

Ronn Richard Opening Remarks
Fall Conference of Community Foundations
Monday, Oct. 20, 2014

Good morning! I am Ronn Richard, president and CEO of the Cleveland Foundation and chair of the Advisory Group for this very special 2014 fall Conference of Community Foundations in our field's centennial year.

You may be curious about this lineup of good-looking folks onstage with me. It's made up of 15 of my state of Ohio community foundation colleagues. We wanted to collectively welcome you to our beautiful state. But please don't panic; you will not be forced to sit through an hour of welcoming remarks. In Ohio, we know how to kick off a conference crisply.

I also represent the great community of Cleveland, where rock-and-roll and community philanthropy were born. In case you haven't heard, Cleveland is experiencing a real renaissance at present: Downtown is on fire with new building projects, young people and empty nesters are moving back, and the streets are lively again at night as the result of all sorts of entertainment options. So we are overjoyed to have you here this week so we can show off the new Cleveland.

We know how to throw a birthday party, don't we? More than 1,400 delegates from 25 nations ... We've convened our own United Nations right here on the shores of Lake Erie. Thank you all for traveling – some from great distances – to donate your time and talent to this important conversation on our next 100 years.

I was honored and delighted to chair the Advisory Group for this conference. On behalf of COF President and CEO Vikki Spruill and the entire staff of COF, allow me to express our deep appreciation for all the hard work the Advisory Group put in to ensure that this centennial gathering exceeds your highest expectations.

I also want to salute my team at the Cleveland Foundation, many of whom have been pulling double duty for months-- working on this conference while simultaneously contributing to our own centennial celebrations here in Cleveland.

This conference is organized around a two-pronged theme: "Learning From Our Past to Enhance Our Future." In the next two and a half days, we will spend about 20 percent of our

time reflecting on how far we have come and devote the remaining 80 percent to shaping the future of place-based philanthropy.

That is hardly an even split, but I think it's appropriate. As important as the historical context is, we need to seize this moment when we are all together to continue the year-old conversation on our second century. To inform our discussion, we have the extensive council-sponsored research of the Monitor Institute and we have your feedback in response to our call for ideas.

We've all heard it before: The world is changing and so must we. You told us you're well aware that the ground is shifting under our feet. That's why you want to discuss contemporary issues, like:

- Next-gen donors
- Race and equity
- The uses and challenges of new technologies
- The environment and our role in sustaining it
- Our response to the retrenchment of the public and private sectors and traditional media
- And our ability to lead and make a meaningful difference in this challenging and chaotic new world – including all of you who are on the front lines dealing with war, natural disasters, public health epidemics and persistent poverty

We heard your concerns, and we have shaped the conference content around them.

This conference will also recognize a most heartening development: the explosive growth of our field around the world. I'm happy to report that a cohort of international community foundation professionals is not only attending the conference, but participating as presenters at various sessions and leading the Wednesday morning plenary.

I had the pleasure of meeting some of these energetic delegates during last night's pre-conference reception. I look forward to seeing us nurture these new friendships.

Many of our international peers represent community foundations identified in the Community Foundation Atlas project, which we will unveil later this morning. The atlas elucidates the fact that community foundations around the world are bringing innovative solutions to complex issues – and making people's lives better as a result.

Finally, to get the most out of the conference, I urge you to take a few minutes to browse the program. In addition to the schedule, it has helpful information on upcoming speakers; the wide

variety of available learning formats, from deep dives to quick, bite-sized sessions; tomorrow's site session tours in Cleveland; and tonight's reception at the absolutely gorgeous Cleveland Museum of Art. I look forward to seeing you there.

Now, one more Ohioan wants to extend his greetings. Then, after this 100-second message from our governor, John Kasich, we will hear from our conference's first keynote speaker.

Ambassador James Joseph has pursued a distinguished career in government, education, business and philanthropy. We claim Ambassador Joseph as one of our own because of his 13-year tenure as president and CEO of the Council on Foundations. But that period accounts for just one small part of an incredible résumé.

For example, he has served four U.S. presidents in senior executive or advisory positions, including appointments as undersecretary of the Interior and U.S. ambassador to South Africa.

Ambassador Joseph is an ordained minister and the author of four books. He has received 19 honorary degrees and his undergraduate alma mater, Southern University, has named an endowed chair in his honor. The Republic of South Africa awarded him the Order of Good Hope, the highest honor a citizen from another country can receive. The Council on Foundations appointed him chairman emeritus.

Ambassador Joseph is currently professor emeritus of the practice of public policy at Duke University. He is also leader-in-residence for Duke's Hart Leadership Program. Please join me in welcoming Ambassador Jim Joseph.