

## Clifford Capital Partners Fund

### Quarterly Commentary – Third Quarter 2017

We hope that this letter finds you all well. We are grateful for your investment in the Clifford Capital Partners Fund (“the Fund”) and thank you for your support.

	3 <sup>rd</sup> Quarter 2017	Year-to-Date 2017	One-Year Return	3-Year Return, Annualized	Total Return, Since Inception (01/30/14)	Total Return, Annualized Since Inception
Institutional Class (CLIFX)	3.38%	4.63%	12.62%	10.85%	53.91%	12.47%
Investor Class (CLFFX)	3.25%	4.43%	12.30%	10.59%	52.71%	12.23%
Russell 3000® Value <sup>1</sup>	3.26%	7.72%	15.53%	8.79%	41.77%	9.98%

*(Performance data quoted represents past performance; past performance does not guarantee future results. The investment return and principal value of an investment will fluctuate so that an investor’s shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance of the fund may be lower or higher than the performance quoted. Performance data current to the most recent month end may be obtained by calling (800) 628-4077. Short term performance, in particular, is not a good indication of the fund’s future performance, and an investment should not be made based solely on returns.)*

The Fund posted a solid gain in the quarter with a particularly strong month in September. As we described in our last letter, we believed that many of the Fund’s holdings were attractively valued coming into the new quarter and several of those undervalued stocks increased. We also discussed in that letter how the prevailing winds of the market in the early parts of 2017 were blowing against us (in favor of popular growth stocks). Those winds turned back in our favor late in the quarter, with value stocks outperforming growth stocks.

From our perspective, the Fund’s performance this year has been driven mostly by whether our investment style has been in- or out-of-favor (we’ll discuss this more below) and less by the fundamental performance of our individual companies, which has been mostly in-line with what we’d expect. We are more concerned about the latter (how our companies are performing relative to our expectations) than the former (whether our investments are “popular” or not). As we’ve mentioned before, there are times the short-term investment winds will be favorable and times they will blow against us. We will continue charting the best long-term course that we can, focusing on the long-term fundamentals of the businesses we invest in, striving to purchase our investments at opportune, undervalued prices, and waiting patiently for the market to eventually realize the value inherent in our stocks.

While we always strive to explain our understanding of the drivers of the Fund’s short-term performance, we remain focused on the long-term investment thesis of each of the Fund’s holdings, and we continue to believe that long-term results are the proper way to evaluate our performance, given our long-term investment philosophy and process.

Despite a solid gain during the quarter, we experienced a large disappointment with Teva Pharmaceutical (ticker: TEVA – 3.00% of the Fund at 09/29/17), which we’ll discuss later in this letter, that detracted from

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<sup>1</sup> The Russell 3000® Value Index is a capitalization-weighted index which is designed to measure performance of Russell 3000 Index companies, respectively, with lower price-to-book ratios and lower forecasted growth values. Numbers presented include the reinvestment of dividends (total return).

what could have been an even stronger result. We think Teva's stock holds tremendous value today, but we believe we could have done a better job managing this particular investment position.

We believe there's still solid value in the Fund's holdings today. As always, we remain focused on selecting individual stocks that we believe are undervalued and have strong long-term appreciation potential with acceptable downside risks.

### **This Feels Like Something We've Been Through Before**

A few days ago, I visited our local cellular service store to purchase a replacement phone for my teenage daughter, when our friendly salesperson asked what I do for a living. When I told him, he proceeded to ask for my opinions about several of the most popular, well-known, "hot" stocks in the marketplace. He had apparently made money trading many of these stocks, and lamented to me how he'd missed some others that were even more popular and had more spectacular price runs. In the past few months, I've had similar interactions with a couple of other strangers, who have taken up stock trading as a pastime and who appeared to be drawn to the allure of quick profits and parabolic stock price charts. (Cryptocurrencies such as Bitcoin are also garnering much interest these days, thanks—in our opinion—to the massive price increases many of them have had in recent periods.)

While these are anecdotal experiences, I see certain similarities today to the boom period in the late 1990s when you could make a fortune on "you-name-it.com" stocks. I lived in Portland, Oregon at the time, an area known as the Silicon Forest. Many of my professional contemporaries at the time were forgoing salaries in favor of stock options with startup technology companies, and speculative trading in stocks abounded among friends and colleagues, many of whom had made millions (on paper at least). We sadly know how that ended for the many people who did not sell quickly enough.

When investing seems as easy as simply choosing companies that are in popular growth industries, are doing well, and have had strong recent stock price increases (these are often referred to as 'momentum' stocks, given their strong business and stock-price momentum), it can be a warning sign of speculative excess. Investing may be relatively simple—buy low and sell high—but it's certainly not easy!

Many of these types of momentum stocks are found today in the technology/internet sector, just as they were back in the late 1990s. It's hard to argue against them—they are, after all, performing very well and in many cases, these are truly transformational companies—but we believe investor expectations often run higher, and are more optimistic, than the realities that eventually face every company in a hyper-competitive world.

### ***Value vs. Momentum***

Our value investment style at Clifford Capital (especially our buy discipline) is the antithesis of momentum investing. Most momentum investing is based primarily on continuation of short-term trends and how a stock's price has been doing: strong price momentum stocks may be bought, and weak price momentum stocks may be shorted. A stock's price momentum is the most important factor and its valuation is a secondary consideration.

Valuation is critical to us. Specifically, the relationship between price and value is central to our philosophy and process: we are looking for mispriced stocks where prices are significantly lower than a reasonable estimate of fair value. We typically buy stocks when they are temporarily downtrodden and have lower investor/trader expectations than what we believe—through our proprietary research and analysis—is reasonable. We also become concerned when price momentum becomes strong in our investment holdings and stock prices rise above what we believe they are worth, leading us to trim or sell.

In short, we are very sensitive to the relationship between price and value and generally believe that investment risk and prices move in opposite directions. Conversely, momentum investing is characterized by the expectation that strong stock price momentum will be sustained – strength begets strength, or ‘buy high and sell even higher’.

Our conviction and our investment discipline is based on the belief of buying low (when stocks trade at discounts to our estimates of fair value) and selling high (when those discounts are no longer present).

***The Fund Resembles an Anti-Momentum Portfolio***

We have always believed that one of the most difficult periods for the Fund to outperform its peers and its benchmark is when momentum stocks lead the stock market, given our price/value discipline. Conversely, we believe that when momentum stocks lose their luster, the Fund has a greater chance to shine.

We recently found an index that we think represents a good proxy for Momentum as an investment style: the MSCI USA Momentum Index (the “Momentum Index”). This index selects stocks from the large and mid-cap U.S. market (the MSCI USA Index), which have high price momentum. We also found an exchange traded fund (“ETF”) that mimics the Momentum Index, the iShares Edge MSCI USA Momentum ETF (the “Momentum ETF”) to look at security-level detail. At September 29, 2017, this ETF held 123 stocks. Below are a few observations:

- 1. The Fund doesn’t have much momentum exposure. Its Russell 3000 Value benchmark and the overall market (as represented by the S&P 500) have a higher weighting of momentum stocks:**

<b>Comparison vs. Momentum ETF</b>	<b># of Holdings</b>	<b>% Weighting</b>
Clifford Capital Partners Fund	0/123	0.0%
Russell 3000 Value	64/123	64 stocks represent 47.9% of the ETF
S&P 500	92/123	92 stocks represent 93.0% of the ETF

While we don’t have specific data to show here, we’d argue that the Fund’s weighting in momentum stocks is also much lower compared to most of its peers, given that the Fund currently has a 0% weighting, and given that many of the holdings within the Momentum Index are widely-owned, popular stocks.

- 2. The performance of momentum stocks has significantly differed from the Fund and its benchmark over the past 3 calendar years.**

<b>Total Returns</b>	<b>01/31/2014 to 12/31/2014</b>	<b>2015</b>	<b>2016</b>	<b>2017, through Sept. 30</b>
Momentum Index	16.62%	9.30%	5.13%	27.55%
CLIFX	<b>20.51%</b>	<b>-10.04%</b>	<b>35.69%</b>	<b>4.63%</b>
CLFFX	<b>20.42%</b>	<b>-10.22%</b>	<b>35.26%</b>	<b>4.43%</b>
Russell 3000 Value	15.94%	-4.14%	18.38%	7.72%
S&P 500	16.99%	1.37%	11.95%	14.24%
<b>Relative Returns</b>				
Momentum vs. CLIFX	-3.89%	<b>19.34%</b>	<b>-30.56%</b>	<b>22.92%</b>
Momentum vs. CLFFX	-3.80%	<b>19.52%</b>	<b>-30.13%</b>	<b>23.12%</b>
Momentum vs. Russell 3000 Value	0.68%	<b>13.44%</b>	<b>-13.25%</b>	<b>19.83%</b>
Momentum vs. S&P	-0.37%	<b>7.93%</b>	<b>-6.82%</b>	<b>13.31%</b>

As is obvious from the table above, the last 3 calendar years have been characterized by large swings in the performance results of the Momentum Index (and we'd argue momentum stocks in general). These 3 calendar years also correspond (not coincidentally, in our opinion) to the Fund's large deviations—both positive and negative—from its benchmark and the overall market (as represented by the S&P 500). Given the Fund's “anti-momentum” makeup and our value discipline, this result is not surprising.

Quite simply, when momentum is at its extremes in performance, we would expect the Fund to lag when momentum is strong, and outperform when momentum is weak.

**3. Momentum extremes over the past 20 years came in multi-year streaks and ended badly after momentum stocks significantly outperformed value stocks.**

We reviewed the performance of the Momentum Index relative to the Russell 3000 Value over the last 20 years to see how often it deviated by more than a double-digit percentage. In addition to the most recent 3 calendar years, there were 7 other years where this happened as shown below. In total there were 6 years in the past 20 when Momentum outperformed the Russell 3000 Value by more than 10% and there were 4 years where the Russell 3000 Value returned the favor:

	<b>Momentum Index vs. Russell 3000 Value (years where there was at least a 10% difference)</b>						
	<b>1998</b>	<b>1999</b>	<b>2000</b>	<b>2001</b>	<b>2005</b>	<b>2006</b>	<b>2007</b>
Momentum Index	48.98%	40.63%	-9.47%	-17.21%	19.31%	10.75%	17.80%
Russell 3000 Value Index, total return	13.16%	6.55%	8.40%	-4.34%	6.82%	22.32%	-1.05%
Momentum vs. Russell 3000 Value	35.82%	34.08%	-17.87%	-12.87%	12.49%	-11.57%	18.85%

While we won't jump to any conclusions about where this current momentum-driven market is headed, as shown above, markets turned sour after the two previous times that the Momentum Index significantly outperformed the Russell 3000 Value (in 1999 and 2007).

In our opinion, we think that the conditions which lead to momentum stocks performing well (high expectations, investor excitement, strong gains, and a general apathy to valuation levels) often lead to overvalued stock prices, which are usually corrected at some point.

We believe the current strong performance of momentum stocks is a warning sign to investors, and we will remain selective and valuation-sensitive in today's environment.

**4. We will remain disciplined and follow our long-term value philosophy.**

We hope that the preceding discussion was educational and instructive in explaining what we believe is a key factor affecting the Fund's performance over the past few years. While we believe the trend towards momentum stocks has affected our results, we won't spend much time worrying about the short-term volatility that results from a “momentum-on, momentum-off” type of market. We firmly believe the best use of our time is seeking for, and investing in, undervalued opportunities that the markets provide.

We typically find a good investment opportunity when expectations are low and a company's stock price has languished. Our job is to assess when expectations are unrealistically low and the odds are in our favor that we're investing in an undervalued asset. We know it's possible to buy companies that exceed even high

expectations (the essence of momentum investing), but that's not our expertise, and we believe over the long-term that a "value" investment style will prove to be more rewarding.

A key element of our investment philosophy is the preeminence of the price we pay for our stock investments. We think the most important factor in stock investing is simply the price of the stock relative to its actual value. This is the essence of a "value" investing strategy. There are other important factors, such as business quality and a company's prospects, but we believe even the world's best company could be a terrible investment if you pay too high a price, and it's possible for even a dying business to be an excellent investment at the right price.

We also believe the bargain-hunting value investor has a sustainable long-term advantage because the pool of investors willing to move against the crowd and invest in out-of-favor stocks is smaller, given the psychological hurdles of such investing. (I have yet to experience the proverbial cell phone salesperson pitching me the latest undervalued and out-of-favor value stock!)

We continue to see a bifurcated market today with pockets of value in stocks with low expectations interspersed among highly-valued, popular momentum stocks with high expectations. At Clifford Capital, we simply strive to find and invest in the former, while avoiding (or selling) the latter.

It is critical that we remain focused on our disciplined investment process and have the patience to allow it to work over the long-term. Not all of our shareholders have benefited from our initial investment purchases (which we believe were done at attractive prices). So we recognize that you are also counting on our ability to make future purchases at bargain prices when they arise, sell/trim holdings when prospects aren't as strong, and to wisely manage the sizing of the individual stocks in the portfolio to balance risks and opportunities. We take this responsibility seriously. We are invested alongside you, and we are committed to maintaining a long-term focus and prudently managing the Fund.

### **Significant Fund Changes**

We purchased two new Contrarian stocks during the quarter: HNI Corp. (ticker: HNI – 1.68% of the Fund at 09/29/17), and Envision Healthcare (ticker: EVHC – 1.49% of the Fund at 09/29/17).

### ***Additions***

**HNI:** HNI Corporation is a small cap company that makes and sells office furniture and hearth products (fireplaces, etc.). We think this company has a great management team, who allocates capital wisely and at opportune times, and has created the low-cost producer in what's essentially a commodity business. We think short-term worries about a small (less than 10% of the company's sales) portion of the company's business has led to an attractive valuation in the stock. We also think that the company's relatively small (less than 25% of sales) hearth business is a hidden gem that's currently in a down cycle but possesses strong profit margins and growth prospects over the long term.

**EVHC:** Envision Healthcare is a mid-cap company that recently completed a transformational merger and the stock has faced several short-term issues that we believe have led to an attractive stock price. The company has 3 main businesses: Physician Services (outsourced physician groups – typically ER and hospital doctors and anesthesiologists); Ambulatory Services (stand-alone surgery centers); and Transport (ambulance business), that they recently agreed to sell to pay down debt and grow the other two businesses. The company has a strong track record of acquiring new physician groups and surgery centers, and in growing its existing businesses. We think its industry is ripe for consolidation and it has years of growth ahead of it.

The stock has come under pressure, thanks to potential changes to health care laws, the firm's relatively high debt pile from the merger, and some unfavorable headlines for its Physician Services business. We believe that the company's services—especially its surgery center business—are valuable and ultimately result in cost savings to the overall health care system with better patient outcomes, so any short-term effects due to changes in health care laws will be short-lived. We also believe the company will reduce its debt meaningfully in the next 12 months; however, we also believe the company's cash flows are adequate to comfortably service their current debt load even if they choose not to pay it down. We also think that recent bad press surrounding the company's Physician Services business (allegations that they purposefully charge patients directly for emergency room visits/procedures rather than work with the patients' insurance companies) is misguided. Only about 1% of the company's revenue comes from directly-billed patients, and we think the articles and studies cited simply show some of the growing pains Envision faces when it initially takes over the operations of an emergency room.

We think Envision has a strong future and an attractive stock price.

### **Individual Stock Performance**

**Contributors:** The two greatest contributors during the quarter were Landauer (ticker: LDR – 2.08% of the Fund at 09/29/17) and Abercrombie & Fitch (ticker: ANF – 2.46% of the Fund at 09/29/17).

**LDR:** Landauer received an all-cash buyout offer of \$67.25 during the quarter from Fortive Corp. (ticker: FTV – 0.00% of the Fund at 09/29/17) which capped off a strong run for the stock and our investment in it. Subsequent to quarter-end, we liquidated the Fund's remaining shares in Landauer, given that the stock was trading above its offer price and we see little chance for a higher offer. We were pleased with our investment in the company and we wish the company well in its new home.

**ANF:** Abercrombie & Fitch reported better than expected quarterly results in August and the stock appreciated sharply off its lows. We highlighted the company in our last quarterly letter as one of the retailers we were fond of, given extremely low expectations coupled with an attractive valuation and what we believed to be brighter prospects than most investors/speculators give them credit for. We still see strong value in Abercrombie & Fitch.

**Detractors:** The two largest detractors in the Fund this quarter were Teva Pharmaceutical (ticker: TEVA – 3.00% of the Fund at 09/29/17), and Diebold Nixdorf (ticker: DBD – 1.87% of the Fund at 09/29/17).

**TEVA:** As we mentioned at the beginning of the letter, Teva was a large detractor from the Fund during the quarter with the stock declining almost 47%. We are not strangers to stock price declines, or overreactions to short-term results, but the magnitude of Teva's drop surprised us, given how low its valuation metrics already were, and what we believed were already rock-bottom investor expectations.

In short, Teva was too large a position going into the quarter and resulted in a large drag—even if it proves to be temporary as we believe—to the Fund. We still strongly believe the company's stock is worth much more than its current stock price, but quite frankly, we could have done a better job managing it.

When Teva reported its results in early August, the company reduced its dividend and lowered its annual guidance due to increasing pressures in the generic drug marketplace, which did not surprise us. What we think spooked the markets and led to the sell-off, in our opinion is that Teva's CFO announced on the earnings conference call that the company may need debt covenant relief if things don't improve, which sounded ominous, and led investors/traders to believe that Teva may struggle servicing its \$35 billion debt pile. The company has since obtained this covenant relief for a very low cost, but the stock price remains depressed. We do not believe Teva will have any trouble meeting its debt obligations, but as is often the

case with levered companies, stock price moves—especially panicked moves—are often magnified, and Teva was no exception.

We believe Teva's stock price will be driven over the next few years based upon its success in paying down its debt load, which we think it will be able to accomplish at a faster rate than is expected by the market. When this happens, we expect the stock to appreciate meaningfully, even though we—and Wall Street—expect the company's earnings to drop significantly over the next two years.

**DBD:** In early July, Diebold Nixdorf's stock fell after the company surprised the market by lowering its annual financial guidance due to disruptions in its core markets caused by the integration of its transformational merger. In short, Diebold's competitors took advantage of the company's merger integration efforts to steal some market share. The company continues to be the market leader and possesses strong advantages, in our opinion, so we believe the stock's decline is mostly an overreaction to issues that will be resolved over the next few years. We think the core value proposition for the company's merger remains intact and we think the company can double its earnings over the next 5 years.

### **Final Comments**

Thank you for your investment in the Fund. We have high conviction in the Fund's stocks and we are invested alongside you. We appreciate your support, and we will continue to strive to prudently manage your money.

Sincerely yours,

Ryan Batchelor, CFA, CPA  
Principal and Portfolio Manager  
Clifford Capital Partners, LLC

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*The fund's investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses must be considered carefully before investing. The prospectus contains this and other important information about the investment company, and it may be obtained by calling (800) 628-4077, or by going to the Clifford Capital Partners Funds website at [www.cliffordcapfunds.com](http://www.cliffordcapfunds.com) and clicking on the "Prospectus" link. Read it carefully before investing.*

### **Risks of the Fund**

**The Fund invests in common stocks**, which subjects the Fund and its shareholders to the risks associated with common stock investing, including the financial risk of selecting individual companies that do not perform as anticipated. Over time, the stock markets tend to move in cycles. The value of the Fund's investments may increase or decrease more than the stock markets in general.

**Investing in the securities of small-cap and mid-cap companies generally involves substantially greater risk than investing in larger, more established companies.** These companies are typically subject to greater changes in earnings and business prospects than are larger, more established companies, and may be more vulnerable than larger companies to adverse business or economic developments; the risk exists that the companies will not succeed; and the prices of the companies' shares could dramatically decline in value. Companies with large market capitalizations go in and out of favor based on various market and economic conditions. Prices of securities of larger companies tend to be less volatile than companies with smaller market capitalizations. In exchange for this potentially lower risk, the Fund's value may not rise as much as the value of funds that emphasize companies with smaller market capitalizations.

**The Fund is a focused fund** and is currently expected to hold stocks of between only 25 and 35 companies once fully invested. Focusing investments in a small number of companies may subject the Fund to greater share price volatility and therefore a greater risk of loss because a single security's increase or decrease in value may have a greater impact on the Fund's value and total return.

**Because the Fund invests primarily in value stocks** (stocks that the Adviser believes are undervalued), the Fund's performance may at times be better or worse than the performance of stock funds that focus on other types of stock strategies (e.g., growth stocks), or that have a broader investment style.

*The Clifford Capital Partners Funds are distributed by First Dominion Capital Corp., Member FINRA*

### **Fees and Expenses of the Fund**

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The following table describes the expenses and fees that you may pay if you buy and hold shares of the Fund.

<b>Shareholder Fees</b> (fees paid directly from your investment)	<b><u>Investor Class</u></b>	<b><u>Institutional Class</u></b>
Redemption Fee (as a percentage of the amount redeemed on shares after holding them for 60 days or less)	2.00%	None
<b>Annual Fund Operating Expenses</b> (expenses that you pay each year as a percentage of the value of your investment)		
Management Fees	0.90%	0.90%
Distribution and Service 12b-1 Fees	0.20%	0.00%
Other Expenses <sup>1</sup>	0.00%	0.00%
Total Annual Fund Operating Expenses	1.10%	0.90%

*1. Based on estimated amounts for the current fiscal year.*