

GABELLI EQUITY TRUST INC  
Form DEF 14A  
March 30, 2012

SCHEDULE 14A INFORMATION

Proxy Statement Pursuant to Section 14(a) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934  
(Amendment No. )

Filed by Registrant   
Filed by a Party other than the Registrant

Check the appropriate box:

- Preliminary Proxy Statement
- Confidential, for Use of the Commission Only (as permitted by Rule 14a-6(e)(2))
- Definitive Proxy Statement
- Definitive Additional Materials
- Soliciting Material Pursuant to Sec. 240.14a-12

The Gabelli Equity Trust Inc.  
(Name of Registrant as Specified In Its Charter)

(Name of Person(s) Filing Proxy Statement, if other than the Registrant)

Payment of Filing Fee (Check the appropriate box):

- No fee required
- Fee computed on table below per Exchange Act Rules 14a-6(i)(1) and 0-11.
  - 1) Title of each class of securities to which transaction applies:
  - 2) Aggregate number of securities to which transaction applies:
  - 3) Per unit price or other underlying value of transaction computed pursuant to Exchange Act Rule 0-11(set forth the amount on which the filing fee is calculated and state how it was determined):
  - 4) Proposed maximum aggregate value of transaction:
  - 5) Total fee paid:
- Fee paid previously with preliminary materials.
- Check box if any part of the fee is offset as provided by Exchange Act Rule 0-11(a)(2) and identify the filing for which the offsetting fee was paid previously. Identify the previous filing by registration statement number, or the Form or Schedule and the date of its filing.
  - 1) Amount Previously Paid:
  - 2) Form, Schedule or Registration Statement No.:

- 3) Filing Party:
  - 4) Date Filed:
-

THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST INC.

One Corporate Center  
Rye, New York 10580-1422  
(914) 921-5070

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NOTICE OF ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS  
To Be Held on May 14, 2012

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To the Shareholders of  
THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST INC.

Notice is hereby given that the Annual Meeting of Shareholders of The Gabelli Equity Trust Inc., a Maryland corporation (the "Fund"), will be held on Monday, May 14, 2012, at 9:30 a.m., at The Cole Auditorium, The Greenwich Library, 101 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut 06830 (the "Meeting"), and at any adjournments thereof for the following purposes:

1. To elect two (2) Directors of the Fund, one (1) Director to be elected by the holders of the Fund's Common Stock and holders of its Series C Auction Rate Cumulative Preferred Stock, 5.875% Series D Cumulative Preferred Stock, Series E Auction Rate Cumulative Preferred Stock, and 6.20% Series F Cumulative Preferred Stock (together, the "Preferred Stock"), voting together as a single class, and one (1) Director to be elected by the holders of the Fund's Preferred Stock, voting as a separate class (Proposal 1); and
2. To consider and vote upon such other matters, including adjournments, as may properly come before said Meeting or any adjournments thereof.

These items are discussed in greater detail in the attached Proxy Statement.

The close of business on March 19, 2012 has been fixed as the record date for the determination of shareholders entitled to notice of and to vote at the Meeting and any adjournments thereof.

**YOUR VOTE IS IMPORTANT REGARDLESS OF THE SIZE OF YOUR HOLDINGS IN THE FUND. WHETHER OR NOT YOU PLAN TO ATTEND THE MEETING, WE ASK THAT YOU PLEASE VOTE PROMPTLY. INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE PROPER VOTING AND/OR EXECUTION OF PROXIES ARE SET FORTH ON THE INSIDE COVER. SHAREHOLDERS MAY PROVIDE THEIR VOTE BY TELEPHONE OR THE INTERNET BY FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS ACCOMPANYING THE PROXY CARD, VOTING INSTRUCTION FORM OR NOTICE OF INTERNET AVAILABILITY OF PROXY MATERIALS. ALTERNATIVELY, SHAREHOLDERS MAY SUBMIT VOTING INSTRUCTIONS BY SIGNING AND DATING THE PROXY CARD OR VOTING INSTRUCTION FORM AND RETURNING IT IN THE ACCOMPANYING POSTAGE-PAID ENVELOPE.**

By Order of the Board of Directors,

AGNES MULLADY  
Secretary

April 4, 2012

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INSTRUCTIONS FOR SIGNING PROXY CARDS TO BE RETURNED BY MAIL

The following general rules for signing proxy cards may be of assistance to you and avoid the time and expense to the Fund involved in validating your vote if you fail to sign your proxy card properly.

1. Individual Accounts: Sign your name exactly as it appears in the registration on the proxy card.
2. Joint Accounts: Either party may sign, but the name of the party signing should conform exactly to the name shown in the registration.
3. All Other Accounts: The capacity of the individuals signing the proxy card should be indicated unless it is reflected in the form of registration. For example:

Registration	Valid Signature
<b>Corporate Accounts</b>	
(1) ABC Corp.	ABC Corp., John Doe, Treasurer
(2) ABC Corp.	John Doe, Treasurer
(3) ABC Corp. c/o John Doe, Treasurer	John Doe
(4) ABC Corp., Profit Sharing Plan	John Doe, Trustee
<b>Trust Accounts</b>	
(1) ABC Trust	Jane B. Doe, Trustee
(2) Jane B. Doe, Trustee u/t/d 12/28/78	Jane B. Doe
<b>Custodian or Estate Accounts</b>	
(1) John B. Smith, Cust. f/b/o John B. Smith, Jr. UGMA	John B. Smith
(2) John B. Smith, Executor Estate of Jane Smith	John B. Smith, Executor

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TELEPHONE/INTERNET VOTING

Various brokerage firms may offer the convenience of providing you with voting instructions via telephone or the Internet for shares held through such firms. Instructions for Internet and telephonic voting are included with each of the Notice of Internet Availability of Proxy Materials and the proxy card.

THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST INC.

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ANNUAL MEETING OF SHAREHOLDERS

May 14, 2012

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PROXY STATEMENT

This Proxy Statement is furnished in connection with the solicitation of proxies by the Board of Directors (the “Board,” the members of which are referred to as “Directors”) of The Gabelli Equity Trust Inc., a Maryland corporation (the “Fund”) for use at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders of the Fund to be held on Monday, May 14, 2012, at 9:30 a.m., at The Cole Auditorium, The Greenwich Library, 101 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut 06830 (the “Meeting”), and at any adjournments thereof. A Notice of Internet Availability of Proxy Materials is being mailed on April 4, 2012.

In addition to the solicitation of proxies by mail, officers of the Fund and officers and regular employees of Computershare Trust Company, N.A. (“Computershare”), the Fund’s transfer agent, and affiliates of Computershare or other representatives of the Fund may also solicit proxies by telephone, Internet, or in person. In addition, the Fund has retained Morrow & Co., LLC to assist in the solicitation of proxies for an estimated fee of \$1,000 plus reimbursement of expenses. The Fund will pay the costs of the proxy solicitation and the expenses incurred in connection with preparing, printing, and mailing the Notice of Internet Availability of Proxy Materials and/or Proxy Statement and its enclosures. The Fund will also reimburse brokerage firms and others for their expenses in forwarding solicitation materials to the beneficial owners of its Shares (as defined below).

The Fund’s most recent annual report, including audited financial statements for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011, is available upon request, without charge, by writing to the Secretary of the Fund, One Corporate Center, Rye, New York 10580-1422, by calling the Fund at 800-422-3554, or via the Internet at [www.gabelli.com](http://www.gabelli.com).

If the proxy is properly executed and returned in time to be voted at the Meeting, the Shares represented thereby will be voted “FOR” the election of the nominees as Directors as described in this Proxy Statement, unless instructions to the contrary are marked thereon, and at the discretion of the proxy holders as to the transaction of any other business that may properly come before the Meeting. Any shareholder who has submitted a proxy has the right to revoke it at any time prior to its exercise either by attending the Meeting and voting his or her Shares in person, or by submitting a letter of revocation, or a later dated proxy to the Fund at the above address prior to the date of the Meeting.

A quorum of shareholders is constituted by the presence in person or by proxy of the holders of a majority of the outstanding Shares of the Fund entitled to vote at the Meeting. In the event a quorum is not present at the Meeting, or in the event that a quorum is present at the Meeting but sufficient votes to approve any of the proposed items are not received, the Meeting may be adjourned by an individual appointed by the Board to be the chairman of the Meeting (or in his absence, a person designated pursuant to the By-Laws to act as chairman of the Meeting). Alternatively, the chairman of the Meeting may, in his discretion, submit the question of adjournment to a vote of shareholders. Any such adjournment on which the shareholders vote will require the affirmative vote of a majority of those shares present at the Meeting in person or by proxy (or a majority of votes cast if a quorum is present). If a quorum is present, the persons named as proxies will vote those proxies which they are entitled to vote “FOR” any proposal in

favor of such adjournment and will vote those proxies required to be voted “AGAINST” any proposal against any such adjournment. If a quorum is present, a shareholder vote may be taken on one or more of the proposals in this Proxy Statement prior to such adjournment if sufficient votes have been received for approval and it is otherwise appropriate. The chairman of the Meeting may adjourn any meeting of stockholders from time to time to a date not more than 120 days after the original record date without notice other than announcement at the

meeting. At such adjourned meeting at which a quorum shall be present, any business may be transacted which might have been transacted at the Meeting as originally notified. The Fund may set a subsequent record date and give notice of it to shareholders, in which case the meeting may be held not more than 120 days beyond the subsequent record date. The Fund may postpone or cancel a meeting of stockholders by making a public announcement (as defined in the By-Laws) of such postponement or cancellation prior to the meeting. Notice of the date, time, and place to which the meeting is postponed shall be given not less than ten days prior to such date and otherwise in the manner set forth in the By-Laws.

The close of business on March 19, 2012 has been fixed as the record date for the determination of shareholders entitled to notice of and to vote at the Meeting and all adjournments thereof.

The Fund has two classes of capital stock outstanding: common stock, par value \$0.001 per share (the “Common Stock”), and preferred stock consisting of (i) Series C Auction Rate Cumulative Preferred Stock (“Series C Preferred”), (ii) 5.875% Series D Cumulative Preferred Stock (“Series D Preferred”), (iii) Series E Auction Rate Cumulative Preferred Stock (“Series E Preferred”), and (iv) 6.20% Series F Cumulative Preferred Stock (“Series F Preferred”), each having a par value of \$0.001 per share (together, the “Preferred Stock” and together with the Common Stock, the “Shares”). The holders of the Common Stock and Preferred Stock are each entitled to one vote for each full share held. On the record date, there were 184,620,238 shares of Common Stock, 2,880 shares of Series C Preferred, 2,363,860 shares of Series D Preferred, 1,120 shares of Series E Preferred, and 5,850,402 shares of Series F Preferred, outstanding.

As of the record date, there were no persons known to the Fund to be beneficial owners of more than 5% of the Fund’s outstanding shares of Common Stock or Preferred Stock.

#### SUMMARY OF VOTING RIGHTS ON PROXY PROPOSALS

Proposal	Common Stockholders	Preferred Stockholders
1. Election of Directors	Common and Preferred Stockholders, voting together as a single class, vote to elect one Director: Anthony R. Pustorino	Common and Preferred Stockholders, voting together as a single class, vote to elect one Director: Anthony R. Pustorino  Preferred Stockholders, voting as a separate class, vote to elect one Director: James P. Conn
2. Other Business	Common and Preferred Stockholders, voting together as a single class.	

In order that your Shares may be represented at the Meeting, you are requested to vote on the following matters:

PROPOSAL 1: TO ELECT TWO (2) DIRECTORS OF THE FUND

Nominees for the Board of Directors

The Board of Directors consists of eight Directors, seven of whom are not “interested persons” of the Fund (as defined in the Investment Company Act of 1940, as amended (the “1940 Act”). The Fund divides the Board into three classes, each class having a term of three years. Each year, the term of office of one class will expire. James P. Conn and Anthony R. Pustorino have each been nominated by the Board for election to serve for a three year term to expire at the Fund’s 2015 Annual Meeting of Shareholders and until their successors are duly elected and qualify. Each of the Directors of the Fund has served in that capacity since the July 14, 1986 organizational meeting of the Fund with the exception of Mr. Conn, who became a Director of the Fund on May 15, 1989, Mr. Fahrenkopf, who became a Director of the Fund on May 11, 1998, Mr. Colavita, who became a Director of the Fund on November 17, 1999, and Mr. Ferrara, who became a Director of the Fund on August 15, 2001. All of the Directors of the Fund are also directors or trustees of other investment companies for which Gabelli Funds, LLC (the “Adviser”) or its affiliates serve as investment adviser. The classes of Directors are indicated below:

Nominees to Serve Until 2015 Annual Meeting of Shareholders

James P. Conn  
Anthony R. Pustorino

Directors Serving Until 2014 Annual Meeting of Shareholders

Anthony J. Colavita  
Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.  
Salvatore J. Zizza

Directors Serving Until 2013 Annual Meeting of Shareholders

Mario J. Gabelli, CFA  
Thomas E. Bratter  
Arthur V. Ferrara

Under the Fund’s Articles of Incorporation, Articles Supplementary, and the 1940 Act, holders of the Fund’s outstanding Preferred Stock, voting as a separate class, are entitled to elect two Directors, and holders of the Fund’s outstanding Common Stock and Preferred Stock, voting together as a single class, are entitled to elect the remaining Directors. The holders of the Fund’s outstanding Preferred Stock would be entitled to elect the minimum number of additional Directors that would represent a majority of the Directors in the event that dividends on the Fund’s Preferred Stock are in arrears for two full years. No dividend arrearages exist as of the date of this Proxy Statement. Messrs. Colavita and Conn are currently the Directors elected solely by the holders of the Fund’s Preferred Stock. A quorum of the Preferred Stockholders must be present in person or by proxy at the Meeting in order for the proposal to elect Mr. Conn to be considered. Mr. Colavita’s term as Director is scheduled to expire at the Fund’s 2014 Annual Meeting of Shareholders, and therefore he is not standing for election at the Meeting.

Unless authority is withheld, it is the intention of the persons named in the proxy to vote the proxy “FOR” the election of the nominees named above. Each nominee has indicated that he has consented to serve as a Director if elected at the Meeting. If, however, a designated nominee declines or otherwise becomes unavailable for election, the proxy confers discretionary power on the persons named therein to vote in favor of a substitute nominee or nominees.



## Information about Directors and Officers

Set forth in the table below are the existing Directors, including those Directors who are not considered to be “interested persons,” as defined in the 1940 Act (the “Independent Directors”), two of whom are nominated for reelection to the Board of the Fund, and officers of the Fund, including information relating to their respective positions held with the Fund, a brief statement of their principal occupations and, in the case of the Directors, their other directorships during the past five years (excluding other funds managed by the Adviser), if any.

Name, Position(s) Address(1) and Age	Term of Office and Length of Time Served(2)	Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years	Other Directorships Held by Director During Past Five Years	Number of Portfolios to Fund Complex(3) Overseen by Director
<b>I N T E R E S T E D</b>				
<b>DIRECTOR(4):</b>				
Mario J. Gabelli Chairman and Chief Investment Officer Age: 69	Since 1986***	Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Investment Officer - Value Portfolios of GAMCO Investors, Inc. and Chief Investment Officer - Value Portfolios of Gabelli Funds, LLC and GAMCO Asset Management Inc.; Director/Trustee or Chief Investment Officer of other registered investment companies in the Gabelli/GAMCO Funds Complex; Chief Executive Officer of GGCP, Inc.	Director of Morgan Group Holdings, Inc. (holding company); Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of LICT Corp. (multimedia and communication services company); Director of CIBL, Inc. (broadcasting and wireless communications); Director of RLJ Acquisition, Inc. (blank check company)	27
<b>INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS/NOMINEES(5):</b>				
Thomas E. Bratter			—	3

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Director Age: 72	Since 1986***	Director, President, and Founder of The John Dewey Academy (residential college preparatory therapeutic high school)		
Anthony J. Colavita(6)(7) Director Age: 76	Since 1999**	President of the law firm of Anthony J. Colavita, P.C.	—	35
James P. Conn(6) Director Age: 74	Since 1989*	Former Managing Director and Chief Investment Officer of Financial Security Assurance Holdings, Ltd. (insurance holding company) (1992-1998)	Director of First Republic Bank (banking) through January 2008 and Director of La Quinta Corp. (hotels) through January 2006	19
Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. Director Age: 72	Since 1998**	President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Gaming Association; Co-Chairman of the Commission on Presidential Debates; Former Chairman of the Republican National Committee (1983-1989)	Director of First Republic Bank (banking)	7
Arthur V. Ferrara Director Age: 81	Since 2001***	Former Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of The Guardian Life Insurance	—	8

Company of  
America  
(1993-1995)

Anthony R. Pustorino(7)  
Director  
Age: 86

Since 1986\*

Certified Public  
Accountant;  
Professor  
Emeritus, Pace  
University

Director of LGL  
Group, Inc.  
(diversified  
manufacturing)  
(2002-2010)

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Name, Position(s) Address(1) and Age	Term of Office and Length of Time Served(2)	Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years	Other Directorships Held by Director During Past Five Years	Number of Portfolios to Fund Complex(3) Overseen by Director
Salvatore J. Zizza Director Age: 66	Since 1986**	Chairman of Zizza & Associates Corp. (financial consulting) since 1978; Chairman of Metropolitan Paper Recycling, Inc. (recycling) since 2006; Chairman of BAM Inc. (manufacturing) since 2000; Chairman of E-Corp English (business services) since 2009	Non-Executive Chairman and Director of Harbor BioSciences, Inc. (biotechnology); Vice Chairman and Director of Trans-Lux Corporation (business services); Chairman and Chief Executive Officer of General Employment Enterprises, Inc. (staffing); Director of Bion Environmental Technologies (technology) 2005-2008; Director of Earl Schieb Inc. (automotive painting) through April 2009	29

Name, Position(s) Address(1) and Age	Term of Office and Length of Time Served(8)	Principal Occupation(s) During Past Five Years
OFFICERS: Bruce N. Alpert President; Acting Chief Compliance Officer Age: 60	Since 2003; Since November 2011	Executive Vice President and Chief Operating Officer of Gabelli Funds, LLC since 1988; Officer of all of the registered investment companies in the Gabelli/GAMCO Funds Complex;

		Director of Teton Advisors, Inc. since 1998; Chairman of Teton Advisors, Inc. 2008-2010; President of Teton Advisors, Inc. 1998-2008; Senior Vice President of GAMCO Investors, Inc. since 2008
Agnes Mullady Treasurer and Secretary Age: 53	Since 2006	President and Chief Operating Officer of the Open-End Fund Division of Gabelli Funds, LLC since 2010; Senior Vice President of GAMCO Investors, Inc. since 2009; Vice President of Gabelli Funds, LLC since 2007; Officer of all of the registered investment companies in the Gabelli/GAMCO Funds Complex
Carter W. Austin Vice President Age: 45	Since 2000	Vice President and/or Ombudsman of closed-end funds within the Gabelli/GAMCO Funds Complex; Vice President of Gabelli Funds, LLC since 1996
Molly A.F. Marion Vice President and Ombudsman Age: 58	Since 2009	Vice President and/or Ombudsman of closed-end funds with the Gabelli/GAMCO Funds Complex; Assistant Vice President of GAMCO Investors, Inc. since 2006

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- (1) Address: One Corporate Center, Rye, NY 10580-1422.
- (2) The Fund's Board of Directors is divided into three classes, each class having a term of three years. Each year the term of office of one class expires and the successor or successors elected to such class serve for a three year term.
- (3) The "Fund Complex" or the "Gabelli/GAMCO Funds Complex" includes all the registered funds that are considered part of the same fund complex as the Fund because they have common or affiliated investment advisers.
- (4) "Interested person" of the Fund as defined in the 1940 Act. Mr. Gabelli is considered to be an "interested person" of the Fund because of his affiliation with the Fund's Adviser and Gabelli & Company, Inc., which executes portfolio transactions for the Fund, and as a controlling shareholder because of the level of his ownership of Common Stock of the Fund.
- (5) Directors who are not considered to be "interested persons" of the Fund as defined in the 1940 Act are considered to be "Independent" Directors. None of the Independent Directors (with the possible exception of Messrs. Colavita and Pustorino, as described in footnote 7 below) nor their family members had any interest in the Adviser or any person directly or indirectly controlling, controlled by, or under common control with the Adviser as of December 31, 2011.
- (6) As a Director, elected solely by holders of the Fund's Preferred Stock.
- (7) Each of Messrs. Colavita and Pustorino beneficially own less than 1% of the stock of the LGL Group, Inc., having values of \$9,778 and \$63,712, respectively, as of December 31, 2011. LGL Group, Inc. may be deemed to be controlled by Mario J. Gabelli and in that event would be deemed to be under common control with the Fund's Investment Adviser.
- (8) Each officer will hold office for an indefinite term until the date he or she resigns or retires or until his or her successor is duly elected and qualifies.

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Nominee to serve, if elected, until the Fund's 2015 Annual Meeting of Shareholders and until his successor is duly elected and qualifies.

\*\*Term continues until the Fund's 2014 Annual Meeting of Shareholders and until his successor is duly elected and qualifies.

\*\*\*Term continues until the Fund's 2013 Annual Meeting of Shareholders and until his successor is duly elected and qualifies.

The Board believes that each Director's experience, qualifications, attributes, or skills on an individual basis and in combination with those of other Directors lead to the conclusion that each Director should serve in such capacity. Among the attributes or skills common to all Directors are their ability to review critically and to evaluate, question, and discuss information provided to them, to interact effectively with the other Directors, the Adviser, the sub-administrator, other service providers, counsel, and the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm, and to exercise effective and independent business judgment in the performance of their duties as Directors. Each Director's ability to perform his/her duties effectively has been attained in large part through the Director's business, consulting, or public service positions and through experience from service as a member of the Board and one or more of the other funds in the Fund Complex, public companies, or non-profit entities, or other organizations as set forth above and below. Each Director's ability to perform his/her duties effectively also has been enhanced by education, professional training, and other experience.

Mario J. Gabelli. Mr. Gabelli is Chairman of the Board of Directors and Chief Investment Officer of the Fund. He also currently serves as Chairman of the boards of other funds in the Fund Complex. Mr. Gabelli is Chairman, Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Investment Officer-Value Portfolios of GAMCO Investors, Inc. ("GAMCO"), a NYSE-listed investment advisory firm. He is also the Chief Investment Officer of Value Portfolios of Gabelli Funds, LLC and GAMCO Asset Management, Inc., each of which are asset management subsidiaries of GAMCO. In addition, Mr. Gabelli is Chief Executive Officer and a director and the controlling shareholder of GGCP, Inc., an investment holding company that holds a majority interest in GAMCO. Mr. Gabelli also sits on the boards of other publicly traded companies and private firms and various charitable foundations and educational institutions, including the Board of Trustees of Boston College and Roger Williams University and the Board of Overseers of Columbia University Graduate School of Business. Mr. Gabelli received his Bachelors degree from Fordham University and his Masters of Business Administration from Columbia University Graduate School of Business.

Thomas E. Bratter. Dr. Bratter is the Founder, Director, and President of The John Dewey Academy, a residential college preparatory therapeutic high school in Massachusetts. He is the Director of the International Center for Study of Psychiatry and Psychology, and was Vice President of the Small Boarding Schools Association, and a Trustee of the Majorie Polikoff Estate. In addition to serving on the boards of other funds in the Fund Complex, Dr. Bratter has been an active investor in publicly traded equities for over forty years. Dr. Bratter also serves on the Advisory Board of the American Academy of Health Providers in the Addictive Disorders and sits on the editorial boards of six professional journals. Prior to establishing and managing The John Dewey Academy, Dr. Bratter was in private practice as a psychotherapist and taught psychology at Columbia University as an adjunct faculty member for more than twenty years. Dr. Bratter also founded and sat on the boards of six community based treatment programs for adolescents. He has authored one hundred and fifty articles and four books concerning the treatment and education of gifted and self destructive adolescents and their families. Dr. Bratter received his Bachelor of Arts, Masters, and Doctorate in Education from Columbia College and University.

Anthony J. Colavita, Esq. Mr. Colavita is a practicing attorney with over fifty years of experience, including the field of business law. He is the Chair of the Fund's Nominating Committee and a member of the Fund's Audit Committee. Mr. Colavita also serves on comparable or other board committees with respect to other funds in the Fund Complex on whose boards he sits. Mr. Colavita also serves as a Trustee of a charitable remainder unitrust. He served as a Commissioner of the New York State Thruway Authority and as a Commissioner of the New York State Bridge Authority. He served for ten years as the elected Supervisor of the Town of Eastchester, New York, responsible for ten annual municipal budgets of approximately eight million dollars annually. Mr. Colavita also served as Special Counsel to the New York State Assembly for five years and as a Senior Attorney with the New York State Insurance Department. He is the former Chairman of the Westchester County Republican Party and the New York State Republican Party. Mr. Colavita received his Bachelor of Arts from Fairfield University and his Juris Doctor from

Fordham University School of Law.

James P. Conn. Mr. Conn is the lead independent Director of the Fund, a member of the Fund's ad hoc Proxy Voting Committee, and also serves on comparable or other board committees for other funds in the Fund Complex on whose boards he sits. He was a senior business executive of an insurance holding company for much of his career, including service as Chief Investment Officer. Mr. Conn has been a director of several public companies in banking and other industries, and was lead Director and/or Chair of various committees. He received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from Santa Clara University.

Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. Mr. Fahrenkopf is the President and Chief Executive Officer of the American Gaming Association (“AGA”), the trade group for the hotel-casino industry. Additionally, he serves on certain board committees with respect to other funds in the Fund Complex on whose board he sits. He presently is Co-Chairman of the Commission on Presidential Debates, which is responsible for the widely-viewed Presidential debates during the quadrennial election cycle. Additionally, he serves as a board member of the International Republican Institute, which he founded in 1984. He served for many years as Chairman of the Pacific Democrat Union and Vice Chairman of the International Democrat Union, a worldwide association of political parties from the United States, Great Britain, France, Germany, Canada, Japan, Australia, and twenty other nations. Prior to becoming the AGA’s first chief executive in 1995, Mr. Fahrenkopf was a partner in the law firm of Hogan & Hartson, where he chaired the International Trade Practice Group and specialized in regulatory, legislative, and corporate matters for multinational, foreign, and domestic clients. He also served as Chairman of the Republican National Committee for six years during Ronald Reagan’s presidency. Mr. Fahrenkopf is the former Chairman of the Finance Committee of the Culinary Institute of America and remains a member of the board. Additionally, he has over twenty years’ of experience as a member of the board of directors of a bank and still serves as a member of the Advisory Board of the bank. Mr. Fahrenkopf received his Bachelor of Arts from the University of Nevada, Reno and his Juris Doctor from Boalt Hall School of Law, U.C. Berkeley.

Arthur V. Ferrara. Mr. Ferrara is the former Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of The Guardian Life Insurance Company of America, and formerly served on the boards of The Guardian Insurance and Annuity Company and funds managed by Guardian Investor Services Corporation. He is a former Chairman of the Life Insurance Council of New York Inc. Mr. Ferrara serves as Chairman of the Fund’s ad hoc Pricing Committee (described below under “Directors — Leadership Structure and Oversight Responsibilities”). He is a member of the Fund’s Nominating and Proxy Voting Committees and is also a member of one of the multi-fund ad hoc Compensation Committees. He also serves on comparable or other board committees with respect to other funds in the Fund Complex on whose boards he sits. Mr. Ferrara received his Bachelor of Science in Business Administration from the College of the Holy Cross.

Anthony R. Pustorino. Mr. Pustorino is a Certified Public Accountant (“CPA”) and Professor Emeritus of Pace University with fifty years of experience in public accounting. Mr. Pustorino is Chair of the Fund’s Audit and Proxy Voting Committees and has been designated the Fund’s Audit Committee Financial Expert. He is a member of both multi-fund ad hoc Compensation Committees. Mr. Pustorino also serves on comparable committees of other boards in the Fund Complex. Mr. Pustorino was a Director of LGL Group, Inc., a diversified manufacturing company, and Chair of its Audit Committee. He was previously the President and shareholder of a CPA firm and a Professor of accounting at both Fordham University and Pace University. He served as Chairman of the Board of Directors of the New York State Board for Public Accountancy and of the CPA Examination Review Board of the National Association of State Board of Accountancy. Mr. Pustorino was Vice President and a member of the Executive Committee of the New York State Society of CPAs, and was the Chair or member of many of its technical Committees. He was a member of the Council of the American Institute of CPAs. Mr. Pustorino is the recipient of numerous professional and teaching awards. He received a Bachelor of Science in Business from Fordham University and a Masters in Business Administration from New York University.

Salvatore J. Zizza. Mr. Zizza is the Chairman of a financial consulting firm. He also serves as Chairman to other companies involved in manufacturing, recycling, and real estate. He is a member of the Fund’s Audit and Nominating Committees, the Fund’s ad hoc Pricing Committee, and both multi-fund ad hoc Compensation Committees. In addition, he serves on comparable or other board committees, including as lead independent director/trustee, with respect to other funds in the Fund Complex on whose boards he sits. In addition to serving on the boards of other funds within the Fund Complex, he is currently a director of three other public companies and previously served on the boards of several other public companies. He also served as the Chief Executive of a large NYSE-listed

construction company. Mr. Zizza received his Bachelor of Arts and his Master of Business Administration in Finance from St. John's University, which awarded him an Honorary Doctorate in Commercial Sciences.

## Directors – Leadership Structure and Oversight Responsibilities

Overall responsibility for general oversight of the Fund rests with the Board. The Board has appointed Mr. Conn as the lead Independent Director. The lead Independent Director presides over executive sessions of the Directors and also serves between meetings of the Board as a liaison with service providers, officers, counsel, and other Directors on a wide variety of matters including scheduling agenda items for Board meetings. Designation as such does not impose on the lead Independent Director any obligations or standards greater than or different from other Directors. The Board has established a Nominating Committee and an Audit Committee to assist the Board in the oversight of the management and affairs of the Fund. The Board also has an ad hoc Proxy Voting Committee that exercises voting and investment responsibilities on behalf of the Fund in selected situations. From time to time the Board establishes additional committees or informal working groups, such as an ad hoc Pricing Committee related to securities offerings by the Fund to address specific matters, or assigns one of its members to work with trustees or directors of other funds in the Fund Complex on special committees or working groups that address complex-wide matters, such as the multi-fund ad hoc Compensation Committee relating to compensation of the Chief Compliance Officer for all the funds in the Fund Complex, and a separate multi-fund ad hoc Compensation Committee relating to compensation of certain other officers of the closed-end funds in the Fund Complex.

All of the Fund's Directors other than Mr. Mario J. Gabelli are Independent Directors, and the Board believes it is able to provide effective oversight of the Fund's service providers. In addition to providing feedback and direction during Board meetings, the Directors meet regularly in executive session and chair all committees of the Board.

The Fund's operations entail a variety of risks, including investment, administration, valuation, and a range of compliance matters. Although the Adviser, the sub-administrator and the officers of the Fund are responsible for managing these risks on a day-to-day basis within the framework of their established risk management functions, the Board also addresses risk management of the Fund through its meetings and those of the committees and working groups. As part of its general oversight, the Board reviews with the Adviser at Board meetings the levels and types of risks being undertaken by the Fund, and the Audit Committee discusses the Fund's risk management and controls with the independent registered public accounting firm engaged by the Fund. The Board reviews valuation policies and procedures and the valuations of specific illiquid securities. The Board also receives periodic reports from the Fund's Chief Compliance Officer regarding compliance matters relating to the Fund and its major service providers, including results of the implementation and testing of the Fund's and such providers' compliance programs. The Board's oversight function is facilitated by management reporting processes designed to provide visibility to the Board regarding the identification, assessment, and management of critical risks, and the controls and policies and procedures used to mitigate those risks. The Board reviews its role in supervising the Fund's risk management from time to time and may make changes at its discretion at any time.

The Board has determined that its leadership structure is appropriate for the Fund because it enables the Board to exercise informed and independent judgment over matters under its purview, allocates responsibility among committees in a manner that fosters effective oversight, and allows the Board to devote appropriate resources to specific issues in a flexible manner as they arise. The Board periodically reviews its leadership structure as well as its overall structure, composition, and functioning, and may make changes at its discretion at any time.

Beneficial Ownership of Shares Held in the Fund and the Family of Investment Companies for each Director and Nominee for Election as Director

Set forth in the table below is the dollar range of equity securities in the Fund beneficially owned by each Director and nominee for election as Director and the aggregate dollar range of equity securities in the Fund Complex beneficially owned by each Director and nominee for election as Director.

Name of Director/Nominee	Dollar Range of Equity Securities Held in the Fund*(1)	Aggregate Dollar Range of Equity Securities Held in the Family of Investment Companies*(1)(2)
<b>INTERESTED DIRECTOR:</b>		
Mario J. Gabelli	E	E
<b>INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS/NOMINEES:</b>		
Thomas E. Bratter	E	E
Anthony J. Colavita	C	E
James P. Conn	E	E
Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.	A	B
Arthur V. Ferrara	B	E
Anthony R. Pustorino	D	E
Salvatore J. Zizza	D	E

\* Key to Dollar Ranges  
A. None

B. \$1 – \$10,000  
C. \$10,001 – \$50,000  
D. \$50,001 – \$100,000  
E. Over \$100,000

All Shares were valued as of December 31, 2011.

(1) This information has been furnished by each Director and nominee for election as Director as of December 31, 2011. “Beneficial Ownership” is determined in accordance with Rule 16a-1(a)(2) of the Securities Exchange Act of 1934, as amended (the “1934 Act”).

(2) The term “Family of Investment Companies” includes two or more registered funds that share the same investment adviser or principal underwriter and hold themselves out to investors as related companies for purposes of investment and investor services. Currently, the registered funds that comprise the “Fund Complex” are identical to those that comprise the “Family of Investment Companies.”

Set forth in the table below is the amount of Shares beneficially owned by each Director, nominee for election as Director, and executive officer of the Fund.

Name of Director/Nominee/Officer	Amount and Nature of Beneficial Ownership(1)	Percent of Shares Outstanding(2)
----------------------------------	--	----------------------------------

**INTERESTED DIRECTOR:**

Mario J. Gabelli	1,616,704(3)	*
INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS/NOMINEES:		
Thomas E. Bratter	52,702	*
Anthony J. Colavita	2,835(4)	*
James P. Conn	58,646	*
Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr.	0	*
Arthur V. Ferrara	200	*
Anthony R. Pustorino	13,618(5)	*
Salvatore J. Zizza	10,890	*
EXECUTIVE OFFICERS:		
Bruce N. Alpert	793 Common Shares	*
	2,610 Series D Preferred Shares(6)	*
	8,800 Series F Preferred Shares(7)	*
Agnes Mullady	0	*

(1) This information has been furnished by each Director, including each nominee for election as Director, and executive officer as of December 31, 2011. "Beneficial Ownership" is determined in accordance with Rule 16a-1(a)(2) of the 1934 Act. Reflects ownership of shares of Common Stock unless otherwise noted.

(2) An asterisk indicates that the ownership amount constitutes less than 1% of the total Shares outstanding. The ownership of the Directors, including nominees for election as Director, and executive officers as a group constitutes less than 1% of the total Common Stock or Preferred Stock outstanding.

(3) Comprised of 947,963 shares of Common Stock owned directly by Mr. Gabelli, 37,358 Shares of Common Stock owned by a family partnership for which Mr. Gabelli serves as general partner, and 631,383 shares of Common Stock owned by GAMCO Investors, Inc. or its affiliates. Mr. Gabelli disclaims beneficial ownership of the shares held by the discretionary accounts and by the entities named except to the extent of his interest in such entities.

- (4) All 2,835 shares of Common Stock are owned by Mr. Colavita's spouse for which he disclaims beneficial ownership.
- (5) Includes 2,630 shares of Common Stock owned by Mr. Pustorino's spouse for which he disclaims beneficial ownership.
- (6) All 2,610 shares of Series D Preferred Stock are owned by Mr. Alpert's spouse for which he disclaims beneficial ownership.
- (7) Includes 800 shares of Series F Preferred Stock jointly owned by Mr. Alpert and his spouse and 8,000 shares owned by Mr. Alpert's spouse for which he disclaims beneficial ownership.

The Fund pays each Independent Director an annual retainer of \$15,000 plus \$2,000 for each Board meeting attended. Each Independent Director is reimbursed by the Fund for any out-of-pocket expenses incurred in attending meetings. All Board committee members receive \$1,000 per meeting attended, the Audit Committee Chairman receives an annual fee of \$3,000, the Proxy Voting Committee Chairman receives an annual fee of \$1,500, and the Nominating Committee Chairman and the lead Independent Director each receive an annual fee of \$2,000. A Director may receive a single meeting fee, allocated among the participating funds, for participation in certain meetings on behalf of multiple funds. The aggregate remuneration (excluding out-of-pocket expenses) paid by the Fund to such Directors during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011 amounted to \$170,239. During the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011, the Directors of the Fund met five times, four of which were regular quarterly Board meetings and one of which was a special joint meeting of the Board of Directors of the Fund and the Board of all the funds in the Fund Complex. Each Director then serving in such capacity attended at least 75% of the meetings of Directors and of any Committee of which he is a member.

#### The Audit Committee and Audit Committee Report

The role of the Fund's Audit Committee is to assist the Board of Directors in its oversight of (i) the quality and integrity of the Fund's financial statement reporting process and the independent audit and reviews thereof; (ii) the Fund's accounting and financial reporting policies and practices, its internal controls, and, as appropriate, the internal controls of certain of its service providers; (iii) the Fund's compliance with legal and regulatory requirements; and (iv) the independent registered public accounting firm's qualifications, independence, and performance. The Audit Committee also is required to prepare an audit committee report pursuant to the rules of the Securities and Exchange Commission (the "SEC") for inclusion in the Fund's annual proxy statement. The Audit Committee operates pursuant to the Audit Committee Charter (the "Audit Charter") that was most recently reviewed and approved by the Board of Directors on February 29, 2012. The Audit Charter is available on the Fund's website at [www.gabelli.com/corporate/closed/corp\\_gov.html](http://www.gabelli.com/corporate/closed/corp_gov.html).

Pursuant to the Audit Charter, the Audit Committee is responsible for conferring with the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm, reviewing annual financial statements, approving the selection of the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm, and overseeing the Fund's internal controls. The Audit Charter also contains provisions relating to the pre-approval by the Audit Committee of audit and non-audit services to be provided by PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP ("PricewaterhouseCoopers") to the Fund and to the Adviser and certain of its affiliates. The Audit Committee advises the full Board with respect to accounting, auditing, and financial matters affecting the Fund. As set forth in the Audit Charter, management is responsible for maintaining appropriate systems for accounting and internal control, and the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm is responsible for planning and carrying out proper audits and reviews. The independent registered public accounting firm is ultimately accountable to the Board of Directors and to the Audit Committee, as representatives of shareholders. The independent registered public accounting firm for the Fund reports directly to the Audit Committee.

In performing its oversight function, at a meeting held on February 27, 2012, the Audit Committee reviewed and discussed with management of the Fund and PricewaterhouseCoopers the audited financial statements of the Fund as of and for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011, and discussed the audit of such financial statements with the independent registered public accounting firm.

In addition, the Audit Committee discussed with the independent registered public accounting firm the accounting principles applied by the Fund and such other matters brought to the attention of the Audit Committee by the independent registered public accounting firm as required by Statement of Auditing Standards No. 61, as amended (AICPA, Professional Standards Vol. 1 AU Section 380), as adopted by the Public Company Accounting Oversight Board (United States) (“PCAOB”) in Rule 3200T. The Audit Committee also received from the independent registered public accounting firm the written disclosures and statements required by the SEC’s independence rules, delineating relationships between the independent registered public accounting firm and the Fund, and discussed the impact that any such relationships might have on the objectivity and independence of the independent registered public accounting firm.

As set forth above, and as more fully set forth in the Audit Charter, the Audit Committee has significant duties and powers in its oversight role with respect to the Fund's financial reporting procedures, internal control systems, and the independent audit process.

The members of the Audit Committee are not, and do not represent themselves to be, professionally engaged in the practice of auditing or accounting and are not employed by the Fund for accounting, financial management, or internal control purposes. Moreover, the Audit Committee relies on and makes no independent verification of the facts presented to it or representations made by management or the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm. Accordingly, the Audit Committee's oversight does not provide an independent basis to determine that management has maintained appropriate accounting and/or financial reporting principles and policies, or internal controls and procedures, designed to assure compliance with accounting standards and applicable laws and regulations. Furthermore, the Audit Committee's considerations and discussions referred to above do not provide assurance that the audit of the Fund's financial statements has been carried out in accordance with the standards of the PCAOB or that the financial statements are presented in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles (United States).

Based on its consideration of the audited financial statements and the discussions referred to above with management and the Fund's independent registered public accounting firm, and subject to the limitations on the responsibilities and role of the Audit Committee set forth in the Audit Charter and those discussed above, the Audit Committee recommended to the Fund's Board of Directors that the Fund's audited financial statements be included in the Fund's Annual Report for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011.

Submitted by the Audit Committee of the Fund's Board of Directors

Anthony R. Pustorino, Chairman  
Anthony J. Colavita  
Salvatore J. Zizza

February 29, 2012

The Audit Committee met two times during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011. The Audit Committee is composed of three of the Fund's Independent Directors, namely Messrs. Colavita, Pustorino, and Zizza. Each member of the Audit Committee has been determined by the Board of Directors to be financially literate. Mr. Pustorino has been designated as the Fund's audit committee financial expert, as defined in Items 407(d)(5)(ii) and (iii) of Regulation S-K.

Nominating Committee

The Board of Directors has a Nominating Committee composed of three Independent Directors, namely Messrs. Colavita, Ferrara, and Zizza. Each Nominating Committee Member is an Independent Director as determined under guidelines of the New York Stock Exchange ("NYSE"). The Nominating Committee met once during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011. The Nominating Committee is responsible for identifying and recommending qualified candidates to the Board in the event that a position is vacated or created. The Nominating Committee will consider recommendations by shareholders if a vacancy were to exist. In considering candidates submitted by shareholders, the Nominating Committee will take into consideration the needs of the Board, the qualifications of the candidate, and the interests of shareholders. The Nominating Committee may also take into consideration the number of Shares held by the recommending shareholder and the length of time that such Shares have been held. To recommend a candidate for consideration by the Nominating Committee, a shareholder must submit the

recommendation in writing and must include the following information:

The name of the shareholder and evidence of the shareholder's ownership of Shares of the Fund, including the number of Shares owned and the length of time of ownership;

The name of the candidate, the candidate's resume or a listing of his or her qualifications to be a Director of the Fund, and the person's consent to be named as a Director if selected by the Nominating Committee and nominated by the Board of Directors; and

If requested by the Nominating Committee, a completed and signed director's questionnaire.

The shareholder recommendation and information described above must be sent to the Fund's Secretary, c/o Gabelli Funds, LLC, One Corporate Center, Rye, NY 10580-1422, and must be received by the Secretary no less than 120 days prior to the first anniversary of the date of the proxy statement for the preceding year's annual meeting or, if the meeting has moved by more than thirty days, no less than ten days following the date on which public announcement of the date of such annual meeting is first made.

The Nominating Committee believes that the minimum qualifications for serving as a Director of the Fund are that the individual demonstrate, by significant accomplishment in his or her field, an ability to make a meaningful contribution to the Board of Directors oversight of the business and affairs of the Fund and have an impeccable record and reputation for honest and ethical conduct in both his or her professional and personal activities. In addition, the Nominating Committee examines a candidate's specific experiences and skills, time availability in light of other commitments, potential conflicts of interest, and independence from management and the Fund.

The Nominating Committee also considers the overall composition of the Board, bearing in mind the benefits that may be derived from having members who have a variety of experiences, qualifications, attributes, or skills useful in overseeing a publicly traded, highly regulated entity such as the Fund. The Fund's governing documents state that a nominee for Director shall be at least twenty-one years of age and not older than such maximum age, if any, as the Directors may determine and shall not be under legal disability. The Directors have not determined a maximum age. The Nominating Committee does not have a formal policy regarding the consideration of diversity in identifying director candidates. For a discussion of experiences, qualifications, attributes, or skills supporting the appropriateness of each Director's service on the Fund's Board, see the biographical information of the Directors above in the section entitled "Information about Directors and Officers."

The Fund's Nominating Committee adopted a charter on May 12, 2004, and amended the charter on November 17, 2004. The charter is available on the Fund's website at [www.gabelli.com/corporate/closed/corp\\_gov.html](http://www.gabelli.com/corporate/closed/corp_gov.html).

#### Other Board Related Matters

The Board of Directors has established the following procedures in order to facilitate communications among the Board and the shareholders of the Fund and other interested parties.

#### Receipt of Communications

Shareholders and other interested parties may contact the Board or any member of the Board by mail or electronically. To communicate with the Board or any member of the Board, correspondence should be addressed to the Board or the Board member(s) with whom you wish to communicate either by name or title. All such correspondence should be sent to The Gabelli Equity Trust Inc., c/o Gabelli Funds, LLC, One Corporate Center, Rye, NY 10580-1422. To communicate with the Board electronically, shareholders may go to the corporate website at [www.gabelli.com](http://www.gabelli.com) under the heading "Our Firm/Contact Us/Email Addresses/Board of Directors (Gabelli Closed-End Funds)."

#### Forwarding the Communications

All communications received will be opened by the office of the General Counsel of the Adviser for the sole purpose of determining whether the contents represent a message to one or more Directors. The office of the General Counsel will forward promptly to the addressee(s) any contents that relate to the Fund and that are not in the nature of advertising, promotion of a product or service, or patently offensive or otherwise objectionable material. In the case of communications to the Board of Directors or any committee or group of members of the Board, the General Counsel's

office will make sufficient copies of the contents to send to each Director who is a member of the group or committee to which the envelope or e-mail is addressed.

The Fund does not expect Directors or nominees for election as Director to attend the Annual Meeting of Shareholders. Mr. Gabelli, Chairman of the Board of Directors of the Fund, attended the Fund's annual meeting of shareholders held on May 16, 2011.

The following table sets forth certain information regarding the compensation of the Directors by the Fund and officers, if any, who were compensated by the Fund rather than the Adviser for the year ended December 31, 2011.

**COMPENSATION TABLE  
FOR THE FISCAL YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2011**

Name of Person and Position	Aggregate Compensation from the Fund	Aggregate Compensation from the Fund and Fund Complex Paid to Directors*
<b>INTERESTED DIRECTOR:</b>		
Mario J. Gabelli Director and Chief Investment Officer	\$ 0	\$ 0 (0)
<b>INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS/NOMINEES:</b>		
Thomas E. Bratter Director	\$ 21,750	\$ 40,750 (3)
Anthony J. Colavita Director	\$ 26,813	\$ 366,250 (34)
James P. Conn Director	\$ 23,571	\$ 207,750 (18)
Frank J. Fahrenkopf, Jr. Director	\$ 21,875	\$ 100,000 (6)
Arthur V. Ferrara Director	\$ 23,000	\$ 58,000 (8)
Anthony R. Pustorino Director	\$ 28,417	\$ 195,000 (13)
Salvatore J. Zizza Director	\$ 24,813	\$ 299,250 (28)
<b>OFFICERS:</b>		
Carter W. Austin Vice President	\$ 70,000	
Molly A.F. Marion Vice President and Ombudsman	\$ 70,000	

\*Represents the total compensation paid to such persons during the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011 by investment companies (including the Fund) or portfolios that are considered part of the Fund Complex. The number in parentheses represents the number of such investment companies and portfolios.



## Required Vote

The election of each of the listed nominees for Director of the Fund requires the affirmative vote of the holders of a majority of the applicable class or classes of Shares of the Fund present in person or represented by proxy at the Meeting if a quorum is present.

THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS, INCLUDING THE INDEPENDENT DIRECTORS, UNANIMOUSLY RECOMMENDS THAT THE COMMON AND PREFERRED SHAREHOLDERS VOTE “FOR” THE ELECTION OF EACH APPLICABLE NOMINEE.

## ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

### Independent Registered Public Accounting Firm

PricewaterhouseCoopers, 300 Madison Avenue, New York, NY 10017, has been selected to serve as the Fund’s independent registered public accounting firm for the fiscal year ending December 31, 2012. PricewaterhouseCoopers acted as the Fund’s independent registered public accounting firm for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011. The Fund knows of no direct financial or material indirect financial interest of PricewaterhouseCoopers in the Fund. A representative of PricewaterhouseCoopers will not be present at the Meeting, but will be available by telephone and will have an opportunity to make a statement, if asked, and will be available to respond to appropriate questions.

Set forth in the table below are audit fees and non-audit related fees billed to the Fund by PricewaterhouseCoopers for professional services received during and for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2010 and 2011, respectively.

Fiscal Year Ended	Audit Fees	Audit Related Fees*	Tax Fees**	All Other Fees
December 31 2010	\$45,427	\$13,463	\$4,200	—
2011	\$45,427	\$20,963	\$4,200	—

\*“Audit Related Fees” are those estimated fees billed to the Fund by PricewaterhouseCoopers in connection with the preparation of Preferred Shares Reports to Moody’s Investors Service, Inc. and the review and issuance of consent letters and comfort letters in connection with the filing of the Fund’s registration statements on Form N-2.

\*\*“Tax Fees” are those fees billed by PricewaterhouseCoopers in connection with tax compliance services, including primarily the review of the Fund’s income tax returns.

The Fund’s Audit Charter requires that the Audit Committee pre-approve all audit and non-audit services to be provided by the independent registered public accounting firm to the Fund, and all non-audit services to be provided by the independent registered public accounting firm to the Fund’s Adviser and service providers controlling, controlled by, or under common control with the Fund’s Adviser (“affiliates”) that provide ongoing services to the Fund (a “Covered Services Provider”), if the engagement relates directly to the operations and financial reporting of the Fund. The Audit Committee may delegate its responsibility to pre-approve any such audit and permissible non-audit services to the Chairman of the Audit Committee, and the Chairman must report his decision(s) to the Audit Committee, at its next regularly scheduled meeting after the Chairman’s pre-approval of such services. The Audit Committee may also establish detailed pre-approval policies and procedures for pre-approval of such services in accordance with applicable laws, including the delegation of some or all of the Audit Committee’s pre-approval responsibilities to other persons (other than the Adviser or the Fund’s officers). Pre-approval by the Audit Committee of any permissible non-audit services is not required so long as: (i) the aggregate amount of all such permissible non-audit services provided to the

Fund, the Adviser, and any Covered Services Provider constitutes not more than 5% of the total amount of revenues paid by the Fund to its independent registered public accounting firm during the year in which the permissible non-audit services are provided; (ii) the permissible non-audit services were not recognized by the Fund at the time of the engagement to be non-audit services; and (iii) such services are promptly brought to the attention of the Audit Committee and approved by the Audit Committee or the Chairman prior to the completion of the audit. All of the audit, audit related, and tax services described above for which PricewaterhouseCoopers billed the Fund fees for the fiscal years ended December 31, 2010 and December 31, 2011 were pre-approved by the Audit Committee.

For the fiscal years ended December 31, 2010 and 2011, PricewaterhouseCoopers has represented to the Fund that it did not provide any non-audit services (or bill any fees for such services) to the Adviser or any Covered Service Provider.

The Audit Committee was not required to consider whether the provision of non-audit services that were rendered to the Adviser or Covered Service Providers that were not pre-approved was compatible with maintaining PricewaterhouseCoopers' independence.

The Investment Adviser and Administrator

Gabelli Funds, LLC is the Fund's Adviser and Administrator and its business address is One Corporate Center, Rye, New York 10580-1422.

#### Section 16(a) Beneficial Ownership Reporting Compliance

Section 16(a) of the 1934 Act and Section 30(h) of the 1940 Act, and the rules thereunder, require the Fund's executive officers and Directors, executive officers and directors of the Adviser, certain other affiliated persons of the Adviser, and persons who own more than 10% of a registered class of the Fund's securities to file reports of ownership and changes in ownership with the SEC and the NYSE and to furnish the Fund with copies of all Section 16(a) forms they file. Based solely on the Fund's review of the copies of such forms it received for the fiscal year ended December 31, 2011, the Fund believes that during that year such persons complied with all such applicable filing requirements.

#### Broker Non-Votes and Abstentions

For purposes of determining the presence of a quorum for transacting business at the Meeting, abstentions (or "withheld votes" with respect to the election of Directors) and broker "non-votes" (that is, proxies from brokers or nominees indicating that such persons have not received instructions from the beneficial owner or other persons entitled to vote Shares on a particular matter with respect to which the brokers or nominees do not have discretionary power) will be treated as Shares that are present but that have not been voted. Accordingly, shareholders are urged to forward their voting instructions promptly.

Because the Fund requires a plurality of votes to elect each nominee for Director, abstentions and broker non-votes, if any, will not be counted as votes cast, but will have no effect on the result of the vote. Abstentions and any broker non-votes, however, will be considered to be present at the Meeting for purposes of determining the existence of a quorum.

Brokers holding Shares of the Fund in "street name" for the benefit of their customers and clients will request the instructions of such customers and clients on how to vote their Shares on Proposal 1 before the Meeting. Under the rules of the NYSE, such brokers may, for certain "routine" matters, grant discretionary authority to the proxies designated by the Board to vote if no instructions have been received from their customers and clients prior to the date specified in the brokers' request for voting instructions. Proposal 1 is a "routine" matter and accordingly beneficial owners who do not provide proxy instructions or who do not return a proxy card may have their Shares voted by broker-dealer firms in favor of Proposal 1. A properly executed proxy card or other authorization by a beneficial owner of Shares that does not specify how the beneficial owner's Shares should be voted on Proposal 1 may be deemed an instruction to vote such Shares in favor of the proposal.

Shareholders of the Fund will be informed of the voting results of the Meeting in the Fund's Semiannual Report for the six months ended June 30, 2012.

“Householding”

Please note that only one document (i.e., an annual or semiannual report, or set of proxy soliciting materials) may be delivered to two or more shareholders of the Fund who share an address, unless the Fund has received instructions to the contrary. To request a separate copy of a document, or for instructions regarding how to request a separate copy of these documents or regarding how to request a single copy if multiple copies of these documents are received, shareholders should contact the Fund at the address and phone number set forth above.

#### OTHER MATTERS TO COME BEFORE THE MEETING

The Directors of the Fund do not intend to present any other business at the Meeting, nor are they aware that any shareholder intends to do so. If, however, any other matters, including adjournments, are properly brought before the Meeting, the persons named in the accompanying proxy will vote thereon in accordance with their judgment.

#### SHAREHOLDER NOMINATIONS AND PROPOSALS

All proposals by shareholders of the Fund which are intended to be presented at the Fund's next Annual Meeting of Shareholders to be held in 2013 (the "2013 Annual Meeting") must be received by the Fund for consideration for inclusion in the Fund's 2013 proxy statement and proxy relating to that meeting no later than December 5, 2012. Rule 14a-8 under the 1934 Act ("Rule 14a-8") specifies a number of procedural and eligibility requirements to be satisfied by a shareholder submitting a proposal for inclusion in the Fund's proxy materials pursuant to this Rule. Any shareholder contemplating submissions of such a proposal is referred to Rule 14a-8.

The Fund's By-Laws require shareholders that wish to nominate Directors or make proposals to be voted on at an Annual Meeting of the Fund's Shareholders (and which are not proposed to be included in the Fund's proxy materials pursuant to Rule 14a-8 under the 1934 Act) to provide timely notice of the nomination or proposal in writing. To be considered timely for the 2013 Annual Meeting, any such notice must be delivered to or mailed and received at the principal executive offices of the Fund at the address set forth on the first page of this proxy statement no earlier than 9:00 a.m. Eastern time on November 5, 2012 and no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on December 5, 2012; provided, however, that if the 2013 Annual Meeting is to be held on a date that is earlier than April 14, 2013 or later than June 13, 2013, such notice must be delivered to the Fund no later than 5:00 p.m. Eastern time on the tenth day following the date on which public announcement of the date of the 2013 Annual Meeting was first made. Any such notice by a shareholder shall set forth the information required by the Fund's By-Laws with respect to each nomination or matter the shareholder proposes to bring before the 2013 Annual Meeting.

IT IS IMPORTANT THAT PROXIES BE RETURNED PROMPTLY.

SHAREHOLDERS MAY PROVIDE THEIR VOTE BY TELEPHONE OR THE INTERNET BY FOLLOWING THE INSTRUCTIONS ACCOMPANYING THE PROXY CARD, VOTING INSTRUCTION FORM OR SET FORTH IN THE NOTICE OF INTERNET AVAILABILITY OF PROXY MATERIALS.

April 4, 2012

GAB-PS-2012

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PROXY TABULATOR  
 P.O. BOX 9112  
 FARMINGDALE, NY 11735

To vote by Internet

- 1) Read the Proxy Statement and have the proxy card below at hand.
- 2) Go to website [www.proxyvote.com](http://www.proxyvote.com)
- 3) Follow the instructions provided on the website.

To vote by Telephone

- 1) Read the Proxy Statement and have the proxy card below at hand.
- 2) Call 1-800-690-6903
- 3) Follow the instructions.

To vote by Mail

- 1) Read the Proxy Statement.
- 2) Check the appropriate boxes on the proxy card below.
- 3) Sign and date the proxy card.
- 4) Return the proxy card in the envelope provided.

TO VOTE, MARK BLOCKS BELOW IN BLUE OR BLACK INK AS FOLLOWS:

M40479-P19552 KEEP THIS PORTION FOR YOUR RECORDS  
 DETACH AND RETURN THIS PORTION  
 ONLY

THIS PROXY CARD IS VALID ONLY WHEN SIGNED AND DATED.

THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST  
 INC  
 COMMON SHAREHOLDER

	For	Withhold	For All	
Election of Directors — The Board of Directors recommends a vote FOR each of the nominees listed.	All	All	Except	To withhold authority to vote for any individual nominee(s), mark "For All Except" and write the name(s) of the nominee(s) on the line below.

1. To elect one (1) Director of the Fund:

Nominee:

01) Anthony R. Pustorino

Authorized Signatures — This section must be completed for your vote to be counted. — Sign and Date Below

Please sign this proxy exactly as your name(s) appear(s) in the records of the Fund. If joint owners, either may sign. Trustees and other fiduciaries should indicate the capacity in which they sign, and where more than one name appears, a majority must sign. If a corporation, this signature should be that of an authorized officer who should state his or her title.

Signature [PLEASE  
SIGN WITHIN BOX]

Date

Signature (Joint Owners)

Date

362397101

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Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials for the Annual Meeting:  
The Notice and Proxy Statement is available at [www.proxyvote.com](http://www.proxyvote.com).

PLEASE FOLD ALONG THE PERFORATION, DETACH AND RETURN THE BOTTOM  
PORTION IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.

M40480-P19552

THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST INC.

This proxy is solicited on behalf of the Board of Directors

The undersigned hereby appoints Mario J. Gabelli, Agnes Mullady and Bruce N. Alpert, and each of them, attorneys and proxies of the undersigned, with full powers of substitution and revocation, to represent the undersigned and to vote on behalf of the undersigned all shares of The Gabelli Equity Trust Inc. (the "Fund") which the undersigned is entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders of the Fund to be held at The Cole Auditorium, The Greenwich Library, 101 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut 06830 on Monday, May 14, 2012, at 9:30 A.M., and at any adjournments thereof. The undersigned hereby acknowledges receipt of the Notice of Meeting and Proxy Statement and hereby instructs said attorneys and proxies to vote said shares as indicated herein. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

A majority of the proxies present and acting at the Meeting in person or by substitute (or, if only one shall be so present, then that one) shall have and may exercise all of the power and authority of said proxies hereunder. The undersigned hereby revokes any proxy previously given.

This proxy, if properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned shareholder. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted FOR the election of the nominees as Directors and in the discretion of the proxy holder as to any other matter that may properly come before the Meeting. Please refer to the Proxy Statement for a discussion of Proposal No. 1.

PLEASE VOTE, SIGN AND DATE ON THE REVERSE SIDE AND RETURN  
PROMPTLY IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.



PROXY  
 TABULATOR  
 P.O. BOX 9112  
 FARMINGDALE,  
 NY 11735

To vote by Internet

- 1) Read the Proxy Statement and have the proxy card below at hand.
- 2) Go to website [www.proxyvote.com](http://www.proxyvote.com)
- 3) Follow the instructions provided on the website.

To vote by Telephone

- 1) Read the Proxy Statement and have the proxy card below at hand.
- 2) Call 1-800-690-6903
- 3) Follow the instructions.

To vote by Mail

- 1) Read the Proxy Statement.
- 2) Check the appropriate boxes on the proxy card below.
- 3) Sign and date the proxy card.
- 4) Return the proxy card in the envelope provided.

TO VOTE, MARK BLOCKS BELOW IN BLUE OR BLACK INK AS FOLLOWS:

M40477-P19552 KEEP THIS PORTION FOR YOUR RECORDS  
 DETACH AND RETURN THIS PORTION  
 ONLY

THIS PROXY CARD IS VALID ONLY WHEN SIGNED AND DATED.

THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST INC.  
 SERIES C PREFERRED  
 SHAREHOLDER

	For	Withhold	For All	
	All	All	Except	
Election of Directors — The Board of Directors recommends a vote FOR each of the nominees listed.				To withhold authority to vote for any individual nominee(s), mark "For All Except" and write the name(s) of the nominee(s) on the line below.

o                      o                      o

1. To elect two (2) Directors of the Fund:  
 Nominees:

- 01) James P. Conn
- 02) Anthony R. Pustorino

Authorized Signatures — This section must be completed for your vote to be counted. — Sign and Date Below

Please sign this proxy exactly as your name(s) appear(s) in the records of the Fund. If joint owners, either may sign. Trustees and other fiduciaries should indicate the capacity in which they sign, and where more than one name appears, a majority must sign. If a corporation, this signature should be that of an authorized officer who should state his or her title.

Signature [PLEASE SIGN  
Date  
WITHIN BOX]

Signature (Joint Owners)

Date

362397507

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Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials for the Annual Meeting:  
The Notice and Proxy Statement is available at [www.proxyvote.com](http://www.proxyvote.com).

PLEASE FOLD ALONG THE PERFORATION, DETACH AND RETURN THE BOTTOM  
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M40478-P19552

THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST INC.

This proxy is solicited on behalf of the Board of Directors

The undersigned hereby appoints Mario J. Gabelli, Agnes Mullady and Bruce N. Alpert, and each of them, attorneys and proxies of the undersigned, with full powers of substitution and revocation, to represent the undersigned and to vote on behalf of the undersigned all shares of The Gabelli Equity Trust Inc. (the "Fund") which the undersigned is entitled to vote at the Annual Meeting of Shareholders of the Fund to be held at The Cole Auditorium, The Greenwich Library, 101 West Putnam Avenue, Greenwich, Connecticut 06830 on Monday, May 14, 2012, at 9:30 A.M., and at any adjournments thereof. The undersigned hereby acknowledges receipt of the Notice of Meeting and Proxy Statement and hereby instructs said attorneys and proxies to vote said shares as indicated herein. In their discretion, the proxies are authorized to vote upon such other business as may properly come before the Meeting.

A majority of the proxies present and acting at the Meeting in person or by substitute (or, if only one shall be so present, then that one) shall have and may exercise all of the power and authority of said proxies hereunder. The undersigned hereby revokes any proxy previously given.

This proxy, if properly executed, will be voted in the manner directed by the undersigned shareholder. If no direction is made, this proxy will be voted FOR the election of the nominee as a Director and in the discretion of the proxy holder as to any other matter that may properly come before the Meeting. Please refer to the Proxy Statement for a discussion of Proposal No. 1.

PLEASE VOTE, SIGN AND DATE ON THE REVERSE SIDE AND RETURN  
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Nominees:

01) James P. Conn

02) Anthony R. Pustorino

Authorized Signatures — This section must be completed for your vote to be counted. — Sign and Date Below

Please sign this proxy exactly as your name(s) appear(s) in the records of the Fund. If joint owners, either may sign. Trustees and other fiduciaries should indicate the capacity in which they sign, and where more than one name appears, a majority must sign. If a corporation, this signature should be that of an authorized officer who should state his or her title.

Signature [PLEASE  
SIGN WITHIN BOX]

Date

Signature (Joint Owners)

Date

362397705

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M40478-P19552

THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST INC.

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M40477-P19552 KEEP THIS PORTION FOR YOUR RECORDS  
 DETACH AND RETURN THIS PORTION  
 ONLY  
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THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST  
 INC  
 SERIES E PREFERRED  
 SHAREHOLDER

	For	Withhold	For All	To withhold authority
Election of Directors — The Board of Directors recommends a vote FOR each of the nominees listed.	All	All	Except	to vote for any individual nominee(s), mark "For All Except" and write the name(s) of the nominee(s) on the line below.

1. To elect two (2) Directors of the Fund:

Nominees:

- 01) James P. Conn
- 02) Anthony R. Pustorino

Authorized Signatures — This section must be completed for your vote to be counted. — Sign and Date Below

Please sign this proxy exactly as your name(s) appear(s) in the records of the Fund. If joint owners, either may sign. Trustees and other fiduciaries should indicate the capacity in which they sign, and where more than one name appears, a majority must sign. If a corporation, this signature should be that of an authorized officer who should state his or her title.

Signature [PLEASE  
SIGN WITHIN BOX]

Date

Signature (Joint Owners)

Date

362397606

Important Notice Regarding the Availability of Proxy Materials for the Annual Meeting:  
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M40478-P19552

THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST INC.

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PLEASE VOTE, SIGN AND DATE ON THE REVERSE SIDE AND RETURN  
PROMPTLY IN THE ENCLOSED ENVELOPE.

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THE GABELLI EQUITY TRUST  
 INC  
 SERIES F PREFERRED  
 SHAREHOLDER

	For	Withhold	For All	To withhold authority
Election of Directors — The Board of	All	All	Except	to vote for any
Directors recommends a vote				individual nominee(s),
FOR each of the nominees listed.				mark "For All Except"
				and write the name(s)
				of the nominee(s) on
				the line below.

1. To elect two (2) Directors of the Fund:

Nominees:

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- 02) Anthony R. Pustorino

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Signature [PLEASE  
SIGN WITHIN BOX]

Date

Signature (Joint Owners)

Date

362397804

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M40478-P19552

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