

Source: *Jones Journal*. M.A. Wright Investment Fund Wins National Title. Summer 2001. By Ross Morgan, Class of 2001.

About the M. A. Wright Fund

With the past decade witnessing the longest expansion in the U.S. economy, fantastic fortunes have been made in the financial markets, and money management has become a field of great interest and great opportunities. The Jones School offers students a unique learning experience in money management by inviting them to be a member of a student run fund with real money, real objectives, and real rewards and consequences.

The M. A. Wright Fund was established in 1996 with a generous grant made by the M. A. Wright family in his memory. As of December 1, 2000, the assets in the fund had grown in value to over \$700,000. The primary objective of the fund is to provide students the opportunity to learn, develop, and practice effective portfolio management styles and techniques while generating scholarships for a few outstanding students each year. Investment decisions are thoroughly researched and based on sound portfolio management practices. In addition, guest speakers from respected investment firms regularly visit the class and offer strategies, insights, and experiences developed through their professional practices. Furthermore, the guests field direct questions from students on anything from investment practices to career objectives.

The established benchmark for performance is the S&P 500, and over the past 12 months, for the year 2000, performance has been exceptional, with the Wright Fund generating a return of 4.33%, relative to the S&P 500, which was down 2.34%, thus outperforming the benchmark by 6.5%. (Performance numbers are from 11/30/99 to 11/30/00).

The class, which is worth 6 academic credits over 2 semesters, has approximately 30 students with four of those serving as elected officers (chief investment officer, chief operating officer, chief information/re divided into 8 groups of research analysts, each covering sectors within the S&P. Each group is responsible for following the current holdings in its respective sectors as well as recommending future buys and sells within its area. Approximately 40-50 stocks are held at any one time, and all buy and sell decisions are made by the collective vote of the class.

Although no specific course prerequisites are required, the class is for those who have a sincere interest in investing in the markets and who may pursue a career in the field of money management. Students who sign up for the class participate in a selection and interview process conducted by the outgoing elected officers and the two adjunct professors. Usually about 15 new students enter the class each semester.