus and undivided profits in excess of \$100 million, based on latest published reports, or less than \$100 million if the principal amount of such obligations is fully insured by the U.S. Government.

*Commercial Paper, Short-Term Notes and Other Corporate Obligations.* The Fund may invest a portion of their assets in commercial paper and short-term notes. Commercial paper consists of unsecured promissory notes issued by corporations. Issues of commercial paper and short-term notes will normally have maturities of less than nine months and fixed rates of return, although such instruments may have maturities of up to one year.

Commercial paper and short-term notes will consist of issues rated at the time of purchase "A-2" or higher by S&P, "Prime-1" or "Prime-2" by Moody's, or similarly rated by another nationally recognized statistical rating organization or, if unrated, will be determined by the Adviser to be of comparable quality. These rating symbols are described in the Appendix.

Corporate obligations include bonds and notes issued by corporations to finance longer-term credit needs than supported by commercial paper. While such obligations generally have maturities of ten years or more, the Fund may purchase corporate obligations which have remaining maturities of one year or less from the date of purchase and which are rated "AA" or higher by S&P or "Aa" or higher by Moody's.

*Government Obligations.* The Fund may make short-term investments in U.S. Government obligations. Such obligations include Treasury bills, certificates of indebtedness, notes and bonds, and issues of such entities as the Government National Mortgage Association ("GNMA"), Export-Import Bank of the United States, Tennessee Valley Authority, Resolution Funding Corporation, Farmers Home Administration, Federal Home Loan Banks, Federal Intermediate Credit Banks, Federal Farm Credit Banks, Federal Land Banks, Federal Housing Administration, Federal National Mortgage Association ("FNMA"), Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation, and the Student Loan Marketing Association.

Some of these obligations, such as those of the GNMA, are supported by the full faith and credit of the U.S. Treasury; others, such as those of the Export-Import Bank of the United States, are supported by the right of the issuer to borrow from the Treasury; others, such as those of the FNMA, are supported by the discretionary authority of the U.S. Government to purchase the agency's obligations; still others, such



as those of the Student Loan Marketing Association, are supported only by the credit of the instrumentality. No assurance can be given that the U.S. Government would provide financial support to U.S. Government-sponsored instrumentalities if it is not obligated to do so by law.

As of September 7, 2008, the Federal Housing Finance Agency (“FHFA”) has been appointed to be the Conservator of the Federal Home Loan Mortgage Corporation and the FNMA for an indefinite period. In accordance with the Federal Housing Finance Regulatory Reform Act of 2008 and the Federal Housing Enterprises Financial Safety and Soundness Act of 1992, as Conservator, the FHFA will control and oversee the entities until the FHFA deems them financially sound and solvent. During the Conservatorship, each entity’s obligations are expected to be paid in the normal course of business. Although no express guarantee exists for the debt or mortgage-backed securities issued by the entities, the U.S. Department of Treasury, through a secured lending credit facility and a Senior Preferred Stock Purchase Agreement, has attempted to enhance the ability of the entities to meet their obligations.

The Fund may invest in sovereign debt obligations of foreign countries. A sovereign debtor’s willingness or ability to repay principal and interest in a timely manner may be affected by a number of factors, including its cash flow situation, the extent of its foreign reserves, the availability of sufficient foreign exchange on the date a payment is due, the relative size of the debt service burden to the economy as a whole, the sovereign debtor’s policy toward principal international lenders and the political constraints to which it may be subject. Emerging market governments could default on their sovereign debt. Such sovereign debtors also may be dependent on expected disbursements from foreign governments, multilateral agencies and other entities abroad to reduce principal and interest arrearages on their debt. The commitments on the part of these governments, agencies and others to make such disbursements may be conditioned on a sovereign debtor’s implementation of economic reforms and/or economic performance and the timely service of such debtor’s obligations. Failure to meet such conditions could result in the cancellation of such third parties’ commitments to lend funds to the sovereign debtor, which may further impair such debtor’s ability or willingness to service its debt in a timely manner.

### **Options on Securities**

*Purchasing Put and Call Options.* The Fund may purchase covered “put” and “call” options with respect to securities which are otherwise eligible for purchase by the Fund and with respect to various stock indices subject to certain restrictions, not in excess of 5% of the Fund’s total net assets. The Fund will engage in trading of such derivative securities exclusively for hedging purposes.

If the Fund purchases a put option, the Fund acquires the right to sell the underlying security at a specified price at any time during the term of the option (for “American-style” options) or on the option expiration date (for “European-style” options). Purchasing put options may be used as a portfolio investment strategy when the Adviser perceives significant short-term risk but substantial long-term appreciation for the underlying security. The put option acts as an insurance policy, as it protects against significant downward price movement while it allows full participation in any upward movement. If the Fund is holding a security which they feel has strong fundamentals, but for some reason may be weak in the near term, the Fund may purchase a put option on such security, thereby giving themselves the right to sell such security at a certain strike price throughout the term of the option. Consequently, the Fund will exercise the put only if the price of such security falls below the strike price of the put. The difference between the put’s strike price and the market price of the underlying security on the date the Fund exercises the put, less transaction costs, will be the amount by which the Fund will be able to hedge against a decline in the underlying security. If during the period of the option the market price for the underlying security remains at or above the put’s strike price, the put will expire worthless, representing a loss of the price the Fund paid for the put, plus transaction costs. If the price of the underlying security increases, the profit the Fund realizes on the sale of the security will be reduced by the premium paid for the put option less any amount for which the put may be sold.

If the Fund purchases a call option, they acquire the right to purchase the underlying security at a specified price at any time during the term of the option. The purchase of a call option is a type of insurance policy to hedge against losses that could occur if the Fund has a short position in the underlying security and the security thereafter increases in price. The Fund will exercise a call option only if the price of the underlying security is above the strike price at the time of exercise. If during the option period the market price for the underlying security remains at or below the strike price of the call option, the option will expire worthless, representing a loss of the price paid for the option, plus transaction costs. If the call option has been purchased to hedge a short position of the Fund in the underlying security and the price of the underlying security thereafter falls, the profit the Fund realizes on the cover of the short position in the security will be reduced by the premium paid for the call option less any amount for which such option may be sold.

Prior to exercise or expiration, an option may be sold when it has remaining value by a purchaser through a “closing sale transaction,” which is accomplished by selling an option of the same series as the option previously purchased. The Fund generally will purchase only those options for which the Adviser believes there is an active secondary market to facilitate closing transactions.

*Writing Call Options.* The Fund may write covered call options. A call option is “covered” if the Fund owns the security underlying the call or have an absolute right to acquire the security without additional cash consideration (or, if additional cash consideration is required, cash or cash equivalents in such amount as are held in a segregated account by the Custodian). The writer of a call option receives a premium and gives the purchaser the right to buy the security underlying the option at the exercise price. The writer has the obligation upon exercise of the option to deliver the underlying security against payment of the exercise price during the option period. If the writer of an exchange-traded option wishes to terminate his obligation, he may effect a “closing purchase transaction.” This is accomplished by buying an option of the same series as the option previously written. A writer may not effect a closing purchase transaction after it has been notified of the exercise of an option.

Effecting a closing transaction in the case of a written call option will permit the Fund to write another call option on the underlying security with either a different exercise price, expiration date or both. Also, effecting a closing transaction will permit the cash or proceeds from the concurrent sale of any securities subject to the option to be used for other investments of the Fund. If the Fund desires to sell a particular security from their portfolios on which they have written a call option, it will effect a closing transaction prior to or concurrent with the sale of the security.

The Fund will realize a gain from a closing transaction if the cost of the closing transaction is less than the premium received from writing the option or if the proceeds from the closing transaction are more than the premium paid to purchase the option. The Fund will realize a loss from a closing transaction if the cost of the closing transaction is more than the premium received from writing the option or if the proceeds from the closing transaction are less than the premium paid to purchase the option. However, because increases in the market price of a call option will generally reflect increases in the market price of the underlying security, any loss to the Fund resulting from the repurchase of a call option is likely to be offset in whole or in part by appreciation of the underlying security owned by the Fund.

In addition to covered call options, the Fund may write uncovered (or “naked”) call options on securities, including ETFs, and indices; however, SEC rules require that the Fund segregate assets on its books and records with a value equal to the value of the securities or the index that the holder of the option is entitled to call. The Fund will comply with guidelines established by the SEC. Segregated securities cannot be sold while the option strategy is outstanding, unless they are replaced with other suitable assets. As a result, there is a possibility that segregation of a large percentage of the Fund’s assets could impede portfolio management of the Fund’s ability to meet redemption requests or other current obligations.

*Stock Index Options.* The Fund may also purchase put and call options with respect to the S&P 500® Index and other stock indices. Such options may be purchased as a hedge against changes resulting from market conditions in the values of securities which are held in the Fund's portfolio or which it intends to purchase or sell, or when they are economically appropriate for the reduction of risks inherent in the ongoing management of the Fund.

The distinctive characteristics of options on stock indices create certain risks that are not present with stock options generally. Because the value of an index option depends upon movements in the level of the index rather than the price of a particular stock, whether the Fund will realize a gain or loss on the purchase or sale of an option on an index depends upon movements in the level of stock prices in the stock market generally rather than movements in the price of a particular stock. Accordingly, successful use by the Fund of options on a stock index would be subject to the Adviser's ability to predict correctly movements in the direction of the stock market generally. This requires different skills and techniques than predicting changes in the price of individual stocks.

Index prices may be distorted if trading of certain stocks included in the index is interrupted. Trading of index options also may be interrupted in certain circumstances, such as if trading were halted in a substantial number of stocks included in the index. If this were to occur, the Fund would not be able to close out options which they had purchased, and if restrictions on exercise were imposed, the Fund might be unable to exercise an option they hold, which could result in substantial losses to the Fund. It is the policy of the Fund to purchase put or call options only with respect to an index, which the Adviser believes includes a sufficient number of stocks to minimize the likelihood of a trading halt in the index.

*Risks of Investing in Options.* There are several risks associated with transactions in options on securities and indices. Options may be more volatile than the underlying securities and, therefore, on a percentage basis, an investment in options may be subject to greater fluctuation than an investment in the underlying securities themselves. There are also significant differences between the securities and options markets that could result in an imperfect correlation between these markets, causing a given transaction not to achieve its objective. In addition, a liquid secondary market for particular options may be absent for reasons which include the following: there may be insufficient trading interest in certain options; restrictions may be imposed by an exchange on opening transactions or closing transactions or both; trading halts, suspensions or other restrictions may be imposed with respect to particular classes or series of options of underlying securities; unusual or unforeseen circumstances may interrupt normal operations on an exchange; the facilities of an exchange or clearing corporation may not at all times be adequate to handle current trading volume; or one or more exchanges could, for economic or other reasons, decide or be compelled at some future date to discontinue the trading of options (or a particular class or series of options), in which event the secondary market on that exchange (or in that class or series of options) would cease to exist, although outstanding options that had been issued by a clearing corporation as a result of trades on that exchange would continue to be exercisable in accordance with their terms.

A decision as to whether, when and how to use options involves the exercise of skill and judgment, and even a well-conceived transaction may be unsuccessful to some degree because of market behavior or unexpected events. The extent to which the Fund may enter into options transactions may be limited by the Internal Revenue Code of 1986, as amended (the "Code"), requirements for qualification of the Fund as a regulated investment company. See "Dividends and Distributions" and "Tax Matters."

*Dealer Options.* The Fund may engage in transactions involving dealer options as well as exchange-traded options. Certain additional risks are specific to dealer options. While the Fund might look to a clearing corporation to exercise exchange-traded options, if the Fund were to purchase a dealer option they would need to rely on the dealer from which they purchased the option to perform if the option were exercised. Failure by the dealer to do so would result in the loss of the premium paid by the Fund as well as loss of the expected benefit of the transaction.

Exchange-traded options generally have a continuous liquid market while dealer options may not. Consequently, the Fund may generally be able to realize the value of a dealer option they have purchased only by exercising or reselling the option to the dealer who issued it. Similarly, when the Fund writes a dealer option, the Fund may generally be able to close out the option prior to its expiration only by entering into a closing purchase transaction with the dealer to whom the Fund originally wrote the option. While the Fund will seek to enter into dealer options only with dealers who will agree to and which are expected to be capable of entering into closing transactions with the Fund, there can be no assurance that the Fund will at any time be able to liquidate a dealer option at a favorable price at any time prior to expiration. Unless the Fund, as covered dealer call option writers, are able to effect a closing purchase transaction, they will not be able to liquidate securities (or other assets) used as cover until the option expires or is exercised. In the event of insolvency of the other party, the Fund may be unable to liquidate a dealer option. With respect to options written by the Fund, the inability to enter into a closing transaction may result in material losses to the Fund. For example, because the Fund must maintain a secured position with respect to any call option on a security they write, the Fund may not sell the assets which they have segregated to secure the position while they are obligated under the option. This requirement may impair the Fund's ability to sell portfolio securities at a time when such sale might be advantageous.

The Staff of the SEC has taken the position that purchased dealer options are illiquid securities. The Fund may treat the cover used for written dealer options as liquid if the dealer agrees that the Fund may repurchase the dealer option they have written for a maximum price to be calculated by a predetermined formula. In such cases, the dealer option would be considered illiquid only to the extent the maximum purchase price under the formula exceeds the intrinsic value of the option. Accordingly, the Fund will treat dealer options as subject to the Fund's limitation on illiquid securities. If the Staff of the SEC changes its position on the liquidity of dealer options, the Fund will change their treatment of such instruments accordingly.

*Spread Transactions.* The Fund may purchase covered spread options from securities dealers. These covered spread options are not presently exchange-listed or exchange-traded. The purchase of a spread option gives the Fund the right to put securities that they own at a fixed dollar spread or fixed yield spread in relationship to another security that the Fund does not own, but which is used as a benchmark. The risk to the Fund, in addition to the risks of dealer options described above, is the cost of the premium paid as well as any transaction costs. The purchase of spread options will be used to protect the Fund against adverse changes in prevailing credit quality spreads (*i.e.*, the yield spread between high quality and lower quality securities). This protection is provided only during the life of the spread options.

### **Repurchase Agreements**

The Fund may enter into repurchase agreements with respect to its portfolio securities. Pursuant to such agreements, the Fund may acquire securities from financial institutions such as banks and broker-dealers as are deemed to be creditworthy by the Adviser, subject to the seller's agreement to repurchase and the Fund's agreement to resell such securities at a mutually agreed upon date and price. The repurchase price generally equals the price paid by the Fund plus interest negotiated on the basis of current short-term rates (which may be more or less than the rate on the underlying portfolio security). Securities subject to repurchase agreements will be held by the Custodian or in the Federal Reserve/Treasury Book-Entry System or an equivalent foreign system. The seller under a repurchase agreement will be required to maintain the value of the underlying securities at not less than 102% of the repurchase price under the agreement. If the seller defaults on its repurchase obligation, the Fund will suffer a loss to the extent that the proceeds from a sale of the underlying securities are less than the repurchase price under the agreement. Bankruptcy or insolvency of such a defaulting seller may cause the Fund's rights with respect to such securities to be delayed or limited. Repurchase agreements are considered to be loans under the 1940 Act.

**When-Issued Securities, Forward Commitments and Delayed Settlements**

The Fund may purchase securities on a “when-issued,” forward commitment or delayed settlement basis. In this event, the Custodian will segregate liquid assets equal to the amount of the commitment in a separate account. Normally, the Custodian will set aside portfolio securities to satisfy a purchase commitment. In such a case, the Fund may be required subsequently to segregate additional assets in order to assure that the value of the account remains equal to the amount of the Fund’s commitment. It may be expected that the Fund’s net assets will fluctuate to a greater degree when it sets aside portfolio securities to cover such purchase commitments than when it sets aside cash.

The Fund does not intend to engage in these transactions for speculative purposes but only in furtherance of their investment objectives. Because the Fund will segregate liquid assets to satisfy their purchase commitments in the manner described, the Fund’s liquidity and the ability of the Adviser to manage them may be affected in the event the Fund’s forward commitments, commitments to purchase when-issued securities and delayed settlements ever exceeded 15% of the value of their net assets.

The Fund will purchase securities on a when-issued, forward commitment or delayed settlement basis only with the intention of completing the transaction. If deemed advisable as a matter of investment strategy, however, the Fund may dispose of or renegotiate a commitment after it is entered into, and may sell securities they have committed to purchase before those securities are delivered to the Fund on the settlement date. In these cases the Fund may realize a taxable capital gain or loss. When the Fund engages in when-issued, forward commitment and delayed settlement transactions, they rely on the other party to consummate the trade. Failure of such party to do so may result in the Fund incurring a loss or missing an opportunity to obtain a price credited to be advantageous.

The market value of the securities underlying a when-issued purchase, forward commitment to purchase securities, or a delayed settlement and any subsequent fluctuations in their market value is taken into account when determining the market value of the Fund starting on the day the Fund agrees to purchase the securities. The Fund does not earn interest on the securities they have committed to purchase until they are paid for and delivered on the settlement date.

**Illiquid Securities**

Typically, the Fund may hold up to 15% of its net assets in illiquid securities, including (i) securities for which there is no readily available market; (ii) securities the disposition of which would be subject to legal restrictions (so called, “restricted securities”); and (iii) repurchase agreements having more than seven days to maturity. A considerable period of time may elapse between the Fund’s decision to dispose of such securities and the time when the Fund is able to dispose of them, during which time the value of the securities could decline.

Restricted securities issued pursuant to Rule 144A under the Securities Act of 1933, as amended, that have a readily available market usually are not deemed illiquid for purposes of this limitation by the Fund. However, investing in Rule 144A securities could result in increasing the level of the Fund’s illiquidity if qualified institutional buyers become, for a time, uninterested in purchasing these securities.

**Lending Portfolio Securities**

The Fund may lend its portfolio securities in an amount not exceeding one-third of its total assets to financial institutions such as banks and brokers if the loan is collateralized in accordance with applicable regulations. Under the present regulatory requirements which govern loans of portfolio securities, the loan collateral must, on each business day, at least equal the value of the loaned securities and must consist of cash, letters of credit of domestic banks or domestic branches of foreign banks, or securities of the U.S. Government or its agencies. To be acceptable as collateral, letters of credit must obligate a bank to pay amounts demanded by the Fund if the demand meets the terms of the letter. Such terms and the issuing bank would have to be satisfactory to the Fund. Any loan might be secured by any one or more of the three types of collateral. The terms of the Fund’s loans must permit the Fund to reacquire loaned

securities on five days' notice or in time to vote on any serious matter and must meet certain tests under the Code.

The primary risk in securities lending is a default by the borrower during a sharp rise in price of the borrowed security resulting in a deficiency in the collateral posted by the borrower. The Fund will seek to minimize this risk by requiring that the value of the securities loaned be computed each day and additional collateral be furnished each day if required. In addition, the Fund is exposed to the risk of delay in recovery of the loaned securities or possible loss of rights in the collateral should the borrower become insolvent. As well, all investments made with the collateral received are subject to the risks associated with such investments. If such investments lose value, the Fund will have to cover the loss when repaying the collateral.

### **Borrowing**

The Fund is authorized to borrow money from time to time for temporary, extraordinary or emergency purposes or for clearance of transactions in amounts not to exceed at any time 1/3 of the value of their total assets at the time of such borrowings. The use of borrowing by the Fund involves special risk considerations that may not be associated with other funds having similar objectives and policies. Since substantially all of the Fund's assets fluctuate in value, while the interest obligation resulting from a borrowing will be fixed by the terms of the Fund's agreement with its lender, the NAV per share of the Fund will tend to increase more when its portfolio securities increase in value and to decrease more when its portfolio assets decrease in value than would otherwise be the case if the Fund did not borrow. In addition, interest costs on borrowings may fluctuate with changing market rates of interest and may partially offset or exceed the return earned on borrowed funds. Under adverse market conditions, the Fund might have to sell portfolio securities to meet interest or principal payments at a time when fundamental investment considerations would not favor such sales.

### **Short Sales**

Currently, the Fund does not engage in short selling, but the Board has authorized them to engage in short selling involving commitments (on a daily marked-to-market basis) not to exceed 25% of their net assets. In a short sale, the Fund sells a security that they do not own, in anticipation of a decline in the market value of the security. To complete the sale, the Fund must borrow the security (generally from the broker through which the short sale is made) in order to make delivery to the buyer. The Fund is then obligated to replace the security borrowed by purchasing it at the market price at the time of replacement. The Fund is said to have a "short position" in the securities sold until they deliver them to the broker. The period during which the Fund has a short position can range from one day to more than a year. Until the security is replaced, the proceeds of the short sale are retained by the broker, and the Fund is required to pay to the broker a negotiated portion of any dividends or interest which accrue during the period of the loan. To meet current margin requirements, the Fund is also required to deposit with the broker additional cash or securities so that the total deposit with the broker is maintained daily at 150% of the current market value of the securities sold short (100% of the current market value if a security is held in the account that is convertible or exchangeable into the security sold short within 90 days without restriction other than the payment of money).

Short sales by the Fund create opportunities to increase the Fund's return but, at the same time, involve specific risk considerations and may be considered a speculative technique. Since the Fund in effect profits from a decline in the price of the securities sold short without the need to invest the full purchase price of the securities on the date of the short sale, the Fund's NAV per share will tend to increase more when the securities they have sold short decrease in value, and to decrease more when the securities they have sold short increase in value, than would otherwise be the case if they had not engaged in such short sales. The amount of any gain will be decreased, and the amount of any loss increased, by the amount of any premium, dividends or interest the Fund may be required to pay in connection with the short sale. Furthermore, under adverse market conditions the Fund might have difficulty purchasing securities to meet their short sale delivery obligations, and might have to sell portfolio securities to raise the capital

necessary to meet their short sale obligations at a time when fundamental investment considerations would not favor such sales.

## **Additional Risks**

### **Risks Associated With Recent Market Events**

The Fund could lose money over short periods due to short-term market movements and over longer periods during more prolonged market downturns. The value of a security or other instrument may decline due to changes in general market conditions, economic trends or events that are not specifically related to the issuer of the security or other instrument, or factors that affect a particular issuer or issuers, country, group of countries, region, market, industry, group of industries, sector or asset class. During a general market downturn, multiple asset classes may be negatively affected. Changes in market conditions and interest rates generally do not have the same impact on all types of securities and instruments.

Global economies and financial markets are increasingly interconnected, which increases the possibility that conditions in one country or region might adversely impact issuers in a different country or region. Some countries, including the United States, have adopted and/or are considering the adoption of more protectionist trade policies, a move away from the tighter financial industry regulations that followed the financial crisis, and/or substantially reducing corporate taxes. Uncertainty with respect to these policies has recently resulted in increased volatility in the equity and debt markets. A rise in protectionist trade policies, and the possibility of changes to some international trade agreements, could affect the economies of many nations in ways that cannot necessarily be foreseen at the present time. In addition, geopolitical and other risks, including environmental and public health, may add to instability in world economies and markets generally. Economies and financial markets throughout the world are becoming increasingly interconnected. As a result, whether or not the Fund invests in securities of issuers located in or with significant exposure to countries experiencing economic, political and/or financial difficulties, the value and liquidity of the Fund's investments may be negatively affected by such events.

An outbreak of infectious respiratory illness caused by a novel coronavirus known as COVID-19 was first detected in China in December 2019 and developed into a global pandemic. COVID-19 resulted in travel restrictions, closed international borders, enhanced health screenings at ports of entry and elsewhere, disruption of and delays in healthcare service preparation and delivery, prolonged quarantines, cancellations, business and school closings, supply chain disruptions, and lower consumer demand, as well as general concern and uncertainty. Disruptions in markets can adversely impact a Fund and its investments. Further, certain local markets have been or may be subject to closures, and there can be no certainty regarding whether trading will continue in any local markets in which a Fund may invest, when any resumption of trading will occur or, once such markets resume trading, whether they will face further closures. Any suspension of trading in markets in which a Fund invests will have an impact on the Fund and its investments and will impact the Fund's ability to purchase or sell securities in such market. The outbreak could also impair the information technology and other operational systems upon which a Fund's service providers rely, and could otherwise disrupt the ability of employees of a Fund's service providers to perform critical tasks relating to the Fund. The impact of this outbreak has adversely affected the economies of many nations and the entire global economy and may impact individual issuers and capital markets in ways that cannot be foreseen. In the past, governmental and quasi-governmental authorities and regulators through the world have at times responded to major economic disruptions with a variety of fiscal and monetary policy changes, including direct capital infusions into companies and other issuers, new monetary policy tools, and lower interest rates. An unexpected or sudden reversal of these policies, or the ineffectiveness of such policies, is likely to increase market volatility, which could adversely affect a Fund's investments. Public health crises caused by the outbreak may exacerbate other preexisting political, social and economic risks in certain countries or globally. Other infectious illness outbreaks that may arise in the future could have similar or other unforeseen effects. The duration of this outbreak or others and their effects cannot be determined with certainty.

Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and corresponding events in late February 2022, have had, and could continue to have, severe adverse effects on regional and global economic markets for securities and commodities. Following Russia's actions, various governments, including the United States, have issued broad-ranging economic sanctions against Russia, including, among other actions, a prohibition on doing business with certain Russian companies, large financial institutions, officials and oligarchs; the removal by certain countries and the European Union of selected Russian banks from the Society for Worldwide Interbank Financial Telecommunications ("SWIFT"), the electronic banking network that connects banks globally; and restrictive measures to prevent the Russian Central Bank from undermining the impact of the sanctions. The current events, including sanctions and the potential for future sanctions, including any impacting Russia's energy sector, and other actions, and Russia's retaliatory responses to those sanctions and actions, may continue to adversely impact the Russian economy and may result in the further decline of the value and liquidity of Russian securities, a continued weakening of the ruble and continued exchange closures, and may have other adverse consequences on the Russian economy that could impact the value of Russian investments and impair the ability of the Fund to buy, sell, receive or deliver those securities. Moreover, those events have, and could continue to have, an adverse effect on global markets performance and liquidity, thereby negatively affecting the value of the Fund's investments beyond any direct exposure to Russian issuers. The duration of ongoing hostilities and the vast array of sanctions and related events cannot be predicted. Those events present material uncertainty and risk with respect to markets globally and the performance of the Fund and its investments or operations could be negatively impacted.

#### **Risks Related to Israel-Hamas War.**

In October 2023, armed conflict broke out between Israel and the militant group Hamas after Hamas infiltrated Israel's southern border from the Gaza Strip. In response, Israel declared war on Hamas and Israeli Defense Forces invaded the Gaza Strip. Events in Israel, Gaza, and the greater Middle East region are rapidly evolving, and the extent and duration of the Israel-Hamas war are impossible to predict.

Both actual hostilities, including the Israel-Hamas war described above, and the threat of future hostilities may have a significant adverse effect on Israel's economy, including increased volatility in the share price of companies based in or with operations in Israel, local securities trading suspensions, local securities market closures (including for extended periods), a lack of transparency concerning Israeli issuers or other local market information, and increased restrictions on foreign investment or repatriation of capital. Such hostilities or an attack also may escalate into a more wide-scale conflict with the potential for greater and far-reaching adverse effects in the region and globally. While it is not possible to predict the extent and duration of any such conflict, the resulting market disruptions could be significant, including in certain industries or sectors, such as the oil and natural gas markets, and may negatively affect global supply chains, inflation and global growth. These and any related events could significantly impact a Fund's performance and the value of an investment in the Fund, even if the Fund does not have direct exposure to Israeli issuers or issuers in other countries affected by the war.

#### **Government Intervention in Financial Markets Risk**

Instability in the financial markets may lead the U.S. government and foreign governments to take a number of unprecedented actions designed to support certain financial institutions and segments of the financial markets that may experience extreme volatility, and in some cases a lack of liquidity. U.S. federal and state governments and foreign governments, their regulatory agencies or self-regulatory organizations may take additional actions that affect the regulation of the securities in which the Fund invests, or the issuers of such securities, in ways that are unforeseeable. Issuers of corporate securities might seek protection under the bankruptcy laws. Legislation or regulation may also change the way in which the Fund itself is regulated. Such legislation or regulation could limit or preclude the Fund's ability to achieve its investment objective.



### **Fundamental Investment Limitations**

The Trust (on behalf of the Fund) has adopted the following restrictions as fundamental policies, which may not be changed without the favorable vote of the holders of a “majority of the outstanding voting securities of the Fund,” as defined in the 1940 Act. Under the 1940 Act, the “vote of the holders of a majority of the outstanding voting securities” means the vote of the holders of the lesser of (i) 67% of the shares of the Fund represented at a meeting at which the holders of more than 50% of its outstanding shares are represented or (ii) more than 50% of the outstanding shares of the Fund.

The Fund’s investment objectives are fundamental.

In addition, the Fund may not:

1. Issue senior securities, borrow money or pledge its assets, except that (i) the Fund may borrow from banks in amounts not exceeding one-third of its total assets (including the amount borrowed); and (ii) this restriction shall not prohibit the Fund from engaging in options transactions or short sales;
2. Purchase securities on margin, except such short-term credits as may be necessary for the clearance of transactions and except that the Fund may borrow money from banks to purchase securities;
3. Act as underwriter (except to the extent the Fund may be deemed to be an underwriter in connection with the sale of securities in its investment portfolio);
4. Invest 25% or more of its total assets, calculated at the time of purchase and taken at market value, in any one industry (other than U.S. Government securities);
5. Purchase or sell real estate or interests in real estate or real estate limited partnerships (although the Fund may purchase and sell securities which are secured by real estate and securities of companies which invest or deal in real estate);
6. Purchase or sell commodities or commodity futures contracts, except that the Fund may purchase and sell foreign currency contracts in accordance with any rules of the Commodity Futures Trading Commission;
7. Make loans of money (except for purchases of debt securities consistent with the investment policies of the Fund and except for repurchase agreements); or
8. Make investments for the purpose of exercising control or management.

The Fund observes the following restrictions as a matter of operating but not fundamental policy, pursuant to positions taken by federal regulatory authorities:

The Fund may not:

1. Invest in the securities of other investment companies or purchase any other investment company’s voting securities or make any other investment in other investment companies except to the extent permitted by federal securities law;
2. Hold, in the aggregate, more than 15% of its net assets in securities with legal or contractual restrictions on resale, securities that are not readily marketable and repurchase agreements with more than seven days to maturity;
3. Purchase or sell futures contracts; or
4. Invest in other investment companies advised by the same investment adviser as the Fund or in investment companies advised by affiliates of such adviser.

## **Management of the Fund**

### **Board of Trustees**

The management and affairs of the Fund are supervised by the Board of Trustees. The Board of Trustees consists of five individuals, four (4) of whom are not “interested persons” (as defined under the 1940 Act) of the Trust and the Adviser (“Independent Trustees”). The Trustees are fiduciaries for the Fund’s shareholders and are governed by the laws of the State of Delaware in this regard. The Board of Trustees establishes policies for the operation of the Fund and appoints the officers who conduct the daily business of the Fund.

### **Board Leadership Structure**

The Trust is led by Mr. Brian Nielsen, who has served as the Chairman of the Board since 2011. The Board of Trustees is comprised of Mr. Nielsen and four (4) other Independent Trustees. Under certain 1940 Act governance guidelines that apply to the Trust, the Independent Trustees will meet in executive session, at least quarterly. Under the Trust’s Agreement and Declaration of Trust and By-Laws, the Chairman of the Board is responsible for (a) presiding at board meetings, (b) calling special meetings on an as-needed basis, (c) setting the agendas for board meetings and (d) ensuring board members are provided necessary materials in advance of each board meeting. The Trust believes that (i) its Chairman, (ii) Keith Rhoades, the independent chair of the Audit Committee, and (iii), as an entity, the full Board of Trustees, provide effective leadership that is in the best interests of the Trust, each of its funds and each shareholder.

In accordance with the fund governance standards prescribed by the SEC under the 1940 Act, the Independent Trustees on the Nominating Committee select and nominate all candidates for Independent Trustee positions. Each Trustee was appointed to serve on the Board of Trustees because of his experience, qualifications, attributes and/or skills. The Board of Trustees reviews its leadership structure regularly on at least an annual basis. The Board of Trustees believes that the structure described above facilitates the orderly and efficient flow of information to the Trustees from the officers of the Trust, the advisers of the funds that comprise the Trust and other service providers, and facilitates the effective evaluation of the risks and other issues, including conflicts of interest, that may impact the Trust as a whole as well as the funds individually. The Board of Trustees believes that the orderly and efficient flow of information and the ability of the Board of Trustees to bring each Trustee’s experience and skills to bear in overseeing the Trust’s operations is important given the characteristics and circumstances of the Trust, including: the unaffiliated nature of each investment adviser and the fund(s) managed by such adviser; the number of funds that comprise the Trust; the variety of asset classes that those funds reflect; the net assets of the Trust; the committee structure of the Trust; and the independent arrangements of each of the Trust’s series. For these reasons, the Board of Trustees believes that its leadership structure is appropriate.

### **Board Responsibilities**

The Board of Trustees’ role is one of oversight rather than day-to-day management of any of the Trust’s series. The Trust’s Audit Committee assists with this oversight function. The Board of Trustees’ oversight extends to the Trust’s risk management processes. Those processes are overseen by Trust officers, including the President, the Treasurer, the Secretary and Chief Compliance Officer (“CCO”), who regularly report to the Board of Trustees on a variety of matters at Board meetings.

### **Board Risk Oversight**

The Board of Trustees is comprised of Mr. Nielsen, as Chairman, and four (4) other Independent Trustees with a standing independent Audit Committee with a separate chair. The Board is responsible for overseeing risk management, and the full Board regularly engages in discussions of risk management and receives compliance reports that inform its oversight of risk management from its CCO at quarterly meetings and on an ad hoc basis, when and if necessary. The Audit Committee considers financial and

reporting risk within its area of responsibilities. Generally, the Board believes that its oversight of material risks is adequately maintained through the compliance-reporting chain where the CCO is the primary recipient and communicator of such risk-related information and oversees the Trust's service providers' adherence to the Trust's policies and procedures.

Investment advisers managing the Trust's series report to the Trust's CCO and the Board of Trustees, on a regular and as-needed basis, on actual and possible risks affecting the Trust's series. These investment advisers report to the CCO and the Board of Trustees on various elements of risk, including investment, credit, liquidity, valuation, operational and compliance risks, as well as any overall business risks that could impact the Trust's series.

The Board of Trustees has appointed the CCO, who reports directly to the Board of Trustees and who participates in its regular meetings. In addition, the CCO conducts on-going and continuous compliance testing and presents an annual report to the Board of Trustees in accordance with the Trust's compliance policies and procedures. The CCO, together with the Trust's President, Treasurer and Secretary, regularly discusses risk issues affecting the Trust and its series during Board of Trustee meetings. The CCO also provides updates to the Board of Trustees on the operation of the Trust's compliance policies and procedures and on how these procedures are designed to mitigate risk. Finally, the CCO and/or other officers of the Trust report to the Board of Trustees in the event that any material risk issues arise in between Board meetings.

### **Trustee Qualifications**

Generally, the Trust believes that each Trustee is competent to serve because of their individual overall merits including: (i) experience, (ii) qualifications, (iii) attributes and (iv) skills. Mr. Nielsen has over twenty-four years of experience in the investment management and brokerage business including a focus in compliance, legal and regulatory oversight and possesses a strong understanding of the regulatory framework under which investment companies must operate. Since 2010, Thomas Sarkany has been the President of TTS Consultants, LLC, and since December 2022 has been the President of TTS Associates, Inc., each a financial services firm and from 1994 through 2010, Mr. Sarkany held various roles at Value Line, Inc. (a publicly held company providing financial research, publications and money management services to retail and institutional investors), including Director of Marketing and Asset Management, Director of Index Licensing, and member of the Board of Directors. Anthony Lewis has been Chairman and CEO of The Lewis Group USA, an executive consulting firm, for the past 10 years, and also serves as a Director, the Chairman of the Compensation Committee, and a Member of the Audit Committee of Torotel Inc. Keith Rhoades held various accounting roles at Union Pacific Railroad, including Senior Director – General Ledger/Financial Research. Mr. Skalla more than 20 years of investment management experience including serving as President of L5 Enterprises, Inc. since 2001 and from 2001 through 2017 Mr. Skalla was a member of the Orizon Investment Counsel Board. The Trust does not believe any one factor is determinative in assessing a Trustee's qualifications, but that the collective experience of each Trustee makes them each highly qualified.

The Board of Trustees has established three standing board committees – the Audit Committee, the Compensation Committee, and the Nominating Committee. All Independent Trustees are members of the Audit Committee, Compensation and the Nominating Committee. Inclusion of all Independent Trustees as members of all three standing committees allows all such Trustees to participate in the full range of the Board of Trustees' oversight duties, including oversight of risk management processes.

### **Trustees and Officers**

The Trustees and the officers of the Trust are listed below with their addresses, present positions with the Trust and principal occupations over at least the last five years. The business address of each Trustee and Officer is 225 Pictoria Drive, Suite 450, Cincinnati, OH 45246. All correspondence to the Trustees and Officers should be directed to c/o Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC, P.O. Box 541150, Omaha, Nebraska

**Independent Trustees**

| <b>Name and Year of Birth</b> | <b>Position/Term of Office*</b> | <b>Principal Occupation During the Past Five Years</b>  | <b>Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex** Overseen by Trustee</b> | <b>Other Directorships held by Trustee During the Past Five Years</b>   |
|-------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| Brian Nielsen<br>1972         | Trustee<br>Since May 2011       | Trustee of Northern Lights Fund Trust II (since 2011); Special Projects Counsel of NorthStar Financial Services Group, LLC (from 2018 to 2019).     | 1   | NONE  |
| Thomas T. Sarkany<br>1946     | Trustee since October 2011      | President, TTS Consultants, LLC (since 2010) (financial services firm); President, TTS Associates, Inc. (financial services) (since December 2022). | 1   | Director, Aquila Distributors; Trustee, Arrow ETF Trust; Trustee, Arrow Investments Trust; Trustee, Northern Lights Fund Trust IV   |
| Anthony H. Lewis<br>1946      | Trustee since May 2011          | Chairman and CEO of The Lewis Group USA (since 2007) (executive consulting firm).   | 1   | Director, Member of the Compensation Committee and Member of the Risk Committee of Torotel Inc. (Magnetics, Aerospace and Defense), Trustee, Chairman of the Fair Valuation Committee and Member of the Audit Committee of the Wildermuth Endowment Strategy Fund |
| Keith Rhoades<br>1948         | Trustee since May 2011          | Retired since 2008.   | 1   | NONE  |
| Randal D. Skalla<br>1962      | Trustee since May 2011          | President, L5 Enterprises, Inc. (since 2001) (financial services company).  | 1   | NONE  |

## Officers

| Name and Year of Birth  | Position/Term of Office*  | Principal Occupation During the Past Five Years   | Number of Portfolios in Fund Complex*** Overseen by Trustee | Other Directorships held by Trustee During the Past Five Years |
|-------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| Kevin Wolf<br>1969      | President since January 2013  | Vice President of The Ultimus Group, LLC and Executive Vice President, Head of Fund Administration and Product, Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC (formerly, Gemini Fund Services, LLC) (since 2019). President, Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC (formerly, Gemini Fund Services, LLC) (2012 - 2019). | N/A   | N/A  |
| Erik Naviloff<br>1969   | Treasurer since January 2013  | Vice President of Ultimus fund Solutions, LLC (formerly, Gemini Fund Services, LLC) (since 2012).   | N/A   | N/A  |
| Kent Barnes<br>1968     | Secretary since April 2024  | Vice President and Senior Management Counsel, Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC (since November 2023); Vice President, U.S. Bancorp Fund Services, LLC (November 2018 to November 2023).  | N/A   | N/A  |
| Emile Molineaux<br>1962 | Chief Compliance Officer and Anti-Money Laundering Officer since May 2011 | Senior Compliance Officer and CCO of Various clients of Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC (since 2011).  | N/A   | N/A  |
| Jared Lahman<br>1986    | Anti-Money Laundering Officer since January 2022                          | Compliance Analyst, Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC (since January 2019).  | N/A   | N/A  |

\* The term of office for each Trustee and Officer listed above will continue indefinitely.

\*\* As of December 31, 2024, the Trust was comprised of 24 active portfolios managed by unaffiliated investment advisers. The term “Fund Complex” applies only to the Fund and not to any other series of the Trust. The Fund does not hold itself out as related to any other series within the Trust for investment purposes, nor does it share the same investment adviser with any other series.

## **Board Committees**

Audit Committee. The Board has an Audit Committee, which is comprised of the Independent Trustees. The Audit Committee reviews financial statements and other audit-related matters for the Fund. The Audit Committee also holds discussions with management and with the Fund’s independent auditor concerning the scope of the audit and the auditor’s independence and will meet at least four times annually. During the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, the Audit Committee met ten times.

Nominating Committee. The Board has a Nominating Committee, which is comprised of the Independent Trustees. The Nominating Committee is responsible for seeking and reviewing candidates

for consideration as nominees for the position of trustee and meets only as necessary. The Nominating Committee generally will not consider shareholder nominees.

Compensation Committee. The Board has a Compensation Committee, which is comprised of the Independent Trustees. The role of the Compensation Committee is to oversee the evaluation of, and review and approve compensation for, the Independent Trustees. The Compensation Committee will generally meet annually.

## Trustee Compensation

Effective January 1, 2025, each Trustee receives a quarterly fee of \$22,500 (the “Trustee Fee”) to be paid at the beginning of each calendar quarter, allocated among each of the various portfolios comprising the Trust. Each Trustee is also reimbursed for any reasonable expenses incurred attending the regular quarterly meetings of the Trust. In addition to the Trustee Fee, the Audit Committee Chairman receives an additional quarterly fee of \$4,250 and the Chairman of the Trust receives an additional quarterly fee of \$5,600. For each special in-person meeting, each Trustee receives a \$2,500 special in-person meeting fee, as well as reimbursement for any reasonable expenses incurred attending the special in-person meeting, which, in those cases where the special in-person meeting, has been requested by a Fund adviser, such fees are generally paid by the requesting adviser. None of the executive officers receive compensation from the Trust.

Prior to January 1, 2025, each Trustee received a quarterly fee of \$21,250 (the “Trustee Fee”) paid at the beginning of each calendar quarter, allocated among each of the various portfolios comprising the Trust. Each Trustee received reimbursement for any reasonable expenses incurred attending the regular quarterly meetings of the Trust. In addition to the Trustee Fee, the Audit Committee Chairman received an additional quarterly fee of \$4,000 and the Chairman of the Trust received an additional quarterly fee of \$5,250. For each special in-person meeting, each Trustee received a \$2,500 special in-person meeting fee, as well as reimbursement for any reasonable expenses incurred attending the special in-person meeting, which, in those cases where the special in-person meeting had been requested by a Fund adviser, the fee was generally paid by the requesting adviser. None of the executive officers received compensation from the Trust.

The table below details the amount of compensation the Trustees are estimated to receive from the Trust during the Fund’s most recent fiscal year. The Trust does not have a bonus, profit sharing, deferred compensation, pension or retirement plan. The table below details the amount of compensation the Trustees received from the Trust during the year ended December 31, 2024.

| Name              | The Fund | Pension or Retirement Benefits Accrued as Part of Fund Expenses | Estimated Annual Benefits Upon Retirement | Total Compensation From Fund Complex*** Paid to Trustees |
|-------------------|----------|---|---|--|
| Thomas T. Sarkany | \$3,581  | None  | None                                      | \$3,581  |
| Anthony Lewis     | \$3,581  | None  | None                                      | \$3,581  |
| Keith Rhoades*    | \$4,280  | None  | None                                      | \$4,280  |
| Randal Skalla     | \$3,581  | None  | None                                      | \$3,581  |
| Brian Nielsen**   | \$4,475  | None  | None                                      | \$4,475  |

\* Mr. Rhoades also serves as chairman of the Audit Committee.

\*\* Mr. Nielsen also serves as Chairman of the Trust.

\*\*\*There are currently multiple series comprising the Trust. The term “Fund Complex” refers only to the Fund and not to any other series of the Trust. For the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024, aggregate Independent Trustees’ fees were \$462,000.

### Trustee Ownership

The following table indicates the dollar range of equity securities that each Trustee beneficially owned in the Fund and other series of the Trust as of December 31, 2024:

| Name of Trustee   | Dollar Range of Equity Securities in the Fund | Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities in All Registered Investment Companies Overseen by Trustee in Family of Investment Companies |
|-------------------|---|--|
| Thomas T. Sarkany | None  | None   |
| Anthony Lewis     | None  | None   |
| Keith Rhoades     | None  | None   |
| Randal Skalla     | None  | None   |
| Brian Nielsen     | None  | None   |

As of December 31, 2023, the Trustees and officers, as a group, owned less than 1.00% of the Fund's outstanding shares and the Fund Complex's outstanding shares.

### Control Persons and Principal Shareholders

A principal shareholder is any person who owns of record or beneficially 5% or more of the outstanding shares of the Fund. A control person is one who owns beneficially or through controlled companies more than 25% of the voting securities of the Fund or acknowledges the existence of control. A controlling person possesses the ability to control the outcome of matters submitted for shareholder vote by the Fund.

As of April 1, 2025, the following persons owned, beneficially or of record, 5% or more of a Class of shares of the Fund:

| Account Name and Address   | % Of Share Class Owned |
|--|------------------------|
| <b>Advisor Class Shares</b>  |                        |
| Charles Schwab & Co, Inc.<br>Special Custody Account FEBO Customers<br>ATTN: Mutual Funds<br>211 Main Street<br>San Francisco, CA 94105-1905 | 34.08%                 |
| National Financial Services LLC<br>For the Exclusive Benefit of our Customers<br>499 Washington Blvd, Fl 5<br>Jersey City, NJ 07310          | 17.32%                 |

### Investment Adviser

Kovitz Investment Group Partners, LLC, 71 S. Wacker Drive, Suite 1860, Chicago, IL 60606, serves as the investment adviser to the Fund pursuant to an Investment Advisory Agreement (the "Advisory Agreement"). The Adviser is SEC registered investment adviser and was founded in 2003. The Adviser is a wholly owned subsidiary of Focus Operating, LLC, which is a wholly owned subsidiary of Focus Financial Partners, LLC. Subject to such policies as the Board of Trustees may determine, the Adviser is ultimately responsible for investment decisions for the Fund. Pursuant to the terms of the Advisory Agreement, the Adviser provides the Fund with such investment advice and supervision as it deems necessary for the proper supervision of the Fund's investments.

After an initial period of two years, the Advisory Agreement will continue in effect from year to year only if such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by the Board of Trustees or by vote of a majority of the Fund's outstanding voting securities and by a majority of the trustees who are not parties to the Advisory Agreement or interested persons of any such party, at a meeting called for the purpose of voting on the Advisory Agreement. The Advisory Agreement is terminable without penalty by the Trust on behalf of the Fund upon 60 days' prior written notice when authorized either by a majority vote of the Fund's shareholders or by a vote of a majority of the Board of Trustees, or by the Adviser upon 60 days' prior written notice, and will automatically terminate in the event of its "assignment" (as defined in the 1940 Act). The Advisory Agreement provides that the Adviser, under such agreement, shall not be liable for any error of judgment or mistake of law or for any loss arising out of any investment or for any act or omission in the execution of portfolio transactions for the Fund, except for willful misfeasance, bad faith or negligence in the performance of its duties, or by reason of reckless disregard of its obligations and duties thereunder.

Under the Advisory Agreement, the Adviser, under the supervision of the Board, agrees (directly or through a subadviser) to invest the assets of the Fund in accordance with applicable law and the investment objectives, policies and restrictions set forth in the Fund's current Prospectus and Statement of Additional Information, and subject to such further limitations as the Trust may from time to time impose by written notice to the Adviser. The Adviser shall act as the investment adviser to the Fund and, as such shall (directly or through a subadviser) (i) obtain and evaluate such information relating to the economy, industries, business, securities markets and securities as it may deem necessary or useful in discharging its responsibilities here under, (ii) formulate a continuing program for the investment of the assets of the Fund in a manner consistent with its investment objective, policies and restrictions, and (iii) determine from time to time securities to be purchased, sold or retained by the Fund, and implement those decisions, including the selection of entities with or through which such purchases or sales are to be effected; provided, that the Adviser (directly or through a subadviser) will place orders pursuant to its investment determinations either directly with the issuer or with a broker or dealer, and if with a broker or dealer, (a) will attempt to obtain the best price and execution of its orders, and (b) may nevertheless in its discretion purchase and sell portfolio securities from and to brokers who provide the Adviser with research, analysis, advice and similar services and pay such brokers in return a higher commission or spread than may be charged by other brokers. The Adviser also provides the Fund with all necessary office facilities and personnel for servicing the Fund's investments, compensates all officers, Trustees and employees of the Trust who are officers, directors or employees of the Adviser, and all personnel of the Fund or the Adviser performing services relating to research, statistical and investment activities. The Advisory Agreement was approved by the Board of the Trust, including by a majority of the Independent Trustees, at a special meeting of the Board held on May 23, 2023.

In addition, the Adviser, directly subject to the supervision of the Board of Trustees, provides the management services necessary for the operation of the Fund and such additional administrative services as reasonably requested by the Board of Trustees, including a majority of the Independent Trustees. These services include providing such office space, office equipment and office facilities as are adequate to fulfill the Adviser's obligations under the Advisory Agreement; assisting the Trust in supervising relations with custodians, transfer and pricing agents, accountants, underwriters and other persons dealing with the Fund; assisting in preparing all general shareholder communications and conducting shareholder relations; assuring the Fund's records and the registration of the Fund's shares under federal securities laws and making necessary filings under state securities laws; developing management and shareholder services for the Fund; and furnishing reports, evaluations and analyses on a variety of subjects to the Trustees.

Pursuant to the Advisory Agreement, the Fund pays the Adviser a management fee at the annual rate of 1.00% of the Fund's average daily net assets. The fee is computed daily and payable monthly. The Adviser has agreed contractually to waive its management fee and to reimburse operating expenses



(exclusive of any front-end or contingent deferred sales loads, brokerage fees and commissions, acquired fund fees and expenses, borrowing costs (such as interest and dividend expense on securities sold short), and extraordinary expenses such as litigation at least until April 30, 2026, such that net annual fund operating expenses of the Fund does not exceed the percentages in the table below. This operating expense limitation agreement can be terminated only by, or with the consent of, the Board of Trustees. The Adviser is permitted to receive reimbursement from the Fund for fees it waived and Fund expenses it paid, subject to the limitation that: (1) the reimbursement for fees and expenses will be made only if payable within three years from the date the fees and expenses were initially waived or reimbursed; and (2) the reimbursement may not be made if it would cause the expense limitation in effect at the time of the waiver or currently in effect, whichever is lower, to be exceeded. Fee waiver and reimbursement arrangements can decrease the Fund's expenses and increase its performance.

|                             | <b><u>Expense Limitation</u></b> |
|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <b><u>Adviser Class</u></b> | 1.24%                            |

Expenses not expressly assumed by the Adviser under the Advisory Agreement are paid by the Fund. Under the terms of the Advisory Agreement, the Fund is responsible for the payment of the following expenses among others: (a) the fees payable to the Adviser, (b) the fees and expenses of Trustees who are not affiliated persons of the Adviser or Distributor (as defined under the section entitled ("The Distributor")) (c) the fees and certain expenses of the Custodian (as defined under the section entitled "Custodian") and Transfer and Dividend Disbursing Agent (as defined under the section entitled "Transfer Agent"), including the cost of maintaining certain required records of the Fund and of pricing the Fund's shares, (d) the charges and expenses of legal counsel and independent accountants for the Fund, (e) brokerage commissions and any issue or transfer taxes chargeable to the Fund in connection with its securities transactions, (f) all taxes and corporate fees payable by the Fund to governmental agencies, (g) the fees of any trade association of which the Fund may be a member, (h) the cost of share certificates representing shares of the Fund, (i) the cost of fidelity and liability insurance, (j) the fees and expenses involved in registering and maintaining registration of the Fund and of their shares with the SEC, qualifying its shares under state securities laws, including the preparation and printing of the Fund's registration statements and prospectuses for such purposes, (k) all expenses of shareholders and Trustees' meetings (including travel expenses of trustees and officers of the Trust who are directors, officers or employees of the Adviser) and of preparing, printing and mailing reports, proxy statements and prospectuses to shareholders in the amount necessary for distribution to the shareholders, and (l) litigation and indemnification expenses and other extraordinary expenses not incurred in the ordinary course of the Trust's business.

For the fiscal years ended December 31, the Fund paid the following advisory fees to Kovitz Investment Group Partners, LLC, pursuant to the Advisory Agreement, of which the adviser waived or recouped the amounts set forth in the following table:

|  | <b>Management Fees Paid During Fiscal Years Ended<br/>December 31,</b> |                    |                    |
|--|--|--------------------|--------------------|
|  | <b><u>2024</u></b>   | <b><u>2023</u></b> | <b><u>2022</u></b> |
| Management Fees Accrued                      | \$690,299  | \$639,880          | \$712,154          |
| Management Fees Waived by Adviser            | \$(159,025)  | \$(146,969)        | \$(129,083)        |
| Management Fees Recouped by Adviser          | \$0  | \$0                | \$0                |
| <b>Total Management Fees Paid to Adviser</b> | <b>\$531,274</b>   | <b>\$492,911</b>   | <b>\$583,071</b>   |

## Portfolio Managers

John Buckingham and Jason R. Clark are the portfolio managers responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund.

The Fund's Chief Investment Officer is John Buckingham. Mr. Buckingham is principally responsible for the day-to-day management of the Fund's portfolio. He is supported by an investment committee. Mr. Buckingham joined AFAM Capital in 1987 and Kovitz Investment Group in 2018, as part of the Kovitz acquisition of AFAM. Mr. Buckingham has more than 30 years of investment management experience and serves as Editor of The Prudent Speculator, which has been a trusted newsletter for over 40 years. He chairs the AFAM Investment Committee, leading a team that performs comprehensive investment research and financial market analysis. Mr. Buckingham has been featured in Barron's, The Wall Street Journal, and Forbes, and frequently contributes to CNBC, Bloomberg, and Fox Business News. Mr. Buckingham is a recognized industry contributor who regularly speaks at prominent industry seminars and events.

Jason R. Clark joined Kovitz Investment Group in 2018, as part of the Kovitz acquisition of AFAM Capital (which he joined in 2007). As a member of the investment team, Mr. Clark is responsible for performing in-depth microeconomic research and fundamental analysis of individual stocks and industries. In addition, he works directly with clients to provide customized account management. Mr. Clark is also a regular contributor to the firm's market commentary and newsletter. After serving in the United States Navy, Mr. Clark earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in finance, summa cum laude, from the University of West Florida. Mr. Clark is a CFA® charterholder and a member of the CFA Society.

The following table shows the number of other accounts managed by Mr. Buckingham and Mr. Clark and the total assets in the accounts managed within various categories as of December 31, 2024:

| Portfolio<br>Manager | Registered<br>Investment Companies<br>(excluding the Fund) |                                    | Other Pooled<br>Investment Vehicles |                                    | Other Accounts          |                                 |
|----------------------|--|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|
|                      | Number<br>of<br>Account                                    | Total Assets<br>in the<br>Accounts | Number<br>of<br>Account             | Total Assets<br>in the<br>Accounts | Number<br>of<br>Account | Total Assets in<br>the Accounts |
|                      | s  |                                    | s                                   |                                    | s                       |                                 |
| John Buckingham      | 0  | \$0                                | 0                                   | \$0                                | 929                     | \$860 million                   |
| Jason R. Clark       | 0  | \$0                                | 0                                   | \$0                                | 929                     | \$860 million                   |

## Material Conflicts of Interest

Where conflicts of interest arise between the Fund and other accounts managed by Mr. Buckingham and Mr. Clark, each will proceed in a manner that ensures that the Fund will not be treated materially less favorably. There may be instances where similar portfolio transactions may be executed for the same security for numerous accounts managed by Mr. Buckingham or Mr. Clark. In such instances, securities will be allocated in accordance with the Adviser's trade allocation policy.

## Portfolio Managers' Compensation

The Portfolio Managers' compensation is a fixed salary that is set by reference to industry standards. Bonuses paid to the Portfolio Managers are based on the profitability of the Adviser.

Mr. Buckingham's compensation is made up of salary and bonuses. Mr. Buckingham's salary is based on assets under management for private clients. The calculation does not include Fund performance or Fund assets under management. Mr. Buckingham's bonus is based on overall performance as measured by the Value Composite, an additional bonus is based on overall profitability of the Adviser. Mr. Buckingham's retirement plan consists of a SIMPLE IRA. The company matches 3% of gross pay to statutory limits.

Mr. Clark's compensation is salary-based with a bonus structure made up of profit sharing and growth of revenue on the private client group side of the Adviser's business. His retirement plan consists of a SIMPLE IRA. The company matches 3% of gross pay to statutory limits.

### **Portfolio Manager's Ownership of the Fund**

The following table shows the dollar range of equity securities beneficially owned by the portfolio managers of the Fund as of December 31, 2024:

| <b>Name of Portfolio Manager</b> | <b>Dollar Range of Equity Securities in Managed Fund</b> |
|----------------------------------|--|
| John Buckingham                  | Greater than \$100,000                                   |
| Jason R. Clark                   | \$10,001 and \$100,000                                   |

### **Other Service Providers**

#### **Administrator**

Pursuant to a Fund Services Agreement (the "Administration Service Agreement"), Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC ("UFS"), 4221 North 203rd Street, Suite 100, Elkhorn, NE 68022 (the "Administrator"), acts as administrator for the Fund, subject to the supervision of the Board. UFS is primarily in the business of providing administrative, fund accounting and transfer agent services to retail and institutional mutual funds. UFS is an affiliate of the Distributor. UFS may provide persons to serve as officers of the Fund. Such officers may be directors, officers or employees of UFS or its affiliates.

The Administration Service Agreement was initially approved by the Board at a meeting held on November 26, 2012. The Agreement shall remain in effect for 2 years from the date of the Fund's commencement of operations, and subject to annual approval of the Board for one-year periods thereafter. The Administration Service Agreement is terminable by the Board or UFS on 60 days' prior written notice and may be assigned provided the non-assigning party provides prior written consent. This Agreement provides that in the absence of willful misfeasance, bad faith or gross negligence on the part of UFS or reckless disregard of its obligations thereunder, UFS shall not be liable for any action or failure to act in accordance with its duties thereunder.

Under the Administration Service Agreement, UFS provides facilitating administrative services, including: (i) providing services of persons competent to perform such administrative and clerical functions as are necessary to provide effective administration of the Fund; (ii) facilitating the performance of administrative and professional services to the Fund by others, including the Fund's Custodian; (iii) preparing, but not paying for, the periodic updating of the Fund's Registration Statement, Prospectuses and Statement of Additional Information in conjunction with Fund counsel, including the printing of such documents for the purpose of filings with the SEC and state securities administrators, and preparing reports to the Fund's shareholders and the SEC; (iv) preparing in conjunction with Fund counsel, but not paying for, all filings under the securities or "Blue Sky" laws of such states or countries as are designated by the Distributor, which may be required to register or qualify, or continue the registration or qualification, of the Fund and/or their shares under such laws; (v) preparing notices and agendas for meetings of the Board and minutes of such meetings in all matters required by the 1940 Act to be acted upon by the Board; and (vi) monitoring daily and periodic compliance with respect to all requirements and restrictions of the 1940 Act, the Internal Revenue Code and the Prospectus.

For the services rendered to the Fund by the Administrator, the Fund pays the Administrator the greater of an annual minimum fee or an asset based fee, which scales downward based upon net assets for fund administration, fund accounting and transfer agency services. The Fund also pays the Administrator for any out-of-pocket expenses.

For the fiscal years ended December 31, the Fund paid the following administration fees:

| <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| \$57,873    | \$55,342    | \$46,160    |

### **Fund Accounting**

UFS, pursuant to the Administration Service Agreement, provides the Fund with accounting services, including: (i) daily computation of net asset value; (ii) maintenance of security ledgers and books and records as required by the 1940 Act; (iii) production of the Fund's listing of portfolio securities and general ledger reports; (iv) reconciliation of accounting records; (v) calculation of yield and total return for the Fund; (vi) maintaining certain books and records described in Rule 31a-1 under the 1940 Act, and reconciling account information and balances among the Fund's custodian or Adviser; and (vii) monitoring and evaluating daily income and expense accruals, and sales and redemptions of shares of the Fund.

For the fiscal years ended December 31, the Fund paid the following fund accounting fees:

| <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| \$31,763    | \$31,463    | \$31,636    |

### **Transfer Agent**

UFS, 4221 North 203rd Street, Suite 100, Elkhorn, NE 68022, acts as transfer, dividend disbursing, and shareholder servicing agent for the Fund pursuant to a written agreement with the Fund. Under the agreement, UFS is responsible for administering and performing transfer agent functions, dividend distribution, shareholder administration, and maintaining necessary records in accordance with applicable rules and regulations.

For the fiscal years ended December 31, the Fund paid the following transfer agency fees:

| <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| \$38,255    | \$40,134    | \$39,824    |

### **Custodian**

U.S. Bank N.A., 1555 North River Center Drive, Suite 302, Milwaukee, WI 53212, (the "Custodian"), serves as the custodian of the Fund's assets pursuant to a Custody Agreement by and between the Custodian and the Trust on behalf of the Fund. The Custodian's responsibilities include safeguarding and controlling the Fund's cash and securities, handling the receipt and delivery of securities, and collecting interest and dividends on the Fund's investments. Pursuant to the Custody Agreement, the Custodian also maintains original entry documents and books of record and general ledgers; posts cash receipts and disbursements; and records purchases and sales based upon communications from the Adviser. The Fund may employ foreign sub-custodians that are approved by the Board to hold foreign assets.

### **Compliance Services**

Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC ("NLCS"), 4221 North 203rd Street, Suite 100, Elkhorn, NE 68022, an affiliate of GFS and the Distributor, provides a Chief Compliance Officer to the Trust as well as related compliance services pursuant to a consulting agreement between NLCS and the Trust. The Fund pays a compliance service fee to NLCS.

For the fiscal years ended December 31, the Fund paid the following fees to NLCS for compliance services:

| <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> | <u>2022</u> |
|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| \$24,183    | \$24,210    | \$23,448    |

### Legal Counsel

Alston & Bird, LLP, 950 F Street NW, Washington, D.C. 20004, serves as counsel to the Trust.  
Blank Rome LLP, 405 Lexington Avenue, New York, NY 10174, serves as counsel to the Independent Trustees.

### Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

Cohen & Company, Ltd., 1835 Market Street, Suite 310, Philadelphia, PA 19103, serves as the independent registered public accounting firm of the Fund.

### Distribution of Fund Shares

Northern Lights Distributors, LLC, located at 4221 North 203rd Street, Suite 100, Elkhorn, NE 68022 (the "Distributor") serves as the principal underwriter and national distributor for the shares of the Fund pursuant to an underwriting agreement with the Trust (the "Underwriting Agreement"). The Distributor is registered as a broker-dealer under the Securities Exchange Act of 1934 and each state's securities laws and is a member of FINRA. The offering of the Fund's shares are continuous. The Underwriting Agreement provides that the Distributor, as agent in connection with the distribution of Fund shares, will use reasonable efforts to facilitate the sale of the Fund's shares.

The Underwriting Agreement has an initial term of two years and will continue in effect only if such continuance is specifically approved at least annually by the Board of Trustees or by vote of a majority of the Fund's outstanding voting securities and, in either case, by a majority of the trustees who are not parties to the Underwriting Agreement or "interested persons" (as defined in the 1940 Act) of any such party. The Underwriting Agreement is terminable without penalty by the Trust on behalf of the Fund on 60 days' notice when authorized either by a majority vote of the Fund's outstanding voting securities or by vote of a majority of the Board of Trustees, including a majority of the trustees who are not "interested persons" (as defined in the 1940 Act) of the Trust, or by the Distributor on 60 days' notice, and will automatically terminate in the event of its "assignment" (as defined in the 1940 Act).

The following table sets forth the total compensation received by the Distributor for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024:

| <i>Fund</i>   | <i>Net Underwriting Discounts and Commissions</i> | <i>Compensation on Redemptions and Repurchases</i> | <i>Brokerage Commissions</i> | <i>Other Compensation</i> |
|---------------|---|--|------------------------------|---------------------------|
| AI Frank Fund | \$0   | \$0  | \$0                          | \$0                       |

\* The Distributor received \$17,203 from the Adviser as compensation for its distribution services to the Fund.

The Distributor may enter into selling agreements with broker-dealers that solicit orders for the sale of shares of the Fund and may allow concessions to dealers that sell shares of the Fund.

### Portfolio Transactions and Brokerage Allocation

Pursuant to the Advisory Agreement, the Adviser determines which securities are to be purchased and sold by the Fund and which broker-dealers are eligible to execute the Fund's portfolio transactions. Purchases and sales of securities in the OTC market will generally be executed directly with a "market-

maker” unless, in the opinion of the Adviser, a better price and execution can otherwise be obtained by using a broker for the transaction.

Purchases of portfolio securities for the Fund will be effected through broker-dealers (including banks) that specialize in the types of securities that the Fund will be holding, unless better executions are available elsewhere. Dealers usually act as principal for their own accounts. Purchases from dealers will include a spread between the bid and the asked price. If the execution and price offered by more than one dealer are comparable, the order may be allocated to a dealer that has provided research or other services as discussed below.

In placing portfolio transactions, the Adviser will use reasonable efforts to choose broker-dealers capable of providing the services necessary to obtain the most favorable price and execution available. The full range and quality of services available will be considered in making these determinations, such as the size of the order, the difficulty of execution, the operational facilities of the firm involved, the firm’s risk in positioning a block of securities and other factors. In those instances where it is reasonably determined that more than one broker-dealer can offer the services needed to obtain the most favorable price and execution available, consideration may be given to those broker-dealers that furnish or supply research and statistical information to the Adviser that they may lawfully and appropriately use in their investment advisory capacities, as well as provide other brokerage services in addition to execution services. The Adviser considers such information, which is in addition to and not in lieu of the services required to be performed by it under its Advisory Agreement with the Fund, to be useful in varying degrees, but of indeterminable value.

It is the Fund’s general policy to first seek to obtain the most favorable price and execution available in selecting a broker-dealer to execute portfolio transactions for the Fund. Weight is currently not given to the ability of a broker-dealer to furnish brokerage and research services to the Fund or to the Adviser. The Adviser retains the right to update this policy. In negotiating commissions with a broker or evaluating the spread to be paid to a dealer, the Fund may therefore pay a higher commission or spread than would be the case if no weight were given to the furnishing of these supplemental services, provided that the amount of such commission or spread has been determined in good faith by the Adviser to be reasonable in relation to the value of the brokerage and/or research services provided by such broker-dealer. The standard of reasonableness is to be measured in light of the Adviser’s overall responsibilities to the Fund.

Investment decisions for the Fund may or may not be made independently from those of other client accounts of the Adviser. In certain instances, investment decisions will be made similar to other accounts managed. In the case where the Fund uses similar strategies, applicable procedures will be taken to ensure trading allocations will be handled fairly and abide by all appropriate rules and regulations. Nevertheless, it is possible that at times identical securities will be acceptable for both the Fund and one or more of such client accounts. In such event, the position of the Fund and such client account(s) in the same issuer may vary and the length of time that each may choose to hold its investment in the same security may likewise vary. However, to the extent any of these client accounts seek to acquire the same security as the Fund at the same time, the Fund may not be able to acquire as large a portion of such security as it desires, or it may have to pay a higher price or obtain a lower yield for such security. Similarly, the Fund may not be able to obtain as high a price for, or as large an execution of, an order to sell any particular security at the same time. If one or more of such client accounts simultaneously purchases or sells the same security that the Fund is purchasing or selling, each day’s transactions in such security will be allocated between the Fund and all such client accounts in a manner deemed equitable by the Adviser, taking into account the respective sizes of the accounts and the amount being purchased or sold. It is recognized that in some cases this system could have a detrimental effect on the price or value of the security insofar as the Fund is concerned. In other cases, however, it is believed that the ability of the Fund to participate in volume transactions may produce better executions for the Fund. Notwithstanding the above, the Adviser may execute buy and sell orders for accounts and take action in

performance of their duties with respect to any of their accounts that may differ from actions taken with respect to another account, so long as the Adviser shall, to the extent practical, allocate investment opportunities to accounts, including the Fund, over a period of time on a fair and equitable basis and in accordance with applicable law.

The Fund is required to identify any securities of its “regular brokers or dealers” that the Fund has acquired during its most recent fiscal year. The Fund is also required to identify any brokerage transactions during its most recent fiscal year that were directed to a broker because of research services provided, along with the amount of any such transactions and any related commissions paid by the Fund.

The following brokerage commissions were paid by the Fund during the fiscal years ended December 31:

| <b>Aggregate Brokerage Commissions<br/>Paid During Fiscal Years Ended December 31,</b> |                    |                    |
|--|--------------------|--------------------|
| <u><b>2024</b></u>   | <u><b>2023</b></u> | <u><b>2022</b></u> |
| \$173  | \$122              | \$248              |

## **Portfolio Turnover**

Although the Fund generally will not invest for short-term trading purposes, portfolio securities may be sold without regard to the length of time they have been held when, in the opinion of the Adviser, investment considerations warrant such action. Portfolio turnover rate is calculated by dividing (i) the lesser of purchases or sales of portfolio securities for the fiscal year by (ii) the monthly average of the value of portfolio securities owned during the fiscal year. A 100% turnover rate would occur if all the securities in the Fund’s portfolio, with the exception of securities whose maturities at the time of acquisition were one year or less, were sold and either repurchased or replaced within one year. A high rate of portfolio turnover (100% or more) generally leads to above-average transaction costs, could generate capital gains that must be distributed to shareholders as short-term capital gains taxed at ordinary income tax rates (currently as high as 37%) and could increase brokerage commission costs. To the extent that the Fund experiences an increase in brokerage commissions due to a higher portfolio turnover rate, the performance of the Fund could be negatively impacted by the increased expenses incurred by the Fund and may result in a greater number of taxable transactions. For the fiscal years ended December 31, the Fund experienced the following portfolio turnover rates:

| <b>Portfolio Turnover<br/>During Fiscal Years Ended December 31,</b> |                    |
|--|--------------------|
| <u><b>2024</b></u>   | <u><b>2023</b></u> |
| 1.65%  | 1.59%              |

## **Code of Ethics**

The Fund, the Adviser, and the Distributor have each adopted Codes of Ethics under Rule 17j-1 of the 1940 Act. These Codes permit, subject to certain conditions, personnel of the Adviser, and Distributor to invest in securities that may be purchased or held by the Fund.

## **Proxy Voting Procedures**

The Board has adopted Proxy Voting Policies and Procedures (“Policies”) on behalf of the Trust, which delegate the responsibility for voting proxies of securities held by the Fund to the Adviser, subject to the Board’s continuing oversight. The Policies require that the Adviser vote proxies received in a manner consistent with the best interests of the Fund and its shareholders. The Policies also require the Adviser to present to the Board, at least annually, the Adviser’s Proxy Policies and a record of each proxy voted by the Adviser on behalf of the Fund, including a report on the resolution of all proxies identified by the

Adviser as involving a conflict of interest. Notwithstanding this delegation of responsibilities, however, the Fund retains the right to vote proxies relating to its portfolio securities. A copy of the Adviser's Proxy Voting Policies is attached hereto as Appendix B.

More Information. The actual voting records relating to portfolio securities during the 12-month period ended June 30 will be available without charge, upon request, by calling toll-free, 1-800-SEC-0330 or by accessing the SEC's website at [www.sec.gov](http://www.sec.gov).

### **Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Program**

The Trust has established an Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Program (the "Program") as required by the Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001 ("USA PATRIOT Act"). To ensure compliance with this law, the Trust's Program provides for the development of internal practices, procedures and controls, designation of anti-money laundering compliance officers, an ongoing training program and an independent audit function to determine the effectiveness of the Program. The Trust's secretary serves as its Anti-Money Laundering Compliance Officer.

Procedures to implement the Program include, but are not limited to, determining that the Fund's Distributor and Transfer Agent have established proper anti-money laundering procedures, reporting suspicious and/or fraudulent activity and a providing a complete and thorough review of all new opening account applications. The Trust will not transact business with any person or entity whose identity cannot be adequately verified under the provisions of the USA PATRIOT Act.

As a result of the Program, the Trust may be required to "freeze" the account of a shareholder if the shareholder appears to be involved in suspicious activity or if certain account information matches information on government lists of known terrorists or other suspicious persons, or the Trust may be required to transfer the account or proceeds of the account to a governmental agency.

### **Portfolio Holdings Information**

The Trust has adopted policies and procedures that govern the disclosure of the Fund's portfolio holdings. These policies and procedures are designed to ensure that such disclosure is in the best interests of Fund shareholders.

It is the Trust's policy to: (1) ensure that any disclosure of portfolio holdings information is in the best interest of Trust shareholders; (2) protect the confidentiality of portfolio holdings information; (3) have procedures in place to guard against personal trading based on the information; and (4) ensure that the disclosure of portfolio holdings information does not create conflicts between the interests of the Trust's shareholders and those of the Trust's affiliates.

The Fund discloses its portfolio holdings by mailing the annual and semi-annual reports to shareholders sixty days after the end of the fiscal year and semi-annual period. In addition, the Fund discloses its portfolio holdings reports on Forms N-CSR and Form N-PORT sixty days after the end of each quarter/semi-annual period. Further, the top ten portfolio holdings are generally made available to Morningstar within ten days of the end of each calendar quarter and remain available until new information for the next calendar quarter is posted.

The Fund may choose to make portfolio holdings information available to rating agencies such as Lipper, Morningstar or Bloomberg earlier and more frequently on a confidential basis.

Under limited circumstances, as described below, the Fund's portfolio holdings may be disclosed to, or known by, certain third parties in advance of their filing with the Securities and Exchange Commission on Form N-CSR or Form N-PORT. In each case, a determination has been made that such advance



disclosure is supported by a legitimate business purpose and that the recipient is subject to a duty to keep the information confidential.

**The Adviser.** Personnel of the Adviser, including personnel responsible for managing the Fund's portfolio, may have full daily access to Fund portfolio holdings since that information is necessary in order for the Adviser to provide their management, administrative, and investment services to the Fund. As required for purposes of analyzing the impact of existing and future market changes on the prices, availability, demand and liquidity of such securities, as well as for the assistance of portfolio managers in the trading of such securities, Adviser personnel may also release and discuss certain portfolio holdings with various broker-dealers.

**Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC.** Ultimus Fund Solutions, LLC is the transfer agent, fund accountant, administrator and custody administrator for the Fund; therefore, its personnel have full daily access to the Fund's portfolio holdings since that information is necessary in order for them to provide the agreed-upon services for the Trust.

**Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC.** Northern Lights Compliance Services, LLC provides compliance services to the Fund; therefore, its personnel have full daily access to the Fund's portfolio holdings since that information is necessary in order for them to provide the agreed-upon services for the Trust.

**U.S. Bank N.A.** U.S. Bank N.A. is custodian for the Fund; therefore, its personnel have full daily access to the Fund's portfolio holdings since that information is necessary in order for them to provide the agreed-upon services for the Trust.

**Cohen & Company, Ltd.** Cohen & Company, Ltd. is the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm; therefore, its personnel have access to the Fund's portfolio holdings in connection with auditing of the Fund's annual financial statements and providing assistance and consultation in connection with SEC filings.

**Alston & Bird, LLP.** Alston & Bird, LLP is counsel to the Trust; therefore, its personnel have access to the Fund's portfolio holdings in connection with review of the Fund's annual and semi-annual shareholder reports and SEC filings.

**Blank Rome, LLP.** Blank Rome, LLP is counsel to the Independent Trustees.

#### **Additions to List of Approved Recipients**

The Trust's Chief Compliance Officer is the person responsible, and whose prior approval is required, for any disclosure of the Fund's portfolio securities at any time or to any persons other than those described above. In such cases, the recipient must have a legitimate business need for the information and must be subject to a duty to keep the information confidential. There are no ongoing arrangements in place with respect to the disclosure of portfolio holdings. In no event shall the Fund, the Adviser, or any other party receive any direct or indirect compensation in connection with the disclosure of information about the Fund's portfolio holdings.

#### **Compliance With Portfolio Holdings Disclosure Procedures**

The Trust's Chief Compliance Officer will report periodically to the Board with respect to compliance with the Fund's portfolio holdings disclosure procedures, and from time to time will provide the Board any updates to the portfolio holdings disclosure policies and procedures.

There is no assurance that the Trust's policies on disclosure of portfolio holdings will protect the Fund from the potential misuse of holdings information by individuals or firms in possession of that information.

## **Determination of Net Asset Value**

As indicated in the Prospectus under the heading "Share Price," the net asset value ("NAV") of the Fund's shares, by class, is determined by dividing the total value of the Fund's portfolio investments and other assets, less any liabilities, by the total number of shares outstanding of the Fund, by class.

Generally, the Fund's domestic securities (including underlying ETFs which hold portfolio securities primarily listed on foreign (non-U.S.) exchanges) are valued each day at the last quoted sales price on each security's primary exchange. Securities traded or dealt in upon one or more securities exchanges for which market quotations are readily available and not subject to restrictions against resale shall be valued at the last quoted sales price on the primary exchange or, in the absence of a sale on the primary exchange, at the mean between the current bid and ask prices on such exchange. Securities primarily traded in the National Association of Securities Dealers' Automated Quotation System ("NASDAQ") National Market System for which market quotations are readily available shall be valued using the NASDAQ Official Closing Price. The Board has appointed the Adviser as its designee (the "Valuation Designee") for all fair value determinations and responsibilities, other than overseeing pricing service providers used by the Trust. If market quotations are not readily available, securities will be valued at their fair market value as determined in good faith by the Fund's Valuation Designee in accordance with procedures approved by the Board and as further described below. Securities that are not traded or dealt in any securities exchange (whether domestic or foreign) and for which over-the-counter market quotations are readily available generally shall be valued at the last sale price or, in the absence of a sale, at the mean between the current bid and ask price on such over-the-counter market.

Certain securities or investments for which daily market quotes are not readily available may be fair valued by the Valuation Designee, pursuant to guidelines established by the Board, with reference to other securities or indices. Debt securities not traded on an exchange may be valued at prices supplied by a pricing agent(s) based on broker or dealer supplied valuations or matrix pricing, a method of valuing securities by reference to the value of other securities with similar characteristics, such as rating, interest rate and maturity. Short-term investments having a maturity of 60 days or less may be generally valued at amortized cost when it approximated fair value.

Exchange traded options are valued at the last quoted sales price or, in the absence of a sale, at the mean between the current bid and ask prices on the exchange on which such options are traded. Futures and options on futures are valued at the settlement price determined by the exchange. Other securities for which market quotes are not readily available are valued at fair value as determined in good faith by the Valuation Designee. Swap agreements and other derivatives are generally valued daily based upon quotations from market makers or by a pricing service in accordance with the valuation procedures approved by the Board.

Under certain circumstances, the Fund may use an independent pricing service to calculate the fair market value of foreign equity securities on a daily basis by applying valuation factors to the last sale price or the mean price as noted above. The fair market values supplied by the independent pricing service will generally reflect market trading that occurs after the close of the applicable foreign markets of comparable securities or the value of other instruments that have a strong correlation to the fair-valued securities. The independent pricing service will also take into account the current relevant currency exchange rate. A security that is fair valued may be valued at a price higher or lower than actual market quotations or the value determined by other funds using their own fair valuation procedures. Because foreign securities may trade on days when Fund shares are not priced, the value of securities held by the

Fund can change on days when Fund shares cannot be redeemed or purchased. In the event that a foreign security's market quotations are not readily available or are deemed unreliable (for reasons other than because the foreign exchange on which it trades closed before the Fund's calculation of NAV), the security will be valued at its fair market value as determined in good faith by the Fund's Valuation Designee in accordance with procedures approved by the Board as discussed below. Without fair valuation, it is possible that short-term traders could take advantage of the arbitrage opportunity and dilute the NAV of long-term investors. Fair valuation of the Fund's portfolio securities can serve to reduce arbitrage opportunities available to short-term traders, but there is no assurance that it will prevent dilution of the Fund's NAV by short-term traders. In addition, because the Fund may invest in underlying ETFs which hold portfolio securities primarily listed on foreign (non-U.S.) exchanges, and these exchanges may trade on weekends or other days when the underlying ETFs do not price their shares, the value of these portfolio securities may change on days when you may not be able to buy or sell Fund shares.

Investments initially valued in currencies other than the U.S. dollar are converted to U.S. dollars using exchange rates obtained from pricing services. As a result, the NAV of the Fund's shares may be affected by changes in the value of currencies in relation to the U.S. dollar. The value of securities traded in markets outside the United States or denominated in currencies other than the U.S. dollar may be affected significantly on a day that the New York Stock Exchange is closed and an investor is not able to purchase, redeem or exchange shares.

Fund shares are valued at the close of regular trading on the New York Stock Exchange (normally 4:00 p.m., Eastern time) (the "NYSE Close") on each day that the New York Stock Exchange is open. For purposes of calculating the NAV, the Fund normally use pricing data for domestic equity securities received shortly after the NYSE Close and does not normally take into account trading, clearances or settlements that take place after the NYSE Close. Domestic fixed income and foreign securities are normally priced using data reflecting the earlier closing of the principal markets for those securities. Information that becomes known to the Fund or its agents after the NAV has been calculated on a particular day will not generally be used to retroactively adjust the price of the security or the NAV determined earlier that day.

When market quotations are not readily available or deemed unreliable, the Fund may value securities at fair value as determined in good faith by the Valuation Designee, pursuant to procedures approved by the Board. Fair valuation may also be used by the Valuation Designee if extraordinary events occur after the close of the relevant market but prior to the NYSE Close.

### **Purchase of Shares**

Orders for shares received by the Fund in good order prior to the close of business on the NYSE on each day during such periods that the NYSE is open for trading are priced at NAV per share computed as of the close of the regular session of trading on the NYSE. Orders received in good order after the close of the NYSE, or on a day it is not open for trading, are priced at the close of such NYSE on the next day on which it is open for trading at the next determined NAV or offering price per share.

### **Redemption of Shares**

The Fund will redeem all or any portion of a shareholder's shares in the Fund when requested in accordance with the procedures set forth in the "Redemptions" section of the Prospectus. Under the 1940 Act, a shareholder's right to redeem shares and to receive payment therefore may be suspended at times:

- (a) when the NYSE is closed, other than customary weekend and holiday closings;
- (b) when trading on that exchange is restricted for any reason;
- (c) when an emergency exists as a result of which disposal by the Fund of securities owned by it is not reasonably practicable or it is not reasonably practicable for the Fund to fairly determine the value of its net assets, provided that applicable rules and regulations of the

SEC (or any succeeding governmental authority) will govern as to whether the conditions prescribed in (b) or (c) exist; or  
(d) when the SEC by order permits a suspension of the right to redemption or a postponement of the date of payment on redemption.

In case of suspension of the right of redemption, payment of a redemption request will be made based on the NAV next determined after the termination of the suspension.

The Fund may purchase shares of certain series which charge a redemption fee to shareholders (such as the Fund) that redeem shares of the underlying fund within a certain period of time (such as one year). The fee is payable to the underlying fund. Accordingly, if the Fund were to invest in an underlying fund and incur a redemption fee as a result of redeeming shares in such underlying fund, the Fund would bear such redemption fee. The Fund will not, however, invest in shares of an underlying fund that is sold with a contingent deferred sales load.

Supporting documents in addition to those listed under “Redemptions” in the Prospectus will be required from executors, administrators, Trustees, or if redemption is requested by someone other than the shareholder of record. Such documents include, but are not restricted to, stock powers, Trust instruments, certificates of death, appointments as executor, certificates of corporate authority and waiver of tax required in some states when settling estates.

### **Tax Status**

The Fund has elected to qualify and intends to continue to qualify to be treated as a regulated investment company under Subchapter M of the Code, for each taxable year by complying with all applicable requirements regarding the source of its income, the diversification of its assets, and the timing and amount of its distributions. The Fund’s policy is to distribute to its shareholders all of its investment company taxable income and any net realized capital gains for each fiscal year in a manner that complies with the distribution requirements of the Code, so that the Fund will not be subject to any federal income or excise taxes based on net income. However, the Board may elect to pay such excise taxes if it determines that payment is, under the circumstances, in the best interests of the Fund. If the Fund does not qualify as a regulated investment company, it may be taxed as a corporation.

In order to qualify as a regulated investment company, the Fund must, among other things, derive at least 90% of its gross income each year from dividends, interest, payments with respect to loans of stock and securities, gains from the sale or other disposition of stock or securities or foreign currency gains related to investments in stock or securities, or other income (generally including gains from options, futures or forward contracts) derived with respect to the business of investing in stock, securities or currency, and net income derived from an interest in a qualified publicly traded partnership. The Fund must also satisfy the following two asset diversification tests. At the end of each quarter of each taxable year, (i) at least 50% of the value of the Fund’s total assets must be represented by cash and cash items (including receivables), U.S. Government securities, the securities of other regulated investment companies, and other securities, with such other securities being limited in respect of any one issuer to an amount not greater than 5% of the value of such Fund’s total assets and not more than 10% of the outstanding voting securities of such issuer, and (ii) not more than 25% of the value of the Fund’s total assets may be invested in the securities of any one issuer (other than U.S. Government securities or the securities of other regulated investment companies), the securities of any two or more issuers (other than the securities of other regulated investment companies) that such Fund controls (by owning 20% or more of their outstanding voting stock) and that are determined to be engaged in the same or similar trades or businesses or related trades or businesses, or the securities of one or more qualified publicly traded partnerships. The Fund must also distribute each taxable year sufficient dividends to its shareholders to claim a dividends paid deduction equal to at least the sum of 90% of such Fund’s investment company taxable income (which generally includes dividends, interest, and the excess of net short-term capital gain over net long-term capital loss) and 90% of such Fund’s net tax-exempt interest, if any.

In addition to the taxable year 90% distribution requirement described in the previous paragraph, and in order to avoid the imposition of a nondeductible 4% excise tax, the Fund must distribute (or be deemed to have distributed) by December 31 of each calendar year (i) at least 98% of its ordinary income for such year, (ii) at least 98.2% of the excess of its realized capital gains over its realized capital losses for the 12-month period ending on October 31 during such year, and (iii) any amounts from prior years that were not distributed and on which no federal income tax was paid. The Fund intends to declare and pay dividends and other distributions, as stated in the Prospectus.

Net investment income generally consists of interest and dividend income, less expenses. Net realized capital gains for a fiscal period are computed by taking into account any capital loss carryforward of the Fund.

Under recently enacted legislation, capital losses sustained and not used in a taxable year may be carried forward indefinitely to offset capital gains of the Fund in future years.

Distributions of net investment income and net realized capital gains by the Fund will be taxable to shareholders whether made in cash or reinvested by the Fund in shares. Shareholders receiving a distribution from the Fund in the form of additional shares will have a cost basis for federal income tax purposes in each share so received equal to the NAV of a share of the Fund on the reinvestment date. Fund distributions also will be included in individual and corporate shareholders' income on which the alternative minimum tax may be imposed.

The Fund or the securities dealer effecting a redemption of the Fund's shares by a shareholder will be required to file information reports with the Internal Revenue Service ("IRS") with respect to distributions and payments made to the shareholder. In addition, the Fund will be required to withhold federal income tax on taxable dividends, redemptions and other payments made to accounts of individual or other non-exempt shareholders who have not furnished their correct taxpayer identification numbers and certain required certifications on the New Account application or with respect to which the Fund or the securities dealer has been notified by the IRS that the number furnished is incorrect or that the account is otherwise subject to withholding.

The Fund may receive dividend distributions from U.S. corporations. To the extent that the Fund receives such dividends and distributes them to its shareholders, and meets certain other requirements of the Code, corporate shareholders of the Fund may be entitled to the "dividends received" deduction. Availability of the deduction is subject to certain holding period and debt-financing limitations.

Distributions of net investment income and net short-term capital gains are taxable to shareholders as ordinary income or qualified dividend income. Under current law, distributions of certain qualified dividend income paid out of the Fund's investment company taxable income may be taxable to noncorporate shareholders at long-term capital gain rates, which are currently significantly lower than the highest rate that applies to ordinary income.

The Fund may be subject to foreign withholding taxes on dividends and interest earned with respect to securities of foreign corporations.

The use of hedging strategies, such as entering into futures contracts and forward contracts and purchasing options, involves complex rules that will determine the character and timing of recognition of the income received in connection therewith by the Fund. Income from foreign currencies (except certain gains therefrom that may be excluded by future regulations) and income from transactions in options, futures contracts and forward contracts derived by the Fund with respect to its business of investing in securities or foreign currencies will qualify as permissible income under Subchapter M of the Code.

For accounting purposes, when the Fund purchases an option, the premium paid by the Fund is recorded as an asset and is subsequently adjusted to the current market value of the option. Any gain or loss realized by the Fund upon the expiration or sale of such options held by the Fund generally will be capital gain or loss.

Any security, option, or other position entered into or held by the Fund that substantially diminishes the Fund's risk of loss from any other position held by the Fund may constitute a "straddle" for federal income tax purposes. In general, straddles are subject to certain rules that may affect the amount, character and timing of the Fund's gains and losses with respect to straddle positions by requiring, among other things, that the loss realized on disposition of one position of a straddle be deferred until gain is realized on disposition of the offsetting position; that the Fund's holding period in certain straddle positions not begin until the straddle is terminated (possibly resulting in the gain being treated as short-term capital gain rather than long-term capital gain); and that losses recognized with respect to certain straddle positions, which would otherwise constitute short-term capital losses, be treated as long-term capital losses. Different elections are available to the Fund that may mitigate the effects of the straddle rules.

Certain options, futures contracts and forward contracts that are subject to Section 1256 of the Code ("Section 1256 Contracts") and that are held by the Fund at the end of its taxable year generally will be required to be "marked to market" for federal income tax purposes, that is, deemed to have been sold at market value. Sixty percent of any net gain or loss recognized on these deemed sales and 60% of any net gain or loss realized from any actual sales of Section 1256 Contracts will be treated as long-term capital gain or loss, and the balance will be treated as short-term capital gain or loss.

Section 988 of the Code contains special tax rules applicable to certain foreign currency transactions that may affect the amount, timing and character of income, gain or loss recognized by the Fund. Under these rules, foreign exchange gain or loss realized with respect to foreign currency-denominated debt instruments, foreign currency forward contracts, foreign currency denominated payables and receivables and foreign currency options and futures contracts (other than options and futures contracts that are governed by the mark-to-market and 60/40 rules of Section 1256 of the Code and for which no election is made) is treated as ordinary income or loss. Some part of the Fund's gain or loss on the sale or other disposition of shares of a foreign corporation may, because of changes in foreign currency exchange rates, be treated as ordinary income or loss under Section 988 of the Code rather than as capital gain or loss.

A shareholder who purchases shares of the Fund by tendering payment for the shares in the form of other securities may be required to recognize gain or loss for income tax purposes on the difference, if any, between the adjusted basis of the securities tendered to the fund and the purchase price of the Fund's shares acquired by the shareholder.

Section 475 of the Code requires that a "dealer" in securities must generally "mark to market" at the end of its taxable year all securities which it owns. The resulting gain or loss is treated as ordinary (and not capital) gain or loss, except to the extent allocable to periods during which the dealer held the security for investment. The "mark to market" rules do not apply, however, to a security held for investment which is clearly identified in the dealer's records as being held for investment before the end of the day in which the security was acquired. The IRS has issued guidance under Section 475 that provides that, for example, a bank that regularly originates and sells loans is a dealer in securities, and subject to the "mark to market" rules. Shares of the Fund held by a dealer in securities will be subject to the "mark to market" rules unless they are held by the dealer for investment and the dealer properly identifies the shares as held for investment.

Redemptions of shares of the Fund will result in gains or losses for tax purposes to the extent of the difference between the proceeds and the shareholder's adjusted tax basis for the shares. Any loss realized upon the redemption of shares within six months from their date of purchase will be treated as a long-term capital loss to the extent of distributions of long-term capital gain dividends during such six-month period. All or a portion of a loss realized upon the redemption of shares may be disallowed to the extent shares are purchased (including shares acquired by means of reinvested dividends) within 30 days before or after such redemption.

Distributions and redemptions may be subject to state and local income taxes, and the treatment thereof may differ from the federal income tax treatment. Foreign taxes may apply to non-U.S. investors.

Nonresident aliens and foreign persons are subject to different tax rules, and may be subject to withholding of up to 30% on certain payments received from the Fund. Shareholders are advised to consult with their own tax advisers concerning the application of foreign, federal, state and local taxes to an investment in the Fund.

The above discussion and the related discussion in the Prospectus are not intended to be complete discussions of all applicable federal tax consequences of an investment in the Fund. Alston & Bird LLP has expressed no opinion in respect thereof.

### **Dividends and Distributions**

The Fund will receive income in the form of dividends and interest earned on its investments in securities. This income, less the expenses incurred in its operations, is the Fund's net investment income, substantially all of which will be declared as dividends to the Fund's shareholders.

The amount of income dividend payments by the Fund is dependent upon the amount of net investment income received by the Fund from its portfolio holdings, is not guaranteed and is subject to the discretion of the Board. The Fund does not pay "interest" or guarantee any fixed rate of return on an investment in its shares.

The Fund also may derive capital gains or losses in connection with sales or other dispositions of its portfolio securities. Any net gain the Fund may realize from transactions involving investments held less than the period required for long-term capital gain or loss recognition or otherwise producing short-term capital gains and losses, although a distribution from capital gains, will be distributed to shareholders with and as a part of dividends giving rise to ordinary income. If during any year the Fund realizes a net gain on transactions involving investments held more than the period required for long-term capital gain or loss recognition or otherwise producing long-term capital gains and losses, the Fund will have a net long-term capital gain. For more information concerning applicable capital gains tax rates, see your tax advisor.

Any dividend or distribution paid by the Fund reduces the Fund's NAV per share on the date paid by the amount of the dividend or distribution per share. Accordingly, a dividend or distribution paid shortly after a purchase of shares by a shareholder would represent, in substance, a partial return of capital (to the extent it is paid on the shares so purchased), even though it would be subject to income taxes.

Dividends and other distributions will be made in the form of additional shares of the Fund unless the shareholder has otherwise indicated. Investors have the right to change their elections with respect to the reinvestment of dividends and distributions by notifying the Transfer Agent in writing, but any such change will be effective only as to dividends and other distributions for which the record date is seven or more business days after the Transfer Agent has received the written request.

## **Financial Statements**

The financial statements for the Fund for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2024 and the independent registered public accountant's report, are hereby incorporated by reference in the Fund's Annual Report. These financial statements include the schedules of investments, statements of assets and liabilities, statements of operations, statements of changes in net assets, financial highlights and notes. You may obtain a copy of the Annual or Semi-Annual Reports of the Fund to shareholders, without charge upon request in writing or by telephone.



## APPENDIX “A” RATINGS DEFINITIONS

### Standard & Poor’s Issue Credit Rating Definitions

A Standard & Poor’s issue credit rating is a forward-looking opinion about the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to a specific financial obligation, a specific class of financial obligations, or a specific financial program (including ratings on medium-term note programs and commercial paper programs). It takes into consideration the creditworthiness of guarantors, insurers, or other forms of credit enhancement on the obligation and takes into account the currency in which the obligation is denominated. The opinion reflects Standard & Poor’s view of the obligor’s capacity and willingness to meet its financial commitments as they come due, and may assess terms, such as collateral security and subordination, which could affect ultimate payment in the event of default.

Issue credit ratings can be either long term or short term. Short-term ratings are generally assigned to those obligations considered short-term in the relevant market. In the U.S., for example, that means obligations with an original maturity of no more than 365 days—including commercial paper. Short-term ratings are also used to indicate the creditworthiness of an obligor with respect to put features on long-term obligations. The result is a dual rating, in which the short-term rating addresses the put feature, in addition to the usual long-term rating. Medium-term notes are assigned long-term ratings.

#### Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings

##### **A-1**

A short-term obligation rated ‘A-1’ is rated in the highest category by Standard & Poor’s. The obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is strong. Within this category, certain obligations are designated with a plus sign (+). This indicates that the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitment on these obligations is extremely strong.

##### **A-2**

A short-term obligation rated ‘A-2’ is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher rating categories. However, the obligor’s capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is satisfactory.

##### **A-3**

A short-term obligation rated ‘A-3’ exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

##### **B**

A short-term obligation rated ‘B’ is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. Ratings of ‘B-1’, ‘B-2’, and ‘B-3’ may be assigned to indicate finer distinctions within the ‘B’ category. The obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation; however, it faces major ongoing uncertainties which could lead to the obligor’s inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**B-1**

A short-term obligation rated 'B-1' is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics, but the obligor has a relatively stronger capacity to meet its financial commitments over the short-term compared to other speculative-grade obligors.

**B-2**

A short-term obligation rated 'B-2' is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics, and the obligor has an average speculative-grade capacity to meet its financial commitments over the short-term compared to other speculative-grade obligors.

**B-3**

A short-term obligation rated 'B-3' is regarded as having significant speculative characteristics, and the obligor has a relatively weaker capacity to meet its financial commitments over the short-term compared to other speculative-grade obligors.

**C**

A short-term obligation rated 'C' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**D**

A short-term obligation rated 'D' is in payment default. The 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation, including a regulatory capital instrument, are not made on the date due even if the applicable grace period has not expired, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made during such grace period. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of a similar action if payments on an obligation are jeopardized.

**SPUR (Standard & Poor's Underlying Rating)**

This is a rating of a stand-alone capacity of an issue to pay debt service on a credit-enhanced debt issue, without giving effect to the enhancement that applies to it. These ratings are published only at the request of the debt issuer/obligor with the designation SPUR to distinguish them from the credit-enhanced rating that applies to the debt issue. Standard & Poor's maintains surveillance of an issue with a published SPUR.

**Dual Ratings**

Standard & Poor's assigns "dual" ratings to all debt issues that have a put option or demand feature as part of their structure. The first rating addresses the likelihood of repayment of principal and interest as due, and the second rating addresses only the demand feature. The long-term rating symbols are used for bonds to denote the long-term maturity and the short-term rating symbols for the put option (for example, 'AAA/A-1+'). With U.S. municipal short-term demand debt, note rating symbols are used with the short-term issue credit rating symbols (for example, 'SP-1+/A-1+').

The ratings and other credit related opinions of Standard & Poor's and its affiliates are statements of opinion as of the date they are expressed and not statements of fact or recommendations to purchase, hold, or sell any securities or make any investment decisions. Standard & Poor's assumes no obligation to update any information following publication. Users of ratings and credit related opinions should not rely on them in making any investment decision. Standard & Poor's opinions and analyses do not address the suitability of any security. Standard & Poor's Financial Services LLC does not act as a fiduciary or an investment adviser. While Standard & Poor's has obtained information from sources it believes to be reliable, Standard & Poor's does not perform an audit and undertakes no duty of due diligence or independent verification of any information it receives. Ratings and credit related opinions may be changed, suspended, or withdrawn at any time.

## **Active Qualifiers (Currently applied and/or outstanding)**

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### **i**

This subscript is used for issues in which the credit factors, terms, or both, that determine the likelihood of receipt of payment of interest are different from the credit factors, terms or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of principal on the obligation. The ‘i’ subscript indicates that the rating addresses the interest portion of the obligation only. The ‘i’ subscript will always be used in conjunction with the ‘p’ subscript, which addresses likelihood of receipt of principal. For example, a rated obligation could be assigned ratings of “AAAp NRI” indicating that the principal portion is rated “AAA” and the interest portion of the obligation is not rated.

### **L**

Ratings qualified with ‘L’ apply only to amounts invested up to federal deposit insurance limits.

### **p**

This subscript is used for issues in which the credit factors, the terms, or both, that determine the likelihood of receipt of payment of principal are different from the credit factors, terms or both that determine the likelihood of receipt of interest on the obligation. The ‘p’ subscript indicates that the rating addresses the principal portion of the obligation only. The ‘p’ subscript will always be used in conjunction with the ‘i’ subscript, which addresses likelihood of receipt of interest. For example, a rated obligation could be assigned ratings of “AAAp NRI” indicating that the principal portion is rated “AAA” and the interest portion of the obligation is not rated.

### **pi**

Ratings with a ‘pi’ subscript are based on an analysis of an issuer’s published financial information, as well as additional information in the public domain. They do not, however, reflect in-depth meetings with an issuer’s management and therefore may be based on less comprehensive information than ratings without a ‘pi’ subscript. Ratings with a ‘pi’ subscript are reviewed annually based on a new year’s financial statements, but may be reviewed on an interim basis if a major event occurs that may affect the issuer’s credit quality.

### **pr**

The letters ‘pr’ indicate that the rating is provisional. A provisional rating assumes the successful completion of the project financed by the debt being rated and indicates that payment of debt service requirements is largely or entirely dependent upon the successful, timely completion of the project. This rating, however, while addressing credit quality subsequent to completion of the project, makes no comment on the likelihood of or the risk of default upon failure of such completion. The investor should exercise his own judgment with respect to such likelihood and risk.

### **preliminary**

Preliminary ratings are assigned to issues, including financial programs, in the following circumstances.

- Preliminary ratings may be assigned to obligations, most commonly structured and project finance issues, pending receipt of final documentation and legal opinions. Assignment of a final rating is conditional on the receipt and approval by Standard & Poor’s of appropriate documentation. Changes in the information provided to Standard & Poor’s could result in the assignment of a different rating. In addition, Standard & Poor’s reserves the right not to issue a final rating.
- Preliminary ratings are assigned to Rule 415 Shelf Registrations. As specific issues, with defined terms, are offered from the master registration, a final rating may be assigned to them in accordance with Standard & Poor’s policies. The final rating may differ from the preliminary rating.

### **t**

This symbol indicates termination structures that are designed to honor their contracts to full maturity or, should certain events occur, to terminate and cash settle all their contracts before their final maturity date.

#### **unsolicited**

Unsolicited ratings are those credit ratings assigned at the initiative of Standard & Poor's and not at the request of the issuer or its agents.

#### **Inactive Qualifiers (No longer applied or outstanding)**

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**\***

This symbol indicated continuance of the ratings is contingent upon Standard & Poor's receipt of an executed copy of the escrow agreement or closing documentation confirming investments and cash flows. Discontinued use in August 1998.

**c**

This qualifier was used to provide additional information to investors that the bank may terminate its obligation to purchase tendered bonds if the long-term credit rating of the issuer is below an investment-grade level and/or the issuer's bonds are deemed taxable. Discontinued use in January 2001.

**q**

A 'q' subscript indicates that the rating is based solely on quantitative analysis of publicly available information. Discontinued use in April 2001.

**r**

The 'r' modifier was assigned to securities containing extraordinary risks, particularly market risks, that are not covered in the credit rating. The absence of an 'r' modifier should not be taken as an indication that an obligation will not exhibit extraordinary non-credit related risks. Standard & Poor's discontinued the use of the 'r' modifier for most obligations in June 2000 and for the balance of obligations (mainly structured finance transactions) in November 2002.

#### **Local Currency and Foreign Currency Risks**

Country risk considerations are a standard part of Standard & Poor's analysis for credit ratings on any issuer or issue. Currency of repayment is a key factor in this analysis. An obligor's capacity to repay foreign currency obligations may be lower than its capacity to repay obligations in its local currency due to the sovereign government's own relatively lower capacity to repay external versus domestic debt. These sovereign risk considerations are incorporated in the debt ratings assigned to specific issues. Foreign currency issuer ratings are also distinguished from local currency issuer ratings to identify those instances where sovereign risks make them different for the same issuer.

## **Moody's Credit Rating Definitions**

### **Purpose**

The system of rating securities was originated by John Moody in 1909. The purpose of Moody's ratings is to provide investors with a simple system of gradation by which relative creditworthiness of securities may be noted.

### **Rating Symbols**

Gradations of creditworthiness are indicated by rating symbols, with each symbol representing a group in which the credit characteristics are broadly the same. There are nine symbols as shown below, from that used to designate least credit risk to that denoting greatest credit risk:

### **Aaa Aa A Baa Ba B Caa Ca C**

Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa.

### **Absence of a Rating**

Where no rating has been assigned or where a rating has been withdrawn, it may be for reasons unrelated to the creditworthiness of the issue.

Should no rating be assigned, the reason may be one of the following:

1. An application was not received or accepted.
2. The issue or issuer belongs to a group of securities or entities that are not rated as a matter of policy.
3. There is a lack of essential data pertaining to the issue or issuer.
4. The issue was privately placed, in which case the rating is not published in Moody's publications.

Withdrawal may occur if new and material circumstances arise, the effects of which preclude satisfactory analysis; if there is no longer available reasonable up-to-date data to permit a judgment to be formed; if a bond is called for redemption; or for other reasons.

### **Changes in Rating**

The credit quality of most issuers and their obligations is not fixed and steady over a period of time, but tends to undergo change. For this reason changes in ratings occur so as to reflect variations in the intrinsic relative position of issuers and their obligations.

A change in rating may thus occur at any time in the case of an individual issue. Such rating change should serve notice that Moody's observes some alteration in creditworthiness, or that the previous rating did not fully reflect the quality of the bond as now seen. While because of their very nature, changes are to be expected more frequently among bonds of lower ratings than among bonds of higher ratings. Nevertheless, the user of bond ratings should keep close and constant check on all ratings — both high and low — to be able to note promptly any signs of change in status that may occur.

### **Limitations to Uses of Ratings\***

Obligations carrying the same rating are not claimed to be of absolutely equal credit quality. In a broad sense, they are alike in position, but since there are a limited number of rating classes used in grading thousands of bonds, the symbols cannot reflect the same shadings of risk which actually exist.

As ratings are designed exclusively for the purpose of grading obligations according to their credit quality, they should not be used alone as a basis for investment operations. For example, they have no value in forecasting the direction of future trends of market price. Market price movements in bonds are influenced not only by the credit quality of individual issues but also by changes in money rates and general economic trends, as well as by the length of maturity, etc. During its life even the highest rated bond may have wide price movements, while its high rating status remains unchanged.

The matter of market price has no bearing whatsoever on the determination of ratings, which are not to be construed as recommendations with respect to “attractiveness”. The attractiveness of a given bond may depend on its yield, its maturity date or other factors for which the investor may search, as well as on its credit quality, the only characteristic to which the rating refers.

Since ratings involve judgments about the future, on the one hand, and since they are used by investors as a means of protection, on the other, the effort is made when assigning ratings to look at “worst” possibilities in the “visible” future, rather than solely at the past record and the status of the present. Therefore, investors using the rating should not expect to find in them a reflection of statistical factors alone, since they are an appraisal of long-term risks, including the recognition of many non-statistical factors.

Though ratings may be used by the banking authorities to classify bonds in their bank examination procedure, Moody’s ratings are not made with these bank regulations in mind. Moody’s Investors Service’s own judgment as to the desirability or non-desirability of a bond for bank investment purposes is not indicated by Moody’s ratings.

Moody’s ratings represent the opinion of Moody’s Investors Service as to the relative creditworthiness of securities. As such, they should be used in conjunction with the descriptions and statistics appearing in Moody’s publications. Reference should be made to these statements for information regarding the issuer. Moody’s ratings are not commercial credit ratings. In no case is default or receivership to be imputed unless expressly stated.

\*As set forth more fully on the copyright, credit ratings are, and must be construed solely as, statements of opinion and not statements of fact or recommendations to purchase, sell or hold any securities. Each rating or other opinion must be weighed solely as one factor in any investment decision made by or on behalf of any user of the information, and each such user must accordingly make its own study and evaluation of each security and of each issuer and guarantor of, and each provider of credit support for, each security that it may consider purchasing, selling or holding.

### **Short-Term Ratings**

Moody’s short-term ratings are opinions of the ability of issuers to honor short-term financial obligations. Ratings may be assigned to issuers, short-term programs or to individual short-term debt instruments. Such obligations generally have an original maturity not exceeding thirteen months, unless explicitly noted.

Moody’s employs the following designations to indicate the relative repayment ability of rated issuers:

#### **P-1**

Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-1 have a superior ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

**P-2**

Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-2 have a strong ability to repay short-term debt obligations.

**P-3**

Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Prime-3 have an acceptable ability to repay short-term obligations.

**NP**

Issuers (or supporting institutions) rated Not Prime do not fall within any of the Prime rating categories.

**Note:** Canadian issuers rated P-1 or P-2 have their short-term ratings enhanced by the senior-most long-term rating of the issuer, its guarantor or support-provider.

## Short-term vs. Long-term Ratings

| Long Term         |      | Short Term |           |
|-------------------|------|------------|-----------|
| Investment Grade  | Aaa  | }          | Prime-1   |
|                   | Aa1  |            |           |
|                   | Aa2  |            |           |
|                   | Aa3  |            |           |
|                   | A1   | }          | Prime-2   |
|                   | A2   |            |           |
|                   | A3   |            |           |
|                   | Baa1 | }          | Prime-3   |
|                   | Baa2 |            |           |
| Baa3              |      |            |           |
| Speculative Grade | Ba1  | }          | Not Prime |
|                   | Ba2  |            |           |
|                   | Ba3  |            |           |
|                   | B1   |            |           |
|                   | B2   |            |           |
|                   | B3   |            |           |
|                   | Caa1 |            |           |
|                   | Caa2 |            |           |
|                   | Caa3 |            |           |
|                   | Ca   |            |           |
| C                 |      |            |           |

## **Fitch's National Credit Ratings**

For those countries in which foreign and local currency sovereign ratings are below 'AAA', and where there is demand for such ratings, Fitch Ratings will provide National Ratings. It is important to note that each National Rating scale is unique and is defined to serve the needs of the local market in question.

The National Rating scale provides a relative measure of creditworthiness for rated entities only within the country concerned. Under this rating scale, a 'AAA' Long-Term National Rating will be assigned to the lowest relative risk within that country, which, in most but not all cases, will be the sovereign state.

The National Rating scale merely ranks the degree of perceived risk relative to the lowest default risk in that same country. Like local currency ratings, National Ratings exclude the effects of sovereign and transfer risk and exclude the possibility that investors may be unable to repatriate any due interest and principal repayments. It is not related to the rating scale of any other national market. Comparisons between different national scales or between an individual national scale and the international rating scale are therefore inappropriate and potentially misleading. Consequently they are identified by the addition of a special identifier for the country concerned, such as 'AAA(arg)' for National Ratings in Argentina.

In certain countries, regulators have established credit rating scales, to be used within their domestic markets, using specific nomenclature. In these countries, the agency's National Short-Term Rating definitions for 'F1+(xxx)', 'F1(xxx)', 'F2(xxx)' and 'F3(xxx)' may be substituted by the regulatory scales, e.g. 'A1+', 'A1', 'A2' and 'A3'. The below definitions thus serve as a template, but users should consult the individual scales for each country listed on the agency's web-site to determine if any additional or alternative category definitions apply.

### **National Short-Term Credit Ratings**

#### **F1(xxx)**

Indicates the strongest capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Under the agency's National Rating scale, this rating is assigned to the lowest default risk relative to others in the same country. Where the liquidity profile is particularly strong, a "+" is added to the assigned rating.

#### **F2(xxx)**

Indicates a good capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. However, the margin of safety is not as great as in the case of the higher ratings.

#### **F3(xxx)**

Indicates an adequate capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. However, such capacity is more susceptible to near-term adverse changes than for financial commitments in higher rated categories.

#### **B(xxx)**

Indicates an uncertain capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Such capacity is highly susceptible to near-term adverse changes in financial and economic conditions.



**C(xxx)**

Indicates a highly uncertain capacity for timely payment of financial commitments relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Capacity for meeting financial commitments is solely reliant upon a sustained, favorable business and economic environment.

**D(xxx)**

Indicates actual or imminent payment default.

**Notes to Long-Term and Short-Term National Ratings:**

The ISO country code suffix is placed in parentheses immediately following the rating letters to indicate the identity of the National market within which the rating applies. For illustrative purposes, (xxx) has been used.

“+” or “-” may be appended to a National Rating to denote relative status within a major rating category. Such suffixes are not added to the ‘AAA(xxx)’ Long-Term National Rating category, to categories below ‘CCC(xxx)’, or to Short-Term National Ratings other than ‘F1(xxx)’.

## LONG-TERM RATINGS

### Standard & Poor's Long-Term Issue Credit Ratings

Issue credit ratings are based, in varying degrees, on Standard & Poor's analysis of the following considerations:

- Likelihood of payment—capacity and willingness of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on an obligation in accordance with the terms of the obligation;
- Nature of and provisions of the obligation;
- Protection afforded by, and relative position of, the obligation in the event of bankruptcy, reorganization, or other arrangement under the laws of bankruptcy and other laws affecting creditors' rights.

Issue ratings are an assessment of default risk, but may incorporate an assessment of relative seniority or ultimate recovery in the event of default. Junior obligations are typically rated lower than senior obligations, to reflect the lower priority in bankruptcy, as noted above. (Such differentiation may apply when an entity has both senior and subordinated obligations, secured and unsecured obligations, or operating company and holding company obligations.)

#### **AAA**

An obligation rated 'AAA' has the highest rating assigned by Standard & Poor's. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is extremely strong.

#### **AA**

An obligation rated 'AA' differs from the highest-rated obligations only to a small degree. The obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is very strong.

#### **A**

An obligation rated 'A' is somewhat more susceptible to the adverse effects of changes in circumstances and economic conditions than obligations in higher-rated categories. However, the obligor's capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation is still strong.

#### **BBB**

An obligation rated 'BBB' exhibits adequate protection parameters. However, adverse economic conditions or changing circumstances are more likely to lead to a weakened capacity of the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

#### **BB, B, CCC, CC, and C**

Obligations rated 'BB', 'B', 'CCC', 'CC', and 'C' are regarded as having significant speculative characteristics. 'BB' indicates the least degree of speculation and 'C' the highest. While such obligations will likely have some quality and protective characteristics, these may be outweighed by large uncertainties or major exposures to adverse conditions.

**BB**

An obligation rated 'BB' is less vulnerable to nonpayment than other speculative issues. However, it faces major ongoing uncertainties or exposure to adverse business, financial, or economic conditions which could lead to the obligor's inadequate capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**B**

An obligation rated 'B' is more vulnerable to nonpayment than obligations rated 'BB', but the obligor currently has the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. Adverse business, financial, or economic conditions will likely impair the obligor's capacity or willingness to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**CCC**

An obligation rated 'CCC' is currently vulnerable to nonpayment, and is dependent upon favorable business, financial, and economic conditions for the obligor to meet its financial commitment on the obligation. In the event of adverse business, financial, or economic conditions, the obligor is not likely to have the capacity to meet its financial commitment on the obligation.

**CC**

An obligation rated 'CC' is currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment.

**C**

A 'C' rating is assigned to obligations that are currently highly vulnerable to nonpayment, obligations that have payment arrearages allowed by the terms of the documents, or obligations of an issuer that is the subject of a bankruptcy petition or similar action which have not experienced a payment default. Among others, the 'C' rating may be assigned to subordinated debt, preferred stock or other obligations on which cash payments have been suspended in accordance with the instrument's terms or when preferred stock is the subject of a distressed exchange offer, whereby some or all of the issue is either repurchased for an amount of cash or replaced by other instruments having a total value that is less than par.

**D**

An obligation rated 'D' is in payment default. The 'D' rating category is used when payments on an obligation, including a regulatory capital instrument, are not made on the date due even if the applicable grace period has not expired, unless Standard & Poor's believes that such payments will be made during such grace period. The 'D' rating also will be used upon the filing of a bankruptcy petition or the taking of similar action if payments on an obligation are jeopardized. An obligation's rating is lowered to 'D' upon completion of a distressed exchange offer, whereby some or all of the issue is either repurchased for an amount of cash or replaced by other instruments having a total value that is less than par.

**Plus (+) or minus (-)**

The ratings from 'AA' to 'CCC' may be modified by the addition of a plus (+) or minus (-) sign to show relative standing within the major rating categories.

**NR**

This indicates that no rating has been requested, that there is insufficient information on which to base a rating, or that Standard & Poor's does not rate a particular obligation as a matter of policy.

*See active and inactive qualifiers following Standard & Poor's Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings beginning on page A-3.*

## **Moody's Long-Term Debt Ratings**

### **Long-Term Obligation Ratings**

Moody's long-term obligation ratings are opinions of the relative credit risk of fixed-income obligations with an original maturity of one year or more. They address the possibility that a financial obligation will not be honored as promised. Such ratings reflect both the likelihood of default and any financial loss suffered in the event of default.

### **Moody's Long-Term Rating Definitions:**

#### **Aaa**

Obligations rated Aaa are judged to be of the highest quality, with minimal credit risk.

#### **Aa**

Obligations rated Aa are judged to be of high quality and are subject to very low credit risk.

#### **A**

Obligations rated A are considered upper-medium grade and are subject to low credit risk.

#### **Baa**

Obligations rated Baa are subject to moderate credit risk. They are considered medium-grade and as such may possess certain speculative characteristics.

#### **Ba**

Obligations rated Ba are judged to have speculative elements and are subject to substantial credit risk.

#### **B**

Obligations rated B are considered speculative and are subject to high credit risk.

#### **Caa**

Obligations rated Caa are judged to be of poor standing and are subject to very high credit risk.

#### **Ca**

Obligations rated Ca are highly speculative and are likely in, or very near, default, with some prospect of recovery of principal and interest.

#### **C**

Obligations rated C are the lowest rated class of bonds and are typically in default, with little prospect for recovery of principal or interest.

**Note:** Moody's appends numerical modifiers 1, 2, and 3 to each generic rating classification from Aa through Caa. The modifier 1 indicates that the obligation ranks in the higher end of its generic rating category; the modifier 2 indicates a mid-range ranking; and the modifier 3 indicates a ranking in the lower end of that generic rating category.

## **Fitch's National Long-Term Credit Ratings**

### **AAA(xxx)**

'AAA' National Ratings denote the highest rating assigned by the agency in its National Rating scale for that country. This rating is assigned to issuers or obligations with the lowest expectation of default risk relative to all other issuers or obligations in the same country.

### **AA(xxx)**

'AA' National Ratings denote expectations of very low default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. The default risk inherent differs only slightly from that of the country's highest rated issuers or obligations.

### **A(xxx)**

'A' National Ratings denote expectations of low default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. However, changes in circumstances or economic conditions may affect the capacity for timely repayment to a greater degree than is the case for financial commitments denoted by a higher rated category.

### **BBB(xxx)**

'BBB' National Ratings denote a moderate default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. However, changes in circumstances or economic conditions are more likely to affect the capacity for timely repayment than is the case for financial commitments denoted by a higher rated category.

### **BB(xxx)**

'BB' National Ratings denote an elevated default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Within the context of the country, payment is uncertain to some degree and capacity for timely repayment remains more vulnerable to adverse economic change over time.

### **B(xxx)**

'B' National Ratings denote a significantly elevated default risk relative to other issuers or obligations in the same country. Financial commitments are currently being met but a limited margin of safety remains and capacity for continued timely payments is contingent upon a sustained, favorable business and economic environment. For individual obligations, may indicate distressed or defaulted obligations with potential for extremely high recoveries.

### **CCC(xxx)**

'CCC' National Ratings denote that default is a real possibility. Capacity for meeting financial commitments is solely reliant upon sustained, favorable business or economic conditions.

### **CC(xxx)**

'CC' National Ratings denote that default of some kind appears probable.

### **C(xxx)**

'C' National Ratings denote that default is imminent.

### **D(xxx)**

'D' National Ratings denote an issuer or instrument that is currently in default.

**Notes to Long-Term and Short-Term National Ratings:**

The ISO country code suffix is placed in parentheses immediately following the rating letters to indicate the identity of the National market within which the rating applies. For illustrative purposes, (xxx) has been used.

“+” or “-” may be appended to a National Rating to denote relative status within a major rating category. Such suffixes are not added to the ‘AAA(xxx)’ Long-Term National Rating category, to categories below ‘CCC(xxx)’, or to Short-Term National Ratings other than ‘F1(xxx)’.

## **MUNICIPAL NOTE RATINGS**

### **Standard & Poor's Municipal Short-Term Note Ratings Definitions**

A Standard & Poor's U.S. municipal note rating reflects Standard & Poor's opinion about the liquidity factors and market access risks unique to the notes. Notes due in three years or less will likely receive a note rating. Notes with an original maturity of more than three years will most likely receive a long-term debt rating. In determining which type of rating, if any, to assign, Standard & Poor's analysis will review the following considerations:

- Amortization schedule—the larger the final maturity relative to other maturities, the more likely it will be treated as a note; and
- Source of payment—the more dependent the issue is on the market for its refinancing, the more likely it will be treated as a note.

Note rating symbols are as follows:

#### **SP-1**

Strong capacity to pay principal and interest. An issue determined to possess a very strong capacity to pay debt service is given a plus (+) designation.

#### **SP-2**

Satisfactory capacity to pay principal and interest, with some vulnerability to adverse financial and economic changes over the term of the notes.

#### **SP-3**

Speculative capacity to pay principal and interest.

*See active and inactive qualifiers following Standard & Poor's Short-Term Issue Credit Ratings beginning on page A-3.*

### **Moody's US Municipal Short-Term Debt And Demand Obligation Ratings**

#### **Short-Term Debt Ratings**

There are three rating categories for short-term municipal obligations that are considered investment grade. These ratings are designated as Municipal Investment Grade (MIG) and are divided into three levels -- MIG 1 through MIG 3. In addition, those short-term obligations that are of speculative quality are designated SG, or speculative grade. MIG ratings expire at the maturity of the obligation.

#### **MIG 1**

This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by established cash flows, highly reliable liquidity support, or demonstrated broad-based access to the market for refinancing.

#### **MIG 2**

This designation denotes strong credit quality. Margins of protection are ample, although not as large as in the preceding group.

**MIG 3**

This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Liquidity and cash-flow protection may be narrow, and market access for refinancing is likely to be less well-established.

**SG**

This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Debt instruments in this category may lack sufficient margins of protection.

**Demand Obligation Ratings**

In the case of variable rate demand obligations (VRDOs), a two-component rating is assigned; a long or short-term debt rating and a demand obligation rating. The first element represents Moody's evaluation of the degree of risk associated with scheduled principal and interest payments. The second element represents Moody's evaluation of the degree of risk associated with the ability to receive purchase price upon demand ("demand feature"), using a variation of the MIG rating scale, the Variable Municipal Investment Grade or VMIG rating.

When either the long- or short-term aspect of a VRDO is not rated, that piece is designated NR, e.g., Aaa/NR or NR/VMIG 1.

VMIG rating expirations are a function of each issue's specific structural or credit features.

**VMIG 1**

This designation denotes superior credit quality. Excellent protection is afforded by the superior short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections that ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

**VMIG 2**

This designation denotes strong credit quality. Good protection is afforded by the strong short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections that ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

**VMIG 3**

This designation denotes acceptable credit quality. Adequate protection is afforded by the satisfactory short-term credit strength of the liquidity provider and structural and legal protections that ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.

**SG**

This designation denotes speculative-grade credit quality. Demand features rated in this category may be supported by a liquidity provider that does not have an investment grade short-term rating or may lack the structural and/or legal protections necessary to ensure the timely payment of purchase price upon demand.



## APPENDIX “B” PROXY VOTING POLICY

Kovitz acts as investment adviser or sub-adviser for its clients, including private funds, separately managed accounts, investment companies and other commingled investment vehicles (collectively, “clients”). SEC Rule 206(4)-6 requires all registered investment advisers to adopt written procedures to ensure that they vote client securities in the best interest of their clients. Adviser has adopted these proxy voting policies and procedures to help satisfy its duties relating to proxy voting for securities held by its clients. References herein to “proxies” hereafter shall only include those proxies of clients.

Proxy voting decisions will be made in light of the anticipated impact of the vote on the desirability of maintaining an investment in a company, from the viewpoint of the best interests of Adviser’s clients, without regard to any other interests. As a matter of policy, Adviser will not be influenced by outside sources whose interests conflict with the interest of its clients. Any conflict of interest will be resolved in the best interest of Adviser’s clients.

### *Procedures*

The compliance department shall be responsible for making sure that proxies are voted according to these procedures. Proxies may be voted electronically or by U.S. mail. As proxy ballots are voted, they will be kept on file by the compliance department. With respect to certain accounts, Adviser may not be required to vote proxies.

Adviser has retained independent third-party proxy voting service providers, Institutional Shareholder Services Inc. (“ISS”) and Broadridge Financial Solutions, Inc. (“Broadridge”), to assist it in coordinating, administering (including the maintenance of required records), processing and voting of certain client proxies. These services also include proxy voting recommendations and research. As a general rule, ISS and Broadridge will vote proxies in accordance with its recommendations, except in certain circumstances where Adviser determines it is in the best interests of the relevant client to otherwise vote a proxy, and is consistent with this Proxy Voting Policy and Procedures.

In selecting a proxy advisory firm and as a condition for retention of such firm, Adviser will seek to ensure (or reconfirm) that the firm has the capacity, ability and independence necessary to provide recommendations in the best interests of Adviser’s clients. Factors that Adviser considers critical to the employment or retention of a proxy advisory firm include the capabilities of the advisory firm’s personnel, its capacity and competency to adequately analyze proxy issues, its methodologies for assessing proxy voting matters, the manner in which it engages (or chooses not to engage) with issuers, its management, treatment and disclosure of actual and potential conflicts of interest and its propensity to commit (and correct) errors in its recommendations. The compliance department maintains documentation evidencing this review.

Adviser periodically reevaluates the basis of its continuing relationship with ISS and Broadridge. Adviser will review, among other documents and policies, its conflicts of interest disclosures, its approach to how proxies are voted, and other relevant information in seeking to reconfirm that the bases upon which ISS and Broadridge was originally selected remain intact and that the selection of ISS and Broadridge continues to be in clients’ best interests. Adviser also reviews any on-going updates or notices transmitted from ISS and Broadridge that materially modify its approach to proxy voting. In addition, Adviser will review any disclosures from ISS and Broadridge, or indications from other sources, of material errors, incompleteness or other problems with that firm’s proxy advice. The compliance department maintains documentation evidencing this review.

Adviser will conduct oversight of third-party research providers that it retains to assist with proxy voting to determine that proxies continue to be voted in clients’ best interests. Adviser will request that proxy advisory firm update Adviser regarding relevant business changes (*i.e.*, with respect to the

firm's capacity and competency to provide proxy voting advice) or conflict policies and procedures. Adviser will use such information to identify and address conflicts that may arise on an ongoing basis.

Additionally, the compliance department will periodically review the number of ballots for vote versus the number of client holdings. This review will confirm our third party systems are receiving the appropriate number of ballots for the accounts we have proxy voting authority over.

### ***Conflicts of Interest***

It is the duty of the compliance department to resolve any material conflicts of interest related to proxy voting. A conflict of interest may exist, for example, if Adviser has a business relationship with (or is actively soliciting business from) either the company soliciting the proxy or a third party that has a material interest in the outcome of a proxy vote or that is actively lobbying for a particular outcome of a proxy vote. Any Adviser employee with knowledge of a potential personal conflict of interest (e.g., familial relationship with company management) relating to a particular proposal shall disclose that potential conflict to the compliance department and remove himself or herself from the proxy voting process.

As Adviser utilizes the services of ISS and Broadridge as an independent third party proxy voting service provider, it generally will be the case that voting proxies in accordance with the recommendations of ISS and Broadridge will significantly mitigate the risk of a conflict of interest. Where, however, proxies are voted by Adviser contrary to the recommendations of ISS and Broadridge or where a potential or actual conflict of interest or perceived conflict of interest has been brought to the attention of or been identified by the compliance department, the compliance department will assess and address such conflict of interest. Some examples in which potential conflicts may exist include instances where Adviser or its affiliates also manage the issuer's pension plan or if a Supervised Person or a close relative of a Supervised Person has a significant personal or business relationship with an issuer or an individual director (or directorship candidate), officer (or candidate for corporate office) or proxy contest participant.

If a conflict of interest arises, Adviser will:

Rely solely on (and vote in accordance with) the recommendations of ISS or Broadridge, as referenced above, or other independent third party consulted or engaged (generally or specifically) for such purpose; OR

Prepare a report that (1) describes the conflict of interest; (2) discusses procedures used to address such conflict of interest; (3) discloses any contacts from outside parties (other than routine communications from proxy solicitors) regarding the proposal; and (4) confirms that the recommendation was made solely on the merits and without regard to any other consideration. Adviser will retain a copy of such report.

### ***Voting Guidelines***

If a client directs Adviser to vote a proxy in a particular way, Adviser will vote the proxy in accordance with the client's directions, if possible. In the absence of specific voting direction from a client, Adviser will vote proxies in the best interests of the applicable client, which may result in different voting results among clients for proxies for the same issuer.

In seeking to vote proxies in the best interest of its clients (including determining whether it is in the best interest of a client to abstain from voting), Adviser generally is guided by the principle of voting a client proxy in a manner which it believes will maximize value to the client taking into account the nature of the client's position in the security and underlying investment strategy and thesis, including any

material applicable environmental, social and governance factors, and its voting determination also may take into account the following factors, among others:

- the cost and practicality of voting;
- whether voting the proxy would otherwise be unnecessary or unwarranted for any reason;
- whether the proposal relates to a routine corporate housekeeping matter;
- whether the proposal was recommended by management and Adviser's opinion of management;
- whether the proposal acts to entrench existing management, makes it more difficult to replace members of the issuer's board, or implicates other corporate governance matters; and/or
- whether the proposal fairly compensates management for past and future performance.

Corporate governance standards, disclosure requirements and the mechanics of voting proxies in foreign markets can vary greatly from U.S. markets. Certain foreign markets impose burdensome or expensive proxy voting requirements on equity holders, which in some instances may outweigh the benefits of voting the relevant proxy. Adviser may abstain or take no action with respect to a foreign proxy if it determines, in its reasonable discretion, that the burdens and costs associated with voting the proxy outweigh the potential benefits to clients.

### ***Proxy Voting with Respect to Kovitz's Private Fund Clients***

For most purposes, the firm's affiliated private funds are each considered a client of Kovitz (the underlying investors in each fund are not considered clients of Kovitz).

Absent extraordinary circumstances (e.g., large ownership percentage holding, significant knowledge about the issue at hand, etc.), Kovitz will not cast proxy votes on behalf of the private funds (when it does vote proxies, Kovitz will generally vote with management). Kovitz believes that investors in the private funds would be better served if Kovitz spent its time managing the investments of the private funds, rather than spending time on analyzing proxy matters.

Generally, the private funds' investments are generally in large, liquid stocks, and the percentage ownership in portfolio investments/companies by such funds at any given time is not material. Casting votes on behalf of the private funds would have a negligible impact unless a fund held a significant position in a particular company. Given the investment philosophy and trading strategy of Kovitz, this is unlikely to occur. Kovitz believes that voting proxies without undertaking the required due diligence is irresponsible.

Disclosure of Kovitz's proxy voting policies and procedures to the "client" in this case would be self-serving because the disclosures would be directed to the hedge funds, and Kovitz, which makes the decisions, would be the recipient of such disclosure.

### ***Recordkeeping***

Adviser or its agent will maintain the following records:

this Policy and Procedures;

proxy statements received regarding client securities (provided, however, that Adviser may rely on the SEC's EDGAR system if the company filed its proxy statements via EDGAR or may rely on a third party as long as the third party has provided Adviser with an undertaking to provide a copy of the proxy statement promptly upon request; such proxies, however, will still be recorded by compliance department;

- a record of each vote cast on behalf of a client (provided, however, that Advisers may rely on a third party subject to the undertaking requirement);
- a copy of any document prepared by Adviser that was material to making a voting decision or that memorialized the basis for the decision; and

- a copy of any written client request for information on how Adviser voted proxies on behalf of that client and Adviser's written response to any client request (whether written or oral) on how Adviser voted proxies on behalf of that client.

Adviser will maintain these records in an easily accessible place for at least six years from the end of the fiscal year during which the last entry was recorded, the first two years in Adviser's office.

Adviser relies, for recordkeeping purposes, on proxy statements and records of proxy votes cast that are maintained with ISS and Broadridge. Adviser's agreement with ISS and Broadridge provides that they are required to furnish or make available to Adviser a copy of such documents promptly upon Adviser's request.

### ***Disclosure***

Adviser shall appropriately respond in writing to all written client requests for information on how it voted with respect to that client's securities. Such written request along with any written response shall be maintained pursuant to Adviser's Recordkeeping policy described above.