

## Fund Manager Commentary

As of March 31, 2025

### Fund Highlights

- Concentrated, high conviction portfolio
- Distinctive approach is centered on linking valuations with barriers to entry
- Seeks to invest in businesses that are trading below what is believed to be its estimate of the companies' intrinsic value
- Focuses on businesses that are believed to have a sustainable competitive advantage or a high barrier to entry in place
- Strategy provides the opportunity to invest in companies of all market capitalizations

### Market Recap

U.S. equities moved lower in the first quarter. Despite strong performance to start the year, growth fears and uncertainty surrounding tariffs introduced significant volatility in the back half of the first quarter. The best performing benchmark sectors were Energy, Utilities, and Consumer Staples. The worst performing sectors for the benchmark were Consumer Discretionary, Information Technology, and Communication Services.

### Portfolio Review

The Touchstone Focused Fund (Class A Shares, Load Waived) outperformed its benchmark, the Russell 3000® Index, for the quarter ended March 31, 2025.

Within the Touchstone Focused Fund, the sectors where Fund holdings outperformed the most relative to the benchmark were Consumer Staples, Health Care, and Energy. Sectors that lagged the most relative to the benchmark include Real Estate, Materials, and Communication Services. Stock selection contributed to performance for the quarter. Sector allocation detracted during the quarter primarily due to the zero weighting in Utilities and the underweight in Energy.

Three of the holdings that contributed the most to performance were Philip Morris International Inc. (Consumer Staples sector), Nvidia Corp. (Information Technology sector), and HCA Healthcare Inc. (Health Care sector).

Philip Morris outperformed in the first quarter, driven by stronger-than-expected fourth quarter results and fiscal year 2025 guidance that exceeded consensus expectations. Performance was supported by robust growth in its smoke-free portfolio, along with modest gains in combustible cigarette sales and profits. The company continues to see significant growth potential in its multi-category smoke-free business, with products like Zyn (nicotine pouches)

expanding overall nicotine consumption occasions. Nvidia shares underperformed during the quarter and the Fund benefited from an underweight position. The release of the Chinese DeepSeek artificial intelligence (AI) model in January sparked concerns that a substantial reduction in the cost of AI (as claimed by DeepSeek's creators) would translate to reduced demand for Nvidia's chips, resulting in Nvidia's stock underperforming in the quarter. In our view, the cost of AI has been coming down materially over time, and we view DeepSeek as essentially another step along the existing AI cost reduction curve. In fact, we think reduction in the cost of AI will lead to greater and faster adoption of AI services as the lower cost translates to more compelling return on investment for such services. Therefore, we expect continued strong growth in demand for Nvidia's chips over time. HCA Healthcare shares outperformed during the quarter. Commentary out of Washington suggested less appetite for structural changes to Medicaid than were implied by the initial House framework for budget reconciliation. We still see risks to hospital earnings from legislative actions, primarily via potential non-extension of enhanced subsidies for the health insurance exchanges, and potential reductions in state-directed payments in Medicaid. We currently see these risks as reasonably well-discounted in the shares.

Among the holdings that detracted the most from performance included Salesforce Inc. (Information Technology sector), Alphabet Inc. (Communication Services sector), and Oracle Corp. (Information Technology sector).

All three detractors were part of a broader theme in the first quarter of technology company shares pulling back after leading the market for some time. Salesforce underperformed during the quarter as the company reported fiscal 2026 guidance during the quarter that was slightly below investor expectations. Alphabet's shares have underperformed as the market remains concerned about the potential for Google Search to lose market share to AI

*(continued)*

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Performance data quoted represents past performance, which is no guarantee of future results. The investment return and principal value of an investment in the Fund will fluctuate so that an investor's shares, when redeemed, may be worth more or less than their original cost. Current performance may be higher or lower than performance data given. **For performance information current to the most recent month-end, visit [TouchstoneInvestments.com/mutual-funds](https://TouchstoneInvestments.com/mutual-funds).**



services such as ChatGPT. In our opinion, Google Search maintains a distribution advantage over would-be-rivals and also has a cost advantage as a result of its vertically integrated service that runs on Google's proprietary semiconductor chips. Google's lowest-cost position, combined with AI capabilities at least on par with competitors such as OpenAI, leads to a structural low-cost competitive advantage for Google, even if Google's distribution moat were to diminish as a result of regulatory action. We expect Google to deliver competitive AI services that retain customers and drive revenue and profit growth. Oracle shares underperformed during the quarter as the company reported quarterly results that were slightly below expectations.

Investments made in international companies, which comprised 4.0% of assets at the end of the quarter, outperformed the benchmark.

Uber Technologies Inc. (Industrials sector) was added to the Fund's portfolio and Americold Realty Trust Inc. (Real Estate sector) was sold from the portfolio during the quarter.

As the quarter came to a close, the Fund's portfolio had an overweight in the Communication Services, Health Care, and Consumer Staples sectors and an underweight in the Industrials, Energy, Real Estate, and Financials sectors. The weight in the Materials, Information Technology, and Consumer Discretionary sectors were roughly in line with that of the benchmark. The Fund held no positions in the Utilities sector.

### Outlook and Conclusion

In recent years markets have primarily focused on inflation and the path of rates. In the first quarter, investor attention shifted to policy uncertainty and the impact on economic growth. The new administration's frenetic pace of trade and regulatory policy initiatives left investors and corporations with significant uncertainty. The market has been left wondering whether this policy agenda may stimulate some combination of lower growth and higher inflation. We acknowledge this risk and have been watching employment, housing, manufacturing, and market breadth data among others to continually re-underwrite our view. Consistent with our approach over the past few years, we have maintained a high-quality portfolio with a focus on higher return on capital businesses with pricing power. One hundred percent of the Fund's portfolio, excluding cash, remains invested in companies that have moderate to high barriers to entry in our view. We believe disciplined execution of our process will benefit the Fund's portfolio through periods of volatility and over the long term.



## Fund Facts

Class	Inception Date	Symbol	CUSIP	Annual Fund Operating Expense Ratio	
				Total	Net
A Shares	09/30/03	TFOAX	89154X245	1.19%	1.19%
C Shares	04/12/12	TFFCX	89154X237	2.03%	1.91%
Y Shares	02/12/99	TFFYX	89154X229	0.89%	0.89%
INST Shares	12/20/06	TFFIX	89154X211	0.96%	0.85%
<b>Total Fund Assets</b>	<b>\$1.2 Billion</b>				

Expense ratio is annualized. Data as of the current prospectus. Touchstone Advisors has contractually agreed to waive a portion of its fees and/or reimburse certain Fund expenses in order to limit certain annual fund operating expenses (excluding Acquired Fund Fees and Expenses "AFFE," and other expenses, if any) to 1.20% for Class A Shares, 1.89% for Class C Shares, 0.95% for Class Y Shares and 0.83% for Class INST Shares. These expense limitations will remain in effect until at least 07/29/25. Share class availability differs by firm.

## Annualized Total Returns

	1Q25	YTD	1 Year	3 Year	5 Year	10 Year	Inception
Excluding Max Sales Charge							
A Shares	-3.37%	-3.37%	6.77%	7.04%	17.84%	10.61%	10.23%
C Shares	-3.55%	-3.55%	5.97%	6.20%	16.94%	9.95%	9.64%
Y Shares	-3.30%	-3.30%	7.08%	7.35%	18.18%	10.93%	10.52%
INST Shares	-3.28%	-3.28%	7.12%	7.39%	18.23%	11.00%	10.61%
Benchmark	-4.72%	-4.72%	7.22%	8.22%	18.18%	11.80%	8.11%
Including Max Sales Charge							
A Shares	-8.20%	-8.20%	1.44%	5.22%	16.63%	9.96%	9.98%
C Shares	-4.51%	-4.51%	4.97%	6.20%	16.94%	9.95%	9.64%

Max 5.00% sales charge for Class A Shares and 1% Contingent Deferred Sales Charge for Class C Shares held less than 1 year.

Benchmark - Russell 3000® Index

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The performance presented for Class A, C, and INST Shares combines the performance of an older class of shares (Y Shares) from the Fund's inception, 02/12/99, with the performance since the inception date of each share class.

## Top 10 Equity Holdings of Fund

	(% of Portfolio)		(% of Portfolio)		
1	Microsoft Corp.	8.3	6	UnitedHealth Group Inc.	2.9
2	Meta Platforms, Inc.	6.7	7	Visa Inc.	2.9
3	Apple, Inc.	6.6	8	Philip Morris International Inc.	2.8
4	Alphabet Inc.	5.4	9	NVIDIA Corp.	2.8
5	Amazon.com Inc.	4.9	10	Bank of America Corp.	2.6

Source: BNY Mellon Asset Servicing

The Russell 3000® Index measures the performance of the 3,000 largest U.S. companies based on total market capitalization, which represents approximately 98% of the investable U.S. equity market.

The indexes mentioned are unmanaged statistical composites of stock market or bond market performance. Investing in an index is not possible. Unmanaged index returns do not reflect any fees, expenses or sales charges.

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## A Word About Risk

The Fund invests in equities which are subject to market volatility and loss. The Fund invests in stocks of large-cap companies which may be unable to respond quickly to new competitive challenges. The Fund invests in stocks of small- and mid-cap companies, which may be subject to more erratic market movements than stocks of larger, more established companies. The Fund invests in preferred stocks which are relegated below bonds for payment should the issuer be liquidated. If interest rates rise, the fixed dividend on preferred stocks may be less attractive, causing their price to decline. The Fund invests in foreign securities, including depositary receipts, such as American Depositary Receipts, Global Depositary Receipts, and European Depositary Receipts, which carry the associated risks of economic and political instability, market liquidity, currency volatility and accounting standards that differ from those of U.S. markets and may offer less protection to investors. The Fund invests in emerging markets securities which are more likely to experience turmoil or rapid changes in market or economic conditions than developed countries. The Fund may focus its investments in a particular industry and/or market sector which may increase the Fund's volatility and magnify its effects on total return. The Adviser engages a sub-adviser to make investment decisions for the Fund's portfolio; it may be unable to identify and retain a sub-adviser who achieves superior investment returns relative to other similar sub-advisers. Events in the U.S. and global financial markets, including actions taken to stimulate or stabilize economic growth may at times result in unusually high market volatility, which could negatively impact Fund performance and cause it to experience illiquidity, shareholder redemptions, or other potentially adverse effects. Banks and financial services companies could suffer losses if interest rates rise or economic conditions deteriorate. The Fund is non-diversified, which means that it may invest a greater percentage of its assets in the securities of a limited number of issuers and may be subject to greater risks. Current and future portfolio holdings are subject to change.

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Please consider the investment objectives, risks, charges and expenses of the Fund carefully before investing. The prospectus and the summary prospectus contain this and other information about the Fund. To obtain a prospectus or a summary prospectus, contact your financial professional or download and/or request one at [TouchstoneInvestments.com/resources](https://www.touchstoneinvestments.com/resources) or call Touchstone at 800.638.8194. Please read the prospectus and/or summary prospectus carefully before investing.

Not FDIC Insured | No Bank Guarantee | May Lose Value

