Investment Management

Second Quarter 2021

#### **DEAR CLIENTS & FRIENDS;**

**The Wisco-managed ETF portfolios generated positive mid-single digit returns in the second quarter.** Our lower risk portfolios (Conservative & Balanced) were up in the 4-5% range while our higher risk portfolios (Growth & Aggressive) rose 5-6%. Our portfolios benefited from strong gains in the global equity markets and precious metals, as well as modest gains in the fixed income markets.

**U.S. and International stock markets continued to rally in the quarter, rising 8% and 6%, respectively.** Equity markets have been the primary beneficiary of accommodative Central Bank policies around the world. All G7 Global Central banks cut their borrowing rates to zero last year to provide liquidity to the financial system. As global economies reopen and normal routines resume, economists are predicting some of the strongest 2021 economic growth rates in decades, including 6%-plus growth in the United States, United Kingdom and Canada. In the U.S., a proposed infrastructure bill could lift fiscal stimulus to ~\$6 trillion over the last year (30% of our annual GDP) which has also been a major driver to a rapid economic recovery.

**The Domestic Fixed Income market increased 2% in the quarter.** The 10-year treasury yield began the quarter at 1.8% and drifted lower to 1.4% at quarter-end. Rising inflation expectations remain a concern for bond investors as higher inflation could eventually lead to higher treasury rates (generally treasury rates and bond returns move in opposite directions). CPI inflation was reported at 4.2% and 5.0% year-over-year in the last two months compared to the Fed's long-term mandate of 2%. The Fed has maintained its borrowing rate at 0%-0.25% since March of 2020 and has stated that it does not expect to raise until late-2023 (although some believe this will happen sooner if inflation remains elevated). Real interest rates (adjusted for inflation) have been negative in the U.S. since January 2020. We are keeping fixed income durations a little shorter than normal to moderate losses if rates were to move meaningfully higher.

**Our commodity exposures consisted of gold (up 4%) and silver (up 7%) this period.** Both positions are in the portfolios to potentially take advantage of their safe-haven status (low correlation with stocks and bonds) and hedging ability against an increasing money supply. Wisco uses alternative exposures (like metals & agricultural products) in our ETF portfolios as they tend to improve portfolio diversification when combined with traditional investments.

As a reminder, our policy is to rebalance client portfolios on a semi-annual basis. This allows us to realign the positioning of your portfolio with our current market expectations. To that end, we will be working on rebalancing portfolios over the course of the next few weeks. As always, feel free to contact us to discuss how your portfolio is positioned, your targeted risk level, or any other life changes that may be relevant to your investment strategy. *Also, per our annual requirements, we have enclosed a copy of Wisco's privacy policy and will send you a copy of our Company Brochure upon request.* 

Wisco welcomed Jack Dunn as an intern this Summer. Jack is helping Wisco analyze various investments.

At Wisco, we believe our approach of designing well-diversified, low-cost investment portfolios is the best way to produce favorable results over time. We would like to thank you for providing us with the opportunity to work with you as your investment adviser. We appreciate your business!

Sincerely,





### Second Quarter 2021

## Wisco Investment Management

Wisco-managed portfolios are constructed using five asset classes; Domestic Equity, International Equity, Domestic Fixed Income, Alternative Investments and Money Market. Our current managed portfolio asset class allocations are as follows:

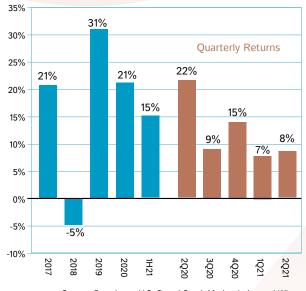
#### WISCO MANAGED PORTFOLIOS

	Conservative	Balanced	Balanced Growth	Growth	Aggressive
Domestic Equity	24%	33%	41%	49%	59%
International Equity	7%	11%	14%	20%	25%
Domestic Fixed Income	e 58%	45%	34%	20%	5%
Alternative Investment	s 10%	10%	10%	10%	10%
Money Market	1%	1%	1%	1%	1%
Total	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Target Volatility*	6%	8%	10%	12%	15%

\*Target Volatility is our estimate for the annual standard deviation of portfolio returns. Source: Wisco Investment Management LLC

# Second Quarter 2021 Market Review

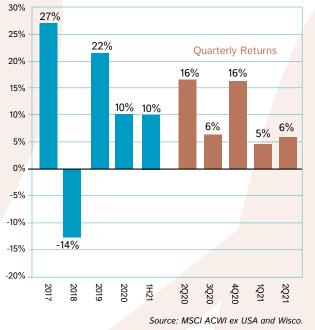
#### **DOMESTIC EQUITY**



Source: Dow Jones U.S. Broad Stock Market Index and Wisco.

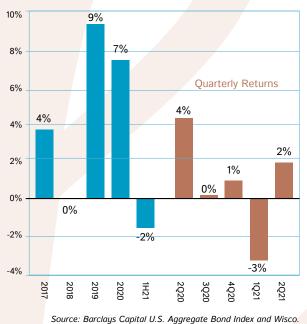
The stock market had another strong quarter returning 8% in 2Q21. The S&P 500 climbed throughout the quarter closing at an all-time high of 4298 and is now 92% above the March 2020 bottom. Large-cap stocks (up 9%) outperformed both mid and small-cap stocks (up 5%) this quarter. The United States' 1Q21 GDP increased 6.4% and the S&P 500's earnings increased 53%. Consumer Discretionary (+238% earnings growth), Financials (+144%) and Materials (+64%) all recovered nicely from the pandemic lows, with only Industrials (-1%) experiencing an earnings decline in 1Q21. We expect strong growth to continue for three reasons. First, as more people get vaccinated we think pent-up demand will stimulate growth. Second, both fiscal and monetary policy are geared to accelerate growth. Finally, an infrastructure bill could increase spending later in the year. Consensus expectations imply 2021 earnings will increase 35% and be 17% higher than the peak earnings level reached in 2019.

Strong growth prospects and an accommodative Fed have led to above normal returns for the past fifteen months. Going forward, we think investors will be focused on how much good news is priced into the market and whether inflation will force the Fed to take a more hawkish position. The S&P 500 trades at a PE of 22x (2021 consensus EPS), which is higher than usual. In addition, we feel the Fed could reduce bond purchases by year end. Under this backdrop, its possible stocks could tread water in the near term, however, long-term we continue to feel domestic equity should be a part of everyone's portfolio. Therefore, we plan to trim domestic equity positions back to where they were at the beginning of the year in all our client accounts.



#### **INTERNATIONAL EQUITY**

DOMESTIC FIXED INCOME



The MSCI All World Index increased 6% in 2Q21, with FTSE Developed Large Cap Index up 6%, FTSE Small Cap Index up 6% and FTSE Emerging Market Index up 4%. In Europe, markets were mainly positive with Poland (+18%) and Switzerland (+12%) among the top performers. In Asia, Hong Kong was up 3%, and South Korea increased 8%, while Japan (-2%) has been one of the weaker performers. In emerging markets, Brazil (+22%) and Russia (+12%) were among the best performers, Shanghai increased 6%, while Malaysia declined 2%.

The Eurozone and Britian continue to struggle with GDP down 1.3% and 5.9%, respectively. Asian economies are more mixed with GDP higher in Hong Kong (+24%), Taiwan (+13%) and China (+2.4%) but lower in Japan (-3.9%). While fundamentals are not as strong oversees as they are in the United States, international stocks trade at a forward PE of just 15x. A significant discount versus the United States. Furthermore, growth in international markets could be primed to accelerate once they reach the vaccination rates achieved in the U.S. Therefore, we are increasing our managed portfolios exposure to international stocks and prefer large developed and emerging market stocks to small cap stocks. The Barclays U.S. Aggregate Bond Index increased 2% in 2Q21 with Intermediate Treasuries up 1%, Short-term Investment Grade Bonds up 6% and High Yield Bonds up 2%. The 10-year treasury yield trended lower in the quarter starting at 1.75% and finishing the quarter at its low of 1.44%. Annual inflation (PCE) in May came in at 3.9% a significant increase from February's 1.6%. The Federal Reserve continues to hold the Fed funds rates around 0% and has doubled the size of its balance sheet since the start of the pandemic. The Fed now holds \$8.1T in fixed income securities and the money supply (M2) now stands at \$20.4T up 14% in the last twelve months.

After a weak 1Q21, Fixed Income posted a positive return in the quarter. Going forward, the Fed seems committed to keeping rates low for an extended period. However, higher inflation rates may force the Fed to taper its \$120B monthly bond buying program later this year or early next year. Under this scenario, longer dated bonds may see higher yields and lower prices. For this reason, we are going to modestly reduce our clients Fixed Income holdings and prefer shorter dated bonds to longer dated bonds.

#### **ALTERNATIVE INVESTMENTS**

The Dow Jones-UBS Commodity Index increased 15% in the quarter. In agriculture, grain prices were up across the board. Corn prices were up 28%<sup>1</sup>, wheat prices increased 9%<sup>1</sup> and soybean prices increased 1%<sup>1</sup>. Corn prices were helped by both strong demand and uncertain supply as a result of a dry start to the North American growing season.

Precious metals were also up in the quarter. Silver increased 7%<sup>3</sup> in 2Q21 and gold prices increased 4%<sup>2</sup> in the quarter. Silver benefited from a stronger economy and easy monetary policies around the world.

The Cushing, Oklahoma spot price for WTI crude oil increased 23% in the quarter to \$72.98/barrel. Spot oil is up 51% so far in 2021, after declining 22% in 2020.

Wisco is adding a board-based commodity ETN to client portfolios in the second half of 2021. This fund will hold positions in crude oil, natural gas, corn, soybeans, gold, copper, aluminum, soybean oil, silver, and livestock along with other smaller commodity positions. We feel these commodity positions offer uncorrelated returns to stocks and bonds and can reduce the overall risk of a portfolio. We also continue to hold a silver ETF and a gold ETF in client portfolios, albeit at reduced position sizes. These precious metals should benefit from easy monetary policies around the world and silver could benefit from an improving economy.

#### **MONEY MARKET**

The current money market yield is 0.03%. Given this low yield, Wisco is going to hold a minimal amount of Cash/Money Market assets in our client portfolios.

#### Footnotes:

1. Return calculation based on the near future contract as quoted in the Wall Street Journal.

- 2. Return calculation uses Aberdeen Physical Gold Shares (SGOL) as a proxy for gold.
- 3. Return calculation uses Aberdeen Physical Silver Trust ETF (SIVR) as a proxy for silver.
- 4. Return calculation uses Cushing, OK WTI spot price FOB as a proxy for oil.
- 5. Based on iBoxx Liquid Investment Grade Index (LQD)

Wisco Investment Management LLC is a registered investment adviser. Information presented is for educational purposes only and does not intend to make an offer or solicitation for the sale or purchase of any specific securities product, service, or investment strategy. Investments involve risk and unless otherwise stated, are not guaranteed. Be sure to first consult with a qualified financial adviser, tax professional, or attorney before implementing any strategy or recommendation discussed herein.

Wall Street to Wisconsin