

## Market Comment

We are currently experiencing very trying times in the world markets and our economy. The word that is most heard is “unprecedented.” While we agree that it seems like we are being hit by one catastrophe after another, we will attempt in these next few pages to help shed some light on the positives and the fact that this time is not different.

**Our commitment.** Since the beginning of time, deciding where to invest your hard-earned dollars has been a puzzling exercise at best. Hawking of wares from salesmen for everything from elixirs to swampland to hedge funds has brightened the eyes of investors for decades looking for the next big wave. The current mess we are in is a testament that this will never change. All market cycles, past and present, can be mapped to the extent in which greed and fear were rampant. The downside to this is that we will continue to have emotion tugging declines into the future. The positive side to this is that just as in every instance prior, actions will be taken to correct the cause of those declines and we will enjoy the prosperity of the ensuing gains to new highs.

History has clearly shown us that it is how you respond to these cycles that will determine your level of success in reaching your investment goals. With these clearly documented results in hand, we are committed to help guide you through the challenging times. This will mean not taking the easy road to recommending short term feel good actions that provide temporary emotional relief. This will mean making the unpopular or hard decisions to stay the course and keep attention on our objectives through all of the distractions. This will mean keeping our head while those around us are losing theirs. Our commitment to your future lies not in the results of the past weeks or months, but on the progress over the coming years and decades. That will not change.

**Commitment to research.** Confidence comes with knowledge and experience.

Knowledge comes from hard work. Just as in everyday life, investing gives us many choices or directions to take to solve problems or meet objectives. The trick in investing is to research the myriad of options available and decide on those that will give the best chance of attaining growth objectives with an acceptable amount of risk. Experience allows knowledge to come from the participation in these various investment alternatives over time and to see firsthand their reactions to market shocks and normal cycles. It is this experience that helps to avoid the get rich quick schemes and to identify strategies and styles that consistently perform. Experience in many market cycles allows the toning down of unrealistic expectations during periods of market exuberance and also helps provide confidence and reassurance during the emotional uneasiness and panic stages of market declines.

Considerable time and man hours are dedicated to the constant updating of information from our selected analysts and managers. Statistics and charting of indicators on the economy give us current reads on where we actually are in cycles and not where the media tells us we are. And then there is our following of some of the greatest investment minds of all time. We, as a firm, have evolved to embracing the strategies of these brilliant investors and revert back to their time proven tactics when the need arises.

Adopting a consistent investment strategy, the continued learning from tireless research, and the confidence that comes from experience helps commit to unwavering advice to meet long term objectives with the best financial strategies and minds at our disposal.

**Role of the media.** Common sense would assume that the broadcasting and written media would report news and events on an equal and non-biased term. Wrong! Never before, in our opinion and many others, has the media been more negative on reporting

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U.S. and world events than they have over the past twelve months. According to the press we were in an economic recession a year ago and every month since. Sometimes, after being told something all day, every day, it becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. Not that the economy wasn't weakening from the nice expansion since 2003, but consumer sentiment means a lot in regards to their spending habits and overall confidence in the country's future and its leadership. What people were feeling and what was happening in reality were miles apart. The most disturbing occurrences are when the media outlets, in their rush to be "first" with the news, does not even verify their sources and reports inexcusable incorrect information. There is no accountability for these actions that move markets, destroy lives, etc.

The financial news networks have become a joke. With no concern for real facts, they book guests that have no reservation offering their opinions even though they have no credible track records. Their success is measured on how rattled they can make the investor while offering no useful advice whatsoever. Ultra short-term has been the extent of their programming and timeframe. Even the onscreen clock on one program measures time in one-hundredths of a second. We continue to suggest that you limit viewing time to this nonsense. Remember that the news media and the great talking heads only tell you everything that went wrong. They only look backward.

**What do we learn.** Experience for experience sake means nothing if you don't learn something. Being through many market cycles, we make it a point to learn from each and apply it to our philosophy and everyday planning. In this recent cycle, it has been demonstrated that trying to time the markets' ups and downs is futile. Going into the decline of these past few weeks, the majority of stocks were by no measure overvalued. Analysts agree that stocks were fairly valued by long standing measures and had plenty of upside potential. Exorbitantly overpriced stocks were not prevalent like they were in the Dot.com bubble of 1999. The majority of this year's decline came in 10 trading days from September 30th to October 10th. This was mainly caused by the failure of Congress to approve the first bailout plan. Anticipating that kind of drop would have been impossible.

The strategy of asset allocation across various market styles provides less volatility and helps reduce losses on the downside. Being that many of the biggest losers came in mutual funds that are normally considered conservative, it helped to have money diversified into growth stocks and government securities as well. We have learned that allocating more precisely in the future may help keep volatility even lower, but it has been demonstrated again that it accomplishes what it is designed to do. New strategies for retired investors taking income are also being tested to help provide piece of mind during long downtrends. Be assured that we will learn and apply much more as we make our way through this cycle.

**How we think this will unfold.** If you look at all of the bear markets we have gone through, they have all had the same characteristics. They all revolve around either a financial crisis or a significant overbuilding of some kind that results in a capacity problem and pricing pressure. Once the crisis is identified and

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## Great Investor Wisdom

It is most important during these times to look back at some of the greatest investors, the decisions they made and the mindset they had during turbulent times of their own. Providing you with a glimpse into some of our research will hopefully allow you to understand market dynamics and how important it is to stay with your plan in times of unease.

The following are quotes and backup graphics from some of the greatest investment minds.

### Avoid Self-Destructive Behavior

**"Individuals who cannot master their emotions are ill-suited to profit from the investment process."**

– Benjamin Graham,  
Father of Value Investing

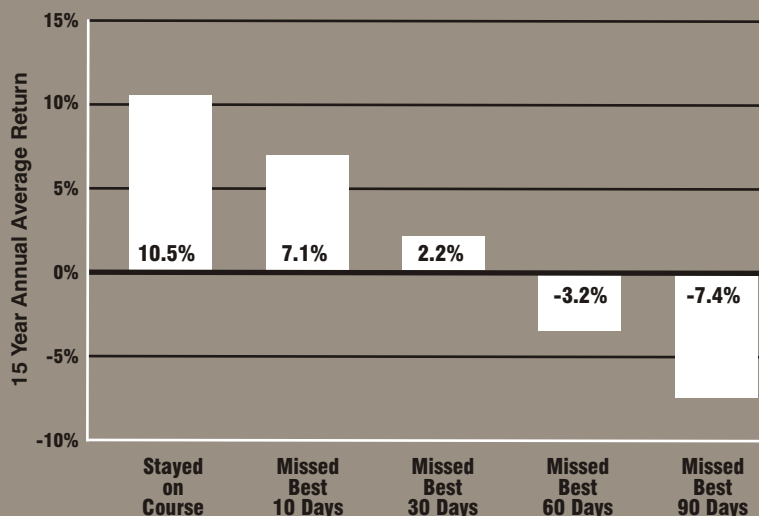
**"Far more money has been lost by investors preparing for corrections or trying to anticipate corrections than has been lost in the corrections themselves."**

– Peter Lynch

Don't  
Attempt  
to Time  
the Market

### The Danger of Trying to Time the Market

15 Year Average Annual Returns (1993-2007)



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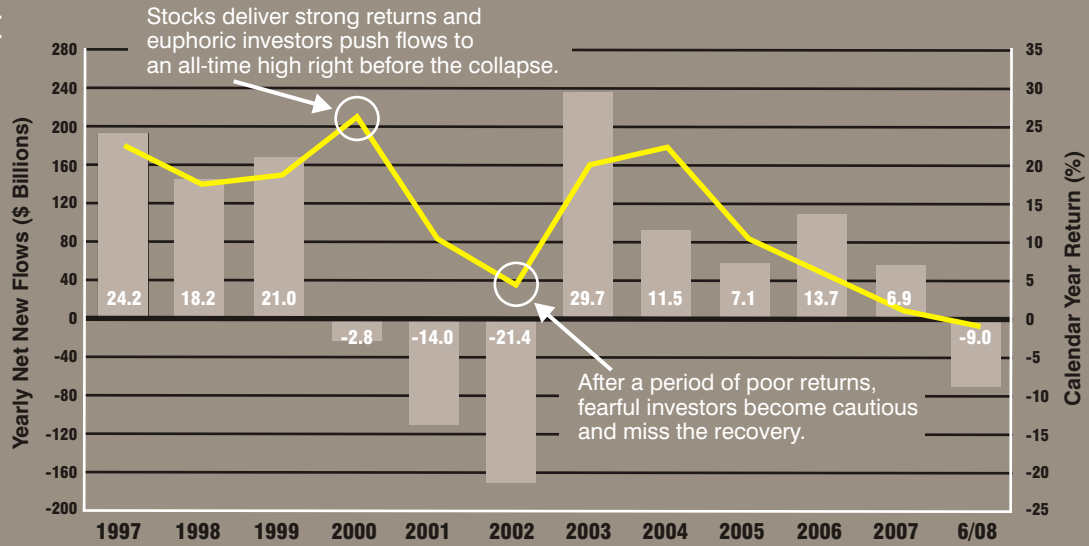
Our business depends on you and your satisfaction. We appreciate your referrals in the past and in the future.

## Don't Let Emotions Guide Your Investment Decisions

**“Be fearful when others are greedy. Be greedy when others are fearful.”**

– Warren Buffett

**Domestic Equity Funds vs. Net New Flows (1/1/1997 - 6/30/2008)**

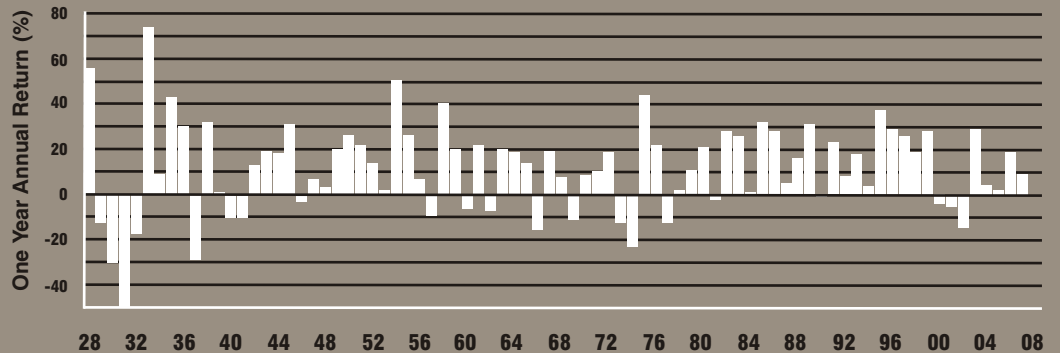


## Be Patient

**“Despite inevitable periods of uncertainty, stocks have rewarded patient, long-term investors.”**

– Christopher Davis,  
Portfolio Manager,  
Davis Advisors

**One Year Returns for the Dow Jones Industrial Average (1928 - 2007)**

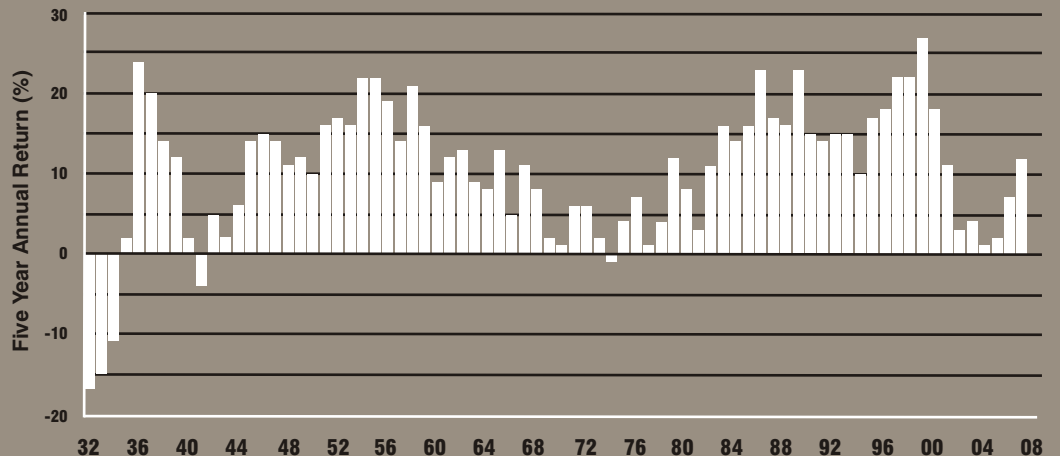


## Understand that Crises Are Inevitable

**“History provides a crucial insight regarding market crises: They are inevitable, painful, and ultimately surmountable.”**

– Shelby M. C. Davis,  
Advisor and Founder,  
Davis Advisors

**Five Year Returns for the Dow Jones Industrial Average**



**“You make most of your money in a bear market, you just don't realize it at the time.”**

– Shelby Cullom Davis, Diplomat, Legendary Investor and Founder of the Davis Investment Discipline

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solving the problem, the crisis is over. Stock markets look forward generally four to eight months out. It is a forward looking mechanism. With that said the recession, holiday shopping weakness and corporate layoffs most likely are already discounted by the markets. Next spring and summer are the timeframe most likely that is important.

If we look at the markets as of this writing, volatility is remarkable! There have been consecutive down days, but also some record breaking buying days to the upside. Current levels of cash in money market funds are at the highest amount ever recorded. The price earnings ratio for almost one third of all stocks is near eight to one. Normal P/E ratios are 15 or 16 to 1. Nearly two out of every ten traded companies have their stock prices trading for less than the cash on their balance sheets. By every measure, the oversold readings are at historic levels.

Long trends in the markets tend to reverse into long trends in the opposite direction. After the long down trend in the 1970's, we had the longest uptrend in history from 1982 to 1999. That was followed by our current nine year underperforming market period. Once we get the current financial mess straightened out and new oversights in place, there is no reason we shouldn't begin a new long term over performing trend.

Regarding unemployment statistics, although non-farm payrolls are down this past year, there are significantly more people working overall than in any point in history. With initial jobless claims reaching the highest point since 2002, this in the past has marked long term market bottoms quite remarkably. Remember that the markets look forward, thus explaining why the worst news often happens after the markets have bottomed.

It's anyone's guess if we make lower lows from this point, but in every bottom the panic stage is always the same. Investors reach such a state of despair and loss of all confidence that they get completely out of equities. When this happens in large numbers and great volume, this is the panic stage or capitulation that has to happen for a bottom to occur. One can argue that we are experiencing that now. If not, it sure feels like it.

So, although this decline is different in many ways from other declines, it is also the same in the way it is moving through the cycle. We feel that each week that goes by more indicators are flipping to the argument that this oversold condition may begin to correct to the upside. And keep in mind that in the first 40 days of a new bull market, stocks typically regain a third of what they lost during the bear market.

We feel it is prudent to stick to your plan and try to put emotions aside during these turbulent times. Hopefully, we have outlined some of the reasons we are confident that this time is not different and those investors that stand by their plan will continue to be the ones rewarded in the end. Capitalism and the free markets will survive and once again prosper.

## Market Summary Year to Date

<b>Dow Industrials</b>	<b>-41.6%</b>
<b>Dow Transportation</b>	<b>-33.8%</b>
<b>S&amp;P 500 Index</b>	<b>-47.7%</b>
<b>NASDAQ Composite</b>	<b>-50.3%</b>
<b>Russell 2000</b>	<b>-47.0%</b>
<b>International</b>	<b>-51.9%</b>

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