

summaries



the official newsletter of sigma investment counselors

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It's Our 40th Birthday!

The year 2013 represents Sigma Investment Counselors' 40th year in business. My late mentor Charles Ricker, CFA, a true gentleman, founded the firm in November, 1973. I joined 11 years later. As a unique feature in each one of our monthly Sigma Summaries publications this year, one of my colleagues will write a brief essay about some aspect of his or her career here at Sigma. I am proud of my colleagues, have a personal relationship with each of them, and value the contributions that they make towards enhancing the "Sigma Experience" for each and every one of our clients. As you get to know them better through their "stories" I think you too will see why I hold them in such high regard. I also hope you enjoy this feature.

Before proceeding, though, a little history might be in order.

The stock market crash was my baptism into the business as an owner in 1987 (after joining the firm in late 1984). Fortunately, and with an obvious dose of luck, I had assumed a fairly defensive investment posture in client portfolios at that time and the financial damage was fairly mitigated. Subsequently, the long period of equity strength in the 1990's

enabled the firm to grow its client base and assets under management from \$30 million then to about \$550 million today. Importantly, the corresponding improvement in revenues enabled the assembly of a sound team of investment and administrative professionals whose stories, again, you will read about over the next 12 months.

The resources also provided the wherewithal to develop industry leading tools and platforms that enable our professionals to deliver highly customized investment solutions to our clients. One platform is the new client report module of the Sigma Investment Counselors website. If you have reviewed these customized reports already, we would be interested in your feedback. If you have not done so, we encourage you to take a look.

In closing, I would like to extend warm wishes for a happy New Year and again thank you for allowing us the privilege of serving in the role that we do for you. We do not take this responsibility lightly.

Robert M. Bilkie Jr., CFA

local independent personal accessible
interactive creative local independent personal
knowledgeable thoughtful ethical experienced

I Knew Chuck Before You Knew Chuck

Great endeavors generally begin long before the official start date. I first met Chuck Ricker as a soon-to-graduate economics major from The University of Wisconsin, when I was interviewing for a first job at National Bank of Detroit (NBD). At that time Chuck was a senior investment analyst in the Trust Department and I was seeking employment as a junior investment analyst. I got the job and very soon after my first day, February 4, 1957, I was assigned to work with Chuck on a request from one of the bank's directors.

At that time, NBD was one of General Motor's lead banks and the Board was rightly attuned to issues that might affect the outlook for the auto industry. In that vein, the bank's research department was asked to assess concerns that a rapid depletion of the world's oil reserves could lead to shortages of motor fuel. That was more than fifty years ago and the issue is still a topic of discussion.

During our tenure at NBD, we were both fortunate to work under the demanding, sometimes unreasonable,

but always brilliant, tutelage of the Director of Research, Frank W. Hausmann, Jr. I didn't fully appreciate it at the time, but what I learned from Frank has been invaluable, even though the lessons were sometimes painful. Chuck and I both learned much of our approach to investing and portfolio management from Frank, and Bob Bilkie, through his subsequent association with Chuck at Sigma, became an additional disciple, by proxy, of the Frank Hausmann philosophy. I'm sure this common investment beginning is an important part of the successful, disciplined and collegial approach to investing practiced at Sigma.

In the late 1960s, Chuck and I both left NBD, Chuck to eventually start Sigma while I wound up at Paine Webber/UBS, where I spent 33 years as an analyst in the equity research department. Life can be unpredictable and here I am, more than 50 years later, associated with the investment counseling firm that Chuck and Bob built.

Walter J. Kirchberger, CFA

Please remember to contact Sigma Investment Counselors if there are any changes in your financial situation or investment objectives