

CLEVELAND FOUNDATION CENTENNIAL MEETING PRESENTED BY KEYBANK

Wednesday, June 11, 2014 | Palace Theatre | Cleveland, Ohio

Remarks of President & CEO Ronald B. Richard

Good evening, dear friends. Welcome to the Cleveland Foundation's centennial meeting: the only annual meeting of its kind in our history. I am overjoyed that you have chosen to share this defining moment with us.

Let me begin by recognizing a gentleman I feel very close to, especially today. We share a special bond. Together, he and I represent one-third of the Cleveland Foundation's presidential history. I speak of my predecessor, mentor and dear friend, the only other living foundation president: Steve Minter.

Steve, I have a feeling I'm not the only one who would like to thank you for your many contributions to our foundation and our community. Would you please rise and be recognized?

Steve will be onstage a little later in our program to present the Homer C. Wadsworth Award to this year's honoree and to help me introduce our keynote speaker.

What a pleasure it is to convene this historic meeting in this historic setting! Playhouse Square is the beating heart of our downtown cultural sector – and, if not for the Cleveland Foundation, I doubt this majestic theater would be here to accommodate us. It was early financial support from the foundation that put wind behind the movement to save the Playhouse Square theaters.

Today, I want to tell you a story. It's the Cleveland Foundation's story – but it's so much more. This is your story and our story. It's the story of community, of the giving legacy our predecessors left us and our own dreams for those who will follow us. You see its visual representation projected here: this tree, a symbol of growth, prosperity and strength at the core of our great city.

“Every man is guilty
of all the good
he did not do.”

So, instead of reporting on the past year, as I usually do, I invite you to time-travel with me: first, back to 1914 when the Cleveland Foundation was created, just seven months before the guns of August roared and World War I broke out in Europe. Then, we'll leap ahead to stand on the threshold of the foundation's second century and scan the horizon beyond that skyline you see here.



“Every man is guilty of all the good he did not do.”

So said Voltaire, the French writer, historian and philosopher. Frederick Harris Goff, the father of the

Cleveland Foundation, is innocent of that charge – as are so very many people in this room. In Goff's case, the evidence is unimpeachable.

Fred Goff – lawyer, banker, civic leader, humanitarian – launched the world's first community foundation with high hopes and aspirations, but no staff or money. That did not deter this visionary – whose name, sadly, has faded from the collective memory in this city he arrived in as a child, and made his home for the rest of his life. But he was a colossus in his day, and it is because of him that we are gathered here a century later.

At the start of this meeting, you saw two images of Goff, one in the prime of life and the other in his later years. He married a Cleveland native, Frances Southworth, whom he courted at her family's now-restored Prospect Avenue home. She was a woman of admirable strength and intelligence, who served nearly two decades on the foundation's board after her husband's death in 1923.

Fred Goff trusted in the power of a singular idea. And it *was* singular.

Goff originated communal giving: the polar opposite of the private foundations established by men of immense wealth, who dominated the philanthropic landscape early in the 20th century. Goff's Cleveland Foundation pools the resources of people from all walks of life, both living and deceased, into a single, great, permanent endowment for the betterment of the entire community.

Over the years, this community savings account – if you want to think of it that way – has received gifts of all sizes: Some, such as the Porter and Goodman bequests, have run to tens of millions of dollars. Others have been

more modest, in the mold of a laundress' bequest of almost \$6,500 – the bulk of her savings, accrued over a lifetime of labor.

In fact, *anyone* can be a philanthropist. The concept seems simple enough to us now, but in Fred Goff's time, it was transcendent.

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Goff planted a seed that germinated well beyond Cleveland. Today, your community foundation has some 1,750 sisters around the globe. Here where the movement started, we have only to look around to see what has flowed from the inspiration of one man.

This record of achievement reflects both our grantmaking and the many non-grantmaking civic roles we have assumed: convener, advocate, think tank, catalyst, facilitator, adviser.

Sometimes we lead; other times, we play a supporting role. Sometimes we act alone; most often, we work with partners, many of whom are in this audience. Collaboration is the keystone of the success we have known.

So if you are here as a donor, a grantee or a concerned citizen ... if you are representing government, the business community, a trustee bank, a community development corporation, an academic or medical institution, or a philanthropic peer ...

I thank you not only for partnering with the Cleveland Foundation, but for caring deeply about this community and its people.

You may have heard me say that if you held a giant magnet over Cleveland and it drew into the sky every institution and project *your* community foundation has established or enhanced – the Cleveland Metroparks, University Circle’s Uptown District, Tri-C, etc., etc. – there wouldn’t be much left. As Steve Minter likes to point out, we are not only a philanthropic organization; we are an anchor institution in this community – a vital and permanent Cleveland institution.

We have earned that status, and it has taken more than a strong identification with – and total commitment to – place. Being an anchor demands courage. Let me illustrate:

Our volunteer board has a stiff spine. To this day, it doesn’t shrink from controversy when it believes there is a wrong to right. This pattern was set as early as 1921, when a foundation-produced survey of the local criminal justice system documented widespread abuses.

The judiciary fired back, with one common pleas judge threatening to jail our entire board of directors for contempt. The board consulted with its legal counsel – James R. Garfield, son of a United States president – who advised his clients to inform the judge that “he could send the sheriff anytime he wanted to receive us.”

The board stood tall – and the judge backed down.

Being an anchor requires advocacy on occasion. We raise our voice when we believe the stakes are worth it. Never have they been higher than during the continuing

push to improve public education – a cause we have embraced since 1915.

Nine years ago, we convened and joined with grantmakers across Ohio, as well as educators, business leaders, public officials and other stakeholders, to advocate in Columbus for public policy changes that would drive K-12 reform, such as adoption of the national Common Core standards. We returned to the legislative battlefield in 2012 to successfully advocate for passage of state legislation that was essential to executing Mayor Jackson’s plan to transform the Cleveland Metropolitan School District.

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To those who would question this level of engagement from a foundation, I would point out that we are honest brokers, accustomed to bringing people together to find common ground – but that does not mean we lack a point of view. Every grant we make is a statement of our priorities.

In awarding grants or advocating for change, we are bound not to any special interest, but to a wide-ranging view of the public interest – and our sacred duty to ensure that every donated dollar is wisely spent.

When the public interest is the education of Cleveland’s children, we channel Fred Goff – who lights the way for us, as usual. Setting the direction of his fledgling foundation a century ago, Goff said, “The schools are

the very thing we ought to tackle. Nobody else dares do it.” Your foundation took that declaration to heart.

Being an anchor also obligates us to be a champion for social justice. We have stood up for the rights of those without powerful allies: the first African-American families in the suburbs in the 1960s. Young drug users needing medical care in the 1970s. People living with HIV/AIDS amid the hysteria the epidemic evoked in the early 1980s. Survivors of rape who deserved to be treated with dignity and respect back when violence against women was often a punch line, both literally and figuratively.

The charitable impulse is universal.

And now, in our centennial year, we are proud to be the first presenting sponsor in the 31-year history of the Gay Games.

We are an anchor of our field, too. With support from national funders such as the Ford, Rockefeller and Gates foundations, we have served as a beta test site community for leading-edge ideas, most of them our own.

And we have carried on Fred Goff’s mission, sharing our knowledge with our peers and spreading the concept of local giving both nationally and internationally. The charitable impulse is universal.

But we do not live in a utopian paradise. If we are not on the brink of a worldwide conflagration in 2014, as we were in 1914, there is certainly enough poverty,

inequality, neglect and despair to fully consume the entire world’s charitable resources.

So while we celebrate this milestone for our city, the Cleveland Foundation and our sector, we need to stop and ponder the legacy that we will leave and will forever be judged by. What do we owe not only to our children and grandchildren, but to succeeding generations of Clevelanders we will never know? Fred Goff thought in terms of posterity.

I would submit that the philanthropic sector has never had a more significant opportunity to play a pivotal role in our society, our economy and our democracy.

No matter who is in charge, Americans typically view today’s federal government as dysfunctional. And many multinational corporations no longer feel an attachment to the communities where they started and prospered, often for decades. One result is that our nation’s cities have been left to pretty much fend for themselves.

Free of the pressure of the next election or the next earnings report, philanthropists can take risks that might be unacceptably costly in the public and private sectors. The Cleveland Foundation will continue to grow with purpose in our second century, and if that means moving outside philanthropy’s safe spaces – well, it won’t be the first time we’ve chosen that course.

In a moment, I will lay out the key priorities the foundation has staked out as we embark on a new era. But first, I’d like to speak from the heart about a looming issue that I personally think should be everyone’s top priority:

If we as a society do not protect our environment – locally, nationally and globally – then I fear that nothing else we do will matter very much in the long run.

Greater Cleveland has been endowed with a segment of the largest freshwater system on Earth: the Great Lakes. These natural wonders are part of the physical and cultural heritage of North America. Even people who have never glimpsed them are awed by them:

“I wanted to see those lakes,” said British-born Harry Coulby, who stowed away to America and then walked from New York City to Cleveland, where he pursued a successful career at a Great Lakes steamship company and left the Cleveland Foundation some \$3 million when he died in 1929.

Unlike Harry Coulby, we too often take Lake Erie, our greatest fixed asset, for granted. Worse yet, we pollute it, the world’s oceans and our air without a second thought.

I am mindful of the central role that coal has played through some 200 years of American history: heating our homes and offices, powering our factories, fueling our naval ships – in short, filling most of our electrical needs. But now we know just how damaging coal is to our environment.

Currently, almost 70 percent of Ohio’s electricity is generated from coal, a nonrenewable fossil fuel that releases mercury and greenhouse gases when burned. We can’t filter the mercury that gets deposited in our lake, where a highly toxic form builds up in the fish we eat and the water we drink and bathe in, posing a hazard to human health.

I believe this is our own slow-motion Hurricane Katrina in the making. It advances insidiously.

Meanwhile, powerful special interests in our beloved state recently succeeded in gutting Ohio’s renewable energy portfolio standard, which our legislature adopted in 2008 with the critical support of your foundation.

That standard represented a significant step toward breaking our state’s addiction to coal and other nonrenewable fossil fuels, which collectively provide more than 85 percent of our power.

It also provided a basis for a new advanced energy economy and a huge number of additional jobs in the state. In killing the standard, Ohio is rowing against the tide of history.

In 2009, your foundation took the lead in creating LEEDCo – the Lake Erie Energy Development Corporation, whose board I chair – to establish the nation’s first freshwater offshore wind farm in our lake and to establish Cleveland as a center of advanced energy research, development and manufacturing.

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The U.S. Department of Energy awarded LEEDCo a first-round competitive grant of \$4 million in 2012. Although LEEDCo did not receive the full second-round funding we had hoped for, the department

thought enough of our project to provide an additional \$3 million to complete the engineering design in the coming months. Ultimately, there will be a large number of non-polluting wind turbines in Lake Erie, the other Great Lakes and all along our nation's coasts.

This nation and the state's corporate leaders must understand that they have stakeholders beyond their shareholders. The environment is public property. And the citizens of this region deserve to participate in the next wave of economic prosperity.

The better angels of our nature summon us to save our lake.

The only questions are: Will Cleveland miss out on this huge new industry, as we missed out on the wealth and jobs of the I.T. revolution? Will we once again see the fruits of a flourishing economy based on new technology go to Silicon Valley, Austin, Boston, etc. – but not to us?

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Let me turn now to an enduring foundation priority: the education of our children.

Your foundation continues to invest in the conversion of a 19th-century farm-and-factory model to a 21st-century Information Age model for the Cleveland schools. It is no secret that we have gone “all in” for radical public school reform from the outset. It is not a quick fix – but, ultimately, we mean to ensure that each

child in Cleveland attends a high-quality school and each neighborhood offers families a choice of great schools.

Every newborn harbors a promise. But all too often, our children lose sight of who they are and what they can become. It is *our* responsibility, as individuals and as a society, to endow them with a sense of possibility.

Innovative, high-quality schools, led and staffed by top-caliber educators, are our best hedge against the hopelessness and despair that condemn even the brightest kids in poor and even middle-class neighborhoods to wasted lives of unfulfilled potential.

Building on our successful proof-of-concept work with innovative schools like the Cleveland School of Science and Medicine, our board approved grants last March for start-up and first-year costs at two additional institutions that will open in the fall: Bard Early College High School, a much-needed resource on the city's West Side, and Cleveland Digital Arts High School downtown.

In Cleveland, we have helped to create and expand 27 district and charter schools that will serve nearly 8,000 children next year.

Your foundation also works closely with College Now Greater Cleveland to increase access for low-income, first-generation college students. Recently, one such student from Cleveland caught the attention of First Lady Michelle Obama.

Royale Nicholson is a 2013 graduate of Early College High School, another innovative school that led *all* Northeast Ohio schools, city and suburban, in state test scores last year. Royale now attends New York University Shanghai on a full scholarship. Mrs. Obama

mentioned her in a speech she delivered in China last March on the importance of education.

But what was most inspiring was Royale's statement that she hoped her example would, "encourage others in my school and my city to believe that their dreams don't have to be confined to the state that they've lived in their entire lives. They should not define or suppress their dreams because of their level of income. I know how easy it can be to slip into the illusion of inferiority."

That is a very perceptive observation from a very mature young woman. No doubt there are many Royales in Cleveland battling "the illusion of inferiority." We need for them all to succeed and then come home to advance Cleveland.

The better angels of our nature summon us to save our children.

Another foundation priority is regional economic transformation, an area where we have been highly engaged – with some \$85 million in grants made in just the past 10 years.

We are narrowing our focus here to concentrate even more intensely on improving the prospects of Cleveland's inner-city residents in order to ensure that our regional economic growth is inclusive. We will pursue an aggressive jobs growth strategy in the core city, where residents bear the burden of unemployment and poverty rates three times higher than the region's.

We are also studying how this community can better align its education and career training programs with viable, well-paying job opportunities, especially for youth not on the college track.

Our program directors for education and economic development have just returned from Finland and the Netherlands, where they examined apprenticeship models that might be adapted to Cleveland's needs. Unlike in many countries, apprenticeships in the U.S. have declined, to under 300,000 last year. But the federal government, the state of Ohio and your foundation are looking to reverse that trend.

We need to ensure that both our college-going and non-college-going kids have bright futures rooted in successful careers.

We will pursue an aggressive jobs growth strategy in the core city.

In the realm of social justice, we will continue to advocate for true economic and social equality for *every* segment of our population. As a community, it is in our own self-interest to welcome all groups into the mainstream. Cleveland can ill afford to spurn their talents.

I want to assure you that we will keep a laser focus on the long-standing priorities I have cited in previous reports to you. These include not only education and economic development, but:

- Neighborhood revitalization
- Human services
- Youth development
- Public health
- And the arts – from our iconic institutions to our grassroots organizations

Every child deserves access to the arts, in the classroom and in the neighborhood. Who knows what youthful dreams they might inspire?



We are bombarded daily with negative news stories, many of them tragic. But the story of the Cleveland Foundation attests to the enduring human capacity for kindness.

In an era when industrialization was disrupting his world as surely as technology is remaking ours, Fred Goff introduced a brand new concept of charitable giving. Succeeding generations of Clevelanders embraced it and nurtured it, bringing us to this momentous day.

In closing, as I gaze out at this historic assembly, I find myself wondering who among us might step forward as the next Fred Goff. Remember, this is your foundation. We who staff it or serve on its volunteer board at any moment in time are merely the fiduciaries and stewards of the community's generosity.

So I challenge you: There is so much work to be done. Please join us in dedicating even a small part of yourself to something much bigger than any one of us.

The better angels of our nature summon us to save our community and make it thrive like never before. It's our turn now!

In 1963, Ralph Hayes – an Ohio native who worked with Fred Goff and went on to lead the New York Community Trust for 43 years – gave an address in Cleveland. Hayes anticipated this very day, speaking of “50 years from now, when others will surely hold another – a centennial – meeting here.”

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And here we are. We can't foresee what Cleveland will be like 100 years from now. But we can hope that at the foundation's bicentennial meeting, our descendants will look back and say that we here today were worthy guardians of this noble experiment – and our legacy, as Hayes said of Fred Goff's image, “will stand out against the sky.”

Thank you.