

New York Regional Association of Grantmakers

“Energizing Values in Family Philanthropy: Legacy, Mission, and Your Foundation’s Future”

One of the most challenging aspects of organized family philanthropy is sustaining the values and heritage of the original donor(s). Those who are entrusted with continuing the family philanthropy don’t always have the same motivations for giving or the same ideas about how assets should be used. The aim of this program was to help families enhance the day-to-day practice of their giving and find ways to foresee and resolve problems in the management of their philanthropies.

Issues of concern to the participating trustees, staff and consultants emerged quickly:

- generational differences in program interests;
- size of the board and the role of the chair;
- balance between family and non-family members;
- communications;
- the role of spouses and the consequences of divorce;
- recruitment and nominating procedures;
- staffing;
- training younger family members to be responsible grantmakers;
- geographical distance and regional giving; and
- the balance between individual giving and collective philanthropy.

Those who thought that they had managed such challenges successfully shared a number of values which, they feel, inform their family foundations. These include:

- risk-taking;
- creativity;
- efficiency;
- a conscious effort to make collective philanthropy work;
- attention to individual needs; and
- a sensitivity to different directions and priorities of new generations.

Most important, it appeared, were respect for everyone in the family and for the integrity of the foundation vs. individual interests.

No single model emerged. Rather, everyone agreed that each foundation must work within its own family dynamic and culture. Techniques shared that served the needs of participants included:

- setting terms for third generation family members;
- differentiating between membership and board participation;
- “apprentice” board memberships for younger family members;
- “adjunct” boards in training;
- grants committees which may include family members who are not trustees; and
- “outside” board members some of whom may include individuals with particular expertise, such as in law, finance, or special program area of interest.

Families who also operate family businesses recommended combining the family foundation retreat with an out-of-town business meeting.

Several participants commented on the importance of “knowing when you need advice.” Both short- and long-term consultants were utilized, the former for establishing a mission, guidelines and a strategic plan; the latter for ongoing program and administrative work. ♦

Our thanks to NYRAG Member Relations Committee member Lauren Katzowitz of the New York-based Foundation Service, for preparing this summary.

This is a highlights sheet from a NYRAG session held on **November 30, 1994**, at **Bankers Trust** in New York City. The program was facilitated by **Judith K. Healey**, Executive Consulting, Inc., Minneapolis, MN, and featured several resource people: **Nancy R. Douzinas**, Rauch Foundation; **Robert R. Larsen**, Larsen Fund, Inc.; **Patti Lieberman**, A. L. Mailman Family Foundation; and **Sarane O’Connor**, The Barker Welfare Foundation.

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