



LAFF

THE LAFF SOCIETY Promoting Social and Professional Contacts Among Former Staff Members of the Ford Foundation

Spring 2017, No. 86



Dick Magat at his desk at Ford...

Richard Magat, LAFF's Co-Founder

Richard Magat, co-founder of The LAFF Society and for 25 years director of the Ford Foundation's Office of Reports, died March 13. He was 90 years old.

Dick Magat ran what is now the Office of Communications with a commitment to professionalism and openness that led to leadership roles in major critical issues of the time and earned recognition for work he did well beyond his position at Ford.

In the foreword to a study Dick conducted of the Foundation that was published in book form in 1979, *The Ford Foundation at Work*, **McGeorge Bundy**, president of Ford at the time, wrote, "He has made our Office of Reports a model of responsibility and integrity, and I think readers of this study will understand why he is respected and trusted both inside and outside the Foundation."

Bundy noted that the study was intended to deal with the Foundation's "shortcomings, unrealized hopes, miscalculations, and down-

right blunders, as well as with what we regard as achievements". It was a history of the Foundation's previous 25 years, when it was developed into a national and international institution, and a perspective on "the great needs that might lie ahead in the next decade and a half, and where and how the Foundation might address them".

As a testament to Dick's abilities, Bundy said the book "...is as faithful a representation of what the Foundation thinks about itself as one can get in the circumstances".

Dick's vision for philanthropy itself was summed up in an interview with The New York Times when, having retired from the Foundation in 1982, he was named president of the Edward W. Hazen Foundation.

"There's no special virtue attached to a large foundation or a small one," he said, "to a local foundation or one of national and international scope. Each earns its character by its work. It's hardly possible for any foundation

not to do good. The test is to do the special good that its independence and flexibility make possible."

In 1991, he and the late **Edward Meade, Jr.** came up the idea of a Ford alumni group.

"...for many of us," they said in a statement then, "our time at the Foundation was a significant part of our lives and the collegiality there contributed to us in many ways. These persons were interested in reconnecting; hence we created the Life After the Ford Foundation Society."

It was, he later said, an effort "to fill the gap of memory".

Dick recounted the early days of LAFF, which did not always have the support or cooperation of Foundation officials, in a talk at the Society's twenty-fifth anniversary gathering at Foundation headquarters last spring that was, true to the character of the man, historically instructive and wryly humorous.

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Richard Magat

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His talk was published in the Summer 2016 issue of the newsletter, which he helped create and then edit through the years.

Dick joined the Foundation in 1957 as a writer in the Office of Reports and was named its director 18 months later. He oversaw an office that prepared press releases and various Foundation publications, including its annual report; recommended public reports on the Foundation's activities; and maintained contacts with newspaper and magazine editors and with public officials, including Congressmen.

But his skills as a writer and editor drew him into other orbits, in the Foundation and outside it.

During the difficult struggle to decentralize New York City's schools in the 1960s, when vehement confrontations were common, he

CORRECTION

The obituary for Brent Ashabrunner in the Winter 2017 issue stated incorrectly that his autobiography was self-published. It was published by Dutton in 1990, titled *Times of My Life*.

The LAFF Society

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...on one of his trips abroad and...

was a special assistant to the mayor's panel created to study and implement the school plan and edited its proposal, "Reconnection for Learning".

He also spent a year in Geneva, Switzerland, in the early 1970s, on sabbatical from Ford, to serve on the Joint Committee on the Reappraisal of the Red Cross, and edited its report.

At the end of 1969, he played a major role in what he described as "Taffaire F.O.R.D". A small organization in California, calling itself Families Organized Against Revolutionary Donations, began a campaign calling for a boycott of the Ford Motor Company and its dealers because of the work of the Foundation, and of many Ford-funded organizations.

Dick worked closely with executives of the company, some of its dealers and such organizations as the American Jewish Committee and the Lawyers' Committee for Civil Rights Under Law, described by F.O.R.D. as "a group

of Communist oriented lawyers".

He developed fact sheets on the Foundation's work for distribution to those assailed by the group, met with representatives of the Ford company and its dealers, with officers of funded organizations, and with Foundation lawyers. He kept Foundation officials apprised of developments through a stream of detailed memos until the attacks fizzled out.

Dick was born in New Haven, Conn., and grew up in the Bronx in New York City, where he graduated from DeWitt Clinton High School. He earned a bachelor's degree from New York University and began his career as a journalist in 1947 at The Dayton Daily News in Ohio.

Following a stint as a reporter for The Binghamton (N.Y.) Sun he was an editor in the Technical Writing Service of the McGraw-Hill Book Company, a script writer for Paramount News, and senior news writer in the Office of Information Services at New York University before joining the Foundation.



... "great fun to be with" (Photos courtesy of the Rockefeller Archive Center)

He was one of more than 500 applicants in a year-long search by the Hazen foundation before being chosen its president. Hazen is a small institution in Connecticut dedicated to “supporting organizing and leadership of young people and communities of color in dismantling structural inequity based on race and class.” It supports grassroots groups and community organizations working in public education and youth development.

While at Hazen he initiated the first study of black philanthropy in cooperation with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies.

He had over the years been a senior consultant to the Council on Foundations, a visiting fellow at Yale University’s Program on Nonprofit Organizations, a visiting fellow at The Foundation Center, and editor-in-chief of the Landmarks in Philanthropy Project for Harvard University’s Hauser Center on Non-profit Organizations.

He also served as vice chair of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, and was a consultant for the German Marshall Fund, the Russell Sage Foundation and Catholic Relief Services.

As a writer, in addition to the Foundation history, he wrote the book *Unlikely Partners: Philanthropic Foundations and the Labor Movement*, and wrote for a variety of publications, including Saturday Review, Consumer Reports, Trans-Action and numerous journals.

Through all the professional assignments, though, he found time to nurture a more contemplative aspect of his nature.

“I knew him at work at the Foundation in the 1970s as a consummate professional,” remembers **Sheila Avrin McLean**, who worked in the Foundation’s international division and Office of the Secretary and General Counsel, “but actually knew him best through an unusual personal connection.

“I saw an advertisement on a Foundation board about a rental house in East Hampton. My husband and I rented the house, twice, I believe. It was Dick’s and Gloria’s gem of a little beach house on the big bay. The experience of his charming, understated way of life revealed the Hamptons to us as a haven.

“Eventually we bought our own house and Dick and I talked about the simple pleasures of beach walks and sunsets over water. I always found him a warm and empathetic person.”

Dick Magat is survived by his wife, Gloria, to whom he was married for 68 years; his son, Gordon; his daughter, Claudia; and three grandchildren, Dylan Keenan, Sam Keenan and Daniel Magat. ■

A KIND AND GENEROUS SPIRIT

By Thea Lurie

Thea Lurie, now an editorial and communications consultant, worked in the Foundation’s Office of Communications from 1990 to 2005.

Dick had long left the Ford Foundation when I met him soon after I started working there. He would stop by the Office of Communications en route to the archives, where he was conducting research for his book. From the start I recognized a unique soul—curious and engaged, an elder statesman with a sharp wit and a playful sense of humor, a kind and generous spirit.

Through the years I often tapped into Dick’s vast knowledge and wisdom about the world of philanthropy. But he had many interests and our conversations were wide-ranging, as were the settings where they took place. Dick was as comfortable in the hamburger joints he occasionally suggested as he was in the more elegant surroundings of The Century Club. He was always great company.

Rest in peace, my friend. ■

THE PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Dick Magat, whose life and work we celebrate in this special edition, has left us with the extraordinary gift of connecting. Along with **Ed Meade**, Dick founded the LAFF Society, whose 25th anniversary we had the pleasure of celebrating with him last May. Those of you who were able to join us will remember Dick’s fascinating recollection of LAFF’s beginnings, obstacles and successes, and the warmth and appreciation with which he was received by the members, his colleagues, in attendance.

For Dick, according to his daughter, Claudia Keenan, the LAFF anniversary and his ability to participate was “a real highlight” of his well-lived 90 years. I will not try to encapsulate those years and the remarkable contributions Dick made as a writer, philanthropist and rights activist. The contributions of others here tell that story far better than I can, as do those who remember Dick for his wry wit and unyielding determination, summed up so well in the LAFF Society designation: Life After the Ford Foundation.

Dick had a simple goal in co-founding LAFF, a desire to stay connected to the colleagues with whom he shared 25 remarkable years and times, at an institution he loved and served with incredible distinction. When I became LAFF’s president seven years ago, Ed sent me a quote from the first issue of the newsletter, I imagine written by Dick, that was clear about their intent:

“We hope that by circulating news

of the professional and/or personal events in the lives of FF alumni, we will remember old bonds, possibly renew acquaintances, perhaps even help one another professionally, and satisfy sheer curiosity. This enterprise is topped with a dollop of nostalgia, for which we make no apology.”

When I inherited the mantle of LAFF’s president, I immediately faced a certain pressure to change the Society’s name, which some viewed as “undignified.” I received a call from Dick reminding me of the name’s layers of meaning, including its humorous connotation. I told him I agreed with the membership’s established consensus that the name should not be changed, but Dick pressed the case nonetheless.

Based on his always informative protestations, our next generation of colleagues sought a tag line that would capture and perpetuate our founding fathers’ original intent: “Promoting social and professional contacts among former staff members of the Ford Foundation.” And we topped it with a seal, designed by **Nellie Toma**’s daughter, Laura, that depicts a global foundation surrounded by its former employees.

It’s as simple and complex as that. And at each meeting where I can *remember old bonds* with my colleagues, with each Newsletter and visit to the website where I can *satisfy sheer curiosity*, with each sad passing *topped with a dollop of nostalgia*, I will remember with gratitude the gift that Dick has bequeathed us. He keeps us connected.

Shep

RICHARD MAGAT: "A DEEPLY ENGAGED CITIZEN OF THE REPUBLIC"

By Stanley N. Katz

HistPhil co-editor Stanley N. Katz remembers his friend, Richard Magat, the long-serving Ford Foundation communications director. HistPhil is a web publication on the history of the philanthropic and non-profit sector.

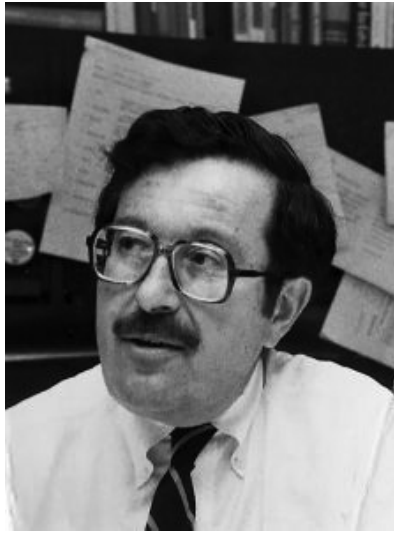
Richard Magat died on March 13, 2017. That sad news likely did not register for many HistPhil readers. The name Dick Magat probably means little even to those currently engaged in the philanthropic world, and I don't suppose that it was widely known even during Dick's prime.

That would not have mattered to him, since he did not have a vain bone in his body. But in fact he was an important figure at the Ford Foundation for a quarter of a century, and he was one of the few foundation officials who were deeply and consistently supportive of the development of serious philanthropy scholarship. It is therefore important for HistPhil to remember Dick and to remind the field of his significance. And, to be clear, he was a particularly close friend of mine.

A few days ago I asked **Susan Berresford**, president of the Ford Foundation from 1996 to 2007, for a comment on Dick, and she responded that he "skillfully led Ford's communications work and helped some of us then newcomers to the field understand the Foundation's history. He had a devilish sense of humor that infused his philanthropic history lessons. I spoke with him just a few months ago when he called to check on some factoid from my early years at Ford. That sharp wit was still strong." Susan has him just right, and he did retain his wit to the end.

Dick was a New Yorker to the core, growing up in the Bronx (where he lived for most of his life), attending DeWitt Clinton High School and New York University. He was a journalist at heart, but spent most of his professional career (25 years) as the Director of the Office of Reports at the Ford Foundation, now its Office of Communications. He, along with Frank Karel at Robert Wood Johnson (and Rockefeller), really created the modern position of communications and government relations for the large foundations.

It was their job to convey what the foundation was attempting to do both to the general public and to relevant government agencies. Dick carried out that function superbly well and was the unpretentious voice of the Ford



I got to know Dick in the early 1980s...since he was one of the few big foundation officials who took an affirmative interest in philanthropy research. In fact, Dick had the chops of a scholar, and I soon learned that he was an avid historian of the field in his own right.

Foundation for many years. The job required him to understand the full range of foundation programs, and to interpret them for the public and, again, for the government. He was later able to put his experience at Ford to work as the president of the Edward W. Hazen Foundation from 1983 to 1988.

I got to know Dick in the early 1980s when I was a member of the Research Committee of Independent Sector, since he was one of the few big foundation officials who took an affirmative interest in philanthropy research. In fact, Dick had the chops of a scholar, and I soon learned that he was an avid historian of the field in his own right.

He began his historical/analytical writing with a report called *The Ford Foundation at Work*, which was published in an effort to facilitate a transition in leadership at the Foundation. He later published his major work of scholarship, *Unlikely Partners: Philanthropic Foundations and the Labor*

Movement (1998), which revealed his progressive politics. He also edited (1989) a volume entitled *Philanthropic Giving: Studies in Varieties and Goals*. Few philanthropic practitioners have had such a consistent scholarly engagement with the field, and Dick's work was first-rate.

He continued his interest to the end, as indicated by a fine critical review in the *Non-profit and Voluntary Sector Quarterly* (2009, pp.535-537) of two very different takes on the field, **Mike Edwards** (Just Another Emperor) and Bishop/Green, (Philanthrocapitalism). He dispassionately laid out both cases, and concluded that: "There is a danger of two parallel nonprofit worlds being created—one funded by the philanthrocapitalists that is much more business savvy and another that is the traditional sector relying on government and mass funding. I suspect that both sides have so much to offer each other they will increasingly find ways to make it work."

He also produced original historical work late in life, especially his poignant account of the role of two DeWitt Clinton High School teachers in the famous Scopes trial on the teaching of evolution ("The Forgotten Roles of Two New York City Teachers in the Epic Scopes Trial," *Science & Society*, v.70 n.4, Oct. 2006, 541-549).

Dick was, as befits a specialist in foundation government relations, very much concerned with and involved in public affairs. He was a member of a New York City commission that looked at the problem of the decentralization of schools, and wrote the final plan for the commission. He served on the Joint Committee on the Reappraisal of the Red Cross and edited the fine report produced by that body. He worked with the Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies to produce the first scholarly study of black philanthropy. And he was the vice-chair of the National Council on Crime and Delinquency, among many other such activities. He was a deeply engaged citizen of the republic, as well as a member in good standing of the republic of scholarship.

Dick was great fun to be with. He had a silly smile that lit up a room, and he was endlessly encouraging and supportive of younger people interested in philanthropy. He was very helpful to me in my attempts to understand the field. Dick Magat was an important and wonderful guy, and I miss him already. ■

***Will Hertz**, who began work at the Ford Foundation in Dick Magat's Office of Reports, here looks back on their relationship and, in a separate article, revisits Dick's "relevant, insightful and beautifully written" history of the Foundation at work.*

MY TEACHER, DICK MAGAT

In 1958 Dick hired me for the Ford Foundation's Office of Reports and I stayed with the Foundation for 23 years. He was the first of my seven bosses at the Foundation, and by far the best—the most effective, the best informed and the wisest. Further, he was my most important teacher.

My first relationship with the Foundation was as a grantee, a Foreign Area Training Fellowship to study development problems and programs in India. However, I was not a budding academic like the other fellows but a journalist by training and job experience. The Foundation was simply a source of funds of mysterious origin allocated by strangers in far away New York.

But in New Delhi I was impressed by the Representative, **Doug Ensminger**, his staff and their grantees. I wanted to be part of that universe. I applied for a job in New York and was turned down by **Forrest "Frosty" Hill**, the international vice president, as lacking the appropriate job skills or experience for development work.

But Dick saw some potential in me and hired me as a writer on his team.

My location changed from New Delhi to Madison Avenue. I soon was turning out annual reports, news releases, summaries of Ford grants by state, and speeches for President **Henry Heald**, who was an engineer by training and awkward in the use of English. As an experienced journalist, I was well suited for the anecdotal program booklets that were Dick's gift to the foundation world.

In staff meetings, in Dick's office, over lunches in the dining room and on walks to Grand Central station, Dick made up for my occupational ignorance about foundations in general and Ford specifically. He was a fountainhead of information and insights.

Years later, **McGeorge Bundy**, who succeeded Heald as president, told me that on his arrival Dick provided him the same insights and service. **Fred Friendly**, another transfer student from the world of journalism, had a similar experience.

In 1952, I got the job at the Foundation that I wanted in the first place: a grant-maker in the field of economic development. Dick not only accepted my priorities but talked up my ability with **Frosty Hill** and **George Gant**, the director of the program in South and Southeast Asia. My talks with Dick continued over lunch until I was transferred to Pakistan as assistant representative.

My relations with Dick continued when I was on home leave and when I returned for reassignment in the Africa and Middle East program, but they changed in nature. Now it became a two-way stream of communication as I broadened Dick's understanding of the problems and opportunities of working and living in a developing country.

Now, as I look back on my career, I feel that my 23 years of experience with the Ford Foundation were the most stimulating and rewarding period of my life. And Dick was my most pivotal colleague. He not only opened the door to the Foundation but gave my experience there meaning and inspiration. ■

DICK MAGAT'S TIMELY BOOK

In his 25 years as director of the Office of Reports, Dick wrote a remarkable variety of annual reports, informal booklets about the Foundation's programs, and speeches for his own delivery and that of others. However, nothing was more insightful, more timely and more reflective of Dick's range of interests than the book, *The Ford Foundation at Work*, published in 1979 and cited briefly in his obituary in this issue.

At its time, the book was unique in the literature of foundations. In its 207 pages it summarized 25 years of grant-making by the nation's largest foundation in 21 subject matter program areas, and at a time when its assets had grown from \$750 million to \$2.7 billion. While published 38 years ago, the book is still a valuable reference source on the Foundation's history, and can be purchased from Amazon and e-bay at a reasonable price.

The book's origin was a request to **McGeorge Bundy**, then the Foundation's president. As told by Bundy in his introduction, "The trustees, aware that there would

be a change of leadership at the Foundation, wanted to make a running start in the process of planning for the future. Their first step was to make a study of the great national and international needs that might lie ahead in the next decade and a half, and where and how the Foundation might address them."

Bundy turned to Dick for help. Dick was in a unique position. From his perch as director of the Office of Reports, he had a bird's-eye view of the Foundation, and he had worked closely with all its programs. Further, he was on intimate terms with the period's two presidents—**Henry Heald** and **Bundy**—and with their productive cabinets of vice presidents and staff members.

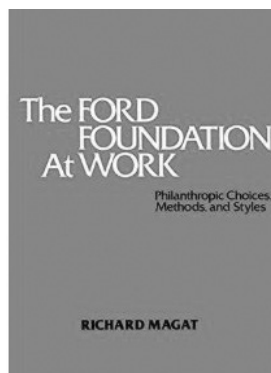
Dick labored over the task for three years in addition to his regular duties and responsibilities, drawing from the voluminous records of the Foundation then stored in the

building's basement, staff members' recollections, including his own, and interviews with knowledgeable persons outside the Foundation. The result was published by Plenum Press and came at a critical time for Ford and the other major foundations.

In the 1960s, there had been a growing hostility toward foundations, much of it addressed toward the Ford Foundation as the giant in the field. This hostility was generated in a congressional hearing on foundations at which Bundy testified. It culminated in the Tax Reform Act of 1969, which, among other things, imposed an excise tax on a foundation's net

investment income and established a new tax on foundations for making grants to individuals or for voter education unless the grants complied with stringent new regulations.

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Dick's book was part of the foundation world's effort to explain more fully to Congress and the general public what foundations are and do and why they are important. In general, foundations responded by publishing detailed annual reports. Dick's book led the way in providing a historical look at Ford's accomplishments and way of doing business over a period of years.

Under the subtitle "Philanthropy, Choices, Methods and Styles", Dick's book began with a discussion of how the Foundation had worked, covering its choice of major objectives, the strategies and various modes of action most often used in achieving those objectives, and the relevant results of earlier activities. To illustrate the discussion, the book drew heavily on 16 short case studies selected from various periods of the Foundation's history and from all of its then broad areas of interest.

It concluded with an appendix that included a selected chronology of the Foundation starting with its establishment in 1936, and a summary with dollar figures of the Foundation's fields of activity during this critical period of substantial growth.

While the world has changed substantially since Dick's book, it is significant how little has changed in the Foundation's principles of operation. Here, for example, is a sample of Dick's cogent prose:

To make the best use of our resources, we need to pursue a systematic approach to grantmaking. This means careful professional assessment of the intrinsic merits of all proposals considered for funding. It also means the concentration of our grants on a limited number of problems or objectives. Finally, it means an overriding concern for efforts of potential benefit to broad segments of society rather than to narrowly defined groups or limited geographic areas.

Less tangible elements of style also are important to an understanding of how the Foundation has worked. At various points... we attempt to indicate significant organizational and atmospheric features—for example, the fact that we no longer interpret our independence to mean remoteness from what others are doing, the encouragement given to the initiatives of individual Foundation program officers, the collegiality within the staff and between the staff and the trustees, and the exchanges across departmental boundaries within the Foundation.

Dick's book is still relevant, insightful and beautifully written. ■

REMEMBRANCES OF RICHARD MAGAT

From his friends at the Rockefeller Archive Center

If it hadn't been for Dick's insistence that he needed to see all copies of The LAFF Society newsletter, the burgeoning relationship between LAFF and the Rockefeller Archive Center (RAC) might never have happened.

In preparation for the exhilarating 25th anniversary celebrations last spring, Dick insisted that the RAC had copies of all the newsletters. He could not believe that they were not part of the Ford Foundation collection. But, of course, they couldn't be, given the Society's origin.

Happily, Ford Foundation Archivist and Librarian **Alan Divack** remembered exactly where the boxes with the newsletters and other papers had been. With the expert detective skills of Ford Records and Archives Manager Andrea Donohue and LAFF Secretary-Treasurer **Nellie Toma**, the missing files eventually were located and transferred to the Archive Center as their own separate collection.

To provide Dick with the means to write his reminiscences in time for the celebration, one of us made copies of all the newsletters for him. In doing so, we realized the wealth of knowledge embedded in each newsletter: about board programs, about Ford staff members and grantees, and about world and national events.

As the longtime head of Ford's Office of Reports, Dick's insistence on reviewing the full history of LAFF brought forth his memorable talk and article for the anniversary celebration. It also built a bridge connecting those who create the history of the Ford Foundation with those who preserve and make it accessible to scholars and other practitioners.

It was Dick's longtime friend (and sometimes tennis adversary) Jim Smith, RAC Vice President, who first invited Dick to meet with RAC staff. Dick led a lively discussion about the Ford Foundation and its thousands of boxes and tapes. Now, thanks in large measure to Dick, the LAFF Society material will augment that Collection.

Dick's sense of fun comes through in the photos in this newsletter. However, he was all seriousness when it came to philanthropy, history and making the right decisions. One of us, Pat Rosenfield, had interacted with Dick over the years when she was at Carnegie Corporation, most notably when

she was running the Carnegie Scholars Program. Dick was a constant caller about the importance of funding independent scholars. That is, Dick argued that some of the best scholarship was not being conducted in a university or think tank but, rather, by individuals working independently and not beholden to any institutional policy or ethos.

While always dedicated to the Ford Foundation and the other institutions where he worked, Dick cherished the value of independence and the freedom to question accepted doctrine.

Pat recalls that Dick never wasted time to make his case. No flattery or flowery openings for him. The phone would ring and he would ask, "Have you contacted that group of independent scholars? Who will be written to? Who has been nominated? What is taking you so long to respond?" It was such a relief when she could tell him that there were at least a couple independent scholars—without institutional affiliations—on the roster and then, at last, one was funded. Dick's powers of persuasion ensured a few more such awards over the years.

That same determination to ensure that all aspects of a story would be told—the successes and failures, the right turns and the wrong ones, those that should have been funded and sustained and those that should not have been—infuse his invaluable 1979 book, *The Ford Foundation at Work*. His discussions of planning and evaluation, indeed his grasp of the knowledge of decision-making from the perspective of practice and scholarship, comprise important lessons for the philanthropic sector. It should be on every program officer's desk, and not only at the Ford Foundation. Our team of historians, including Ford Foundation project director Rachel Wimpee, each has one.

Dick stands out, alongside his peer **Frank Sutton**, as the practitioner historian par excellence of the Ford Foundation. Dick stands out as the champion for independent thinking, evidence-based actions and grappling with tough issues. Dick stands out as the friend and colleague whose insistence on doing the right thing in the right way inspired the right action.

It was a privilege to be on the receiving end of Dick's insistence on excellence, rapid response and getting the story right. He deserves all the appreciations, recognitions and celebrations for living a life dedicated to serving the public good. ■

PROVIDING HELP TO NEGOTIATE THE CIVIL JUSTICE SYSTEM

By Mary E. McClymont

Mary E. McClymont is president and CEO of the Public Welfare Foundation in Washington, D.C. She was vice president of the Peace and Social Justice Program of the Foundation, working there from 1988 to 2000 and from 2006 to 2008. This article appeared originally on Governing.com on March 30. It is reprinted here with permission and can be found at <http://www.governing.com/gov-institute/voices/col-access-crisis-civil-justice-system-access-for-all-project.html>

Marie arrived at the Brooklyn Housing Court frightened and confused. Elderly and with impaired mobility, she had lived in her apartment for more than 20 years and had always paid her rent. But a new landlord was suing her, claiming that she had fallen behind. Marie faced a serious challenge: proving to a judge that she had paid her rent on time and doing so without any legal help or experience.

In civil courts across the country, people like Marie face an uphill battle. A recent study by the National Center for State Courts found that in 75 percent of civil cases one or both

parties are in court alone, without legal guidance to navigate complicated proceedings. With effective legal assistance, stressful but common life issues such as landlord-tenant problems, foreclosure, debt collection, divorce, domestic abuse or child custody can often be resolved promptly; left to fester, these issues can tear families apart or send them spiraling into economic despair.

The increase in self-represented litigants in our state courts, along with severe funding deficiencies over the years, has created an access crisis in our civil justice system that amounts to a betrayal of one of our country's founding principles: the promise of justice for all.

To be sure, there has been progress, with the development of many exciting innovations in recent years. Too often, though, they are offered piecemeal and not in ways that are most helpful to those who face civil legal problems. But in seven pioneering states, that's about to change.

Two years ago, in an unheralded but path-breaking move, the Conference of Chief Justices of the United States and the Conference of State Court Administrators unani-

mously passed a resolution supporting the goal of 100 percent access to effective assistance for people with "essential civil legal needs".

The resolution calls on states to develop systems in which everyone can get legal help through a comprehensive approach that provides a continuum of meaningful and appropriate services. It also calls on core players—courts, Access to Justice commissions, civil legal aid organizations, the private bar and other essential partners—to work together across organizational boundaries in their states to find solutions.

Now, Alaska, Colorado, Georgia, Hawaii, Massachusetts, Minnesota and New York are seizing the opportunity to bring the vision expressed by the resolution closer to reality through what's known as the Justice for All Project.

Housed at the National Center for State Courts, overseen by a distinguished advisory committee and funded by the Public Welfare Foundation with others on deck, the project will assist the seven states with resources to assess their systems' strengths and weaknesses, make coherent action plans that integrate services to close the gaps, and begin making changes. They will harness an array of practical solutions—such as self-help services, automated court forms, and limited scope representation—to better match users who have specific needs to the appropriate level of help.

The potential benefits for our communities are substantial. In New York City, for example, the recent addition of "court navigators"—trained and supervised personnel with no formal legal training—is helping people like Marie manage their way through the sometimes-daunting Brooklyn Housing Court system. A navigator named Ernesto helped Marie keep her home by assisting her in tracking down the money order she had submitted for her rent and showing her how to have it reissued to the new landlord. Beyond that, the navigator helped her obtain a senior-citizen rent-increase exemption.

The project has unleashed interest nationwide, from states that are red and blue, small and large. In all, 25 states applied for funding, suggesting that there is both widespread awareness of the crisis in our civil justice system and a formidable will to come together to remedy it.

Momentum is building, and all of us must commit wholeheartedly to achieving a system of justice that works, not just for the few who can afford it but for everyone. ■

MEMORIAL SERVICE



Many of Dick Magat's friends gathered at a memorial service in New York City on April 30. Among them were, from left, Carolee Iltis, now a psychiatrist at the Astor Home for Children in Poughkeepsie, N.Y.; Oona Sullivan, who worked with Dick in the Office of Reports; Leslie Gottlieb, director of communications for the Jewish Child Association in New York City; and Pat Addeo, a senior associate with Veris Wealth Partners in New York City.

TRUSTAFRICA AND THE NEW AFRICA PHILANTHROPY

By Elizabeth Coleman and Halima Mahomed

TrustAfrica was founded in 2006 to “practice a kind of philanthropy that both benefits Africans and actively supports their agency”. To mark its tenth anniversary, Elizabeth Coleman and Halima Mahomed have edited a book exploring whether and how such an approach works. Coleman is a consultant to international foundations and agencies, including the United Nations. She worked in the Foundation’s Office of Communications from 2000 to 2006. Mahomed has worked as a consultant to the Foundation and is an authority on African philanthropy.

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African philanthropic institutions are demonstrating how donors can more effectively foster independent action and strengthen movements for change. This different approach may hold the key to durable development on the continent.

Although many donors recognize that top-down approaches and solutions that are not rooted in context are less likely to succeed, few manage to include partners and beneficiaries in decision making in very meaningful ways. One of the exceptions is TrustAfrica, an independent foundation based in Africa and led by Africans. It was established in 2006 to practice a kind of philanthropy that not only benefits Africans but actively supports their agency.

It is also the subject of a new book, *Claiming Agency: Reflecting on TrustAfrica’s First Decade*. As the book’s editors, we sought to understand what this kind of African philanthropy looks like in practice and what difference it has made. In our analysis, five elements stand out:

It is geographically rooted

A key premise is that it makes a difference to be based on the continent. TrustAfrica staff support and enable the work as opposed to just resourcing it from afar.

In a chapter about its work on international criminal justice, the legal expert and writer Humphrey Sipalla describes how having an African funder working on the issue transferred a sense of legitimacy to its civil society partners and created spaces for an African narrative to emerge.

Working together, the funders and partners

came to recognize the need to make heard the voices of the victims who had survived crimes of atrocity and to advance African-led justice processes. Doing so brought new momentum to the fight against impunity, as seen in last year’s special court to try Chadian leader Hissène Habré, where victims were among those who testified.

Similarly, reflecting on TrustAfrica’s work in Liberia and Zimbabwe, attorney and philanthropic consultant **Alice Brown**, a former Foundation representative in South Africa, notes that “its position on the frontlines allows it to be an integral part of the strategizing and co-creation of solutions alongside civil society and other democratic actors”. But as these examples suggest, it took more than being geographically rooted; it required actively reaching out to constituency voices to inform those funding decisions.

This relinquishing of power has, for instance, been reflected in the institution’s approach to using convenings and knowledge building as the basis for developing collective agendas and funding priorities. This helps to ensure that resourcing decisions are based on the reality of local issues and priorities.

It actively advances agency and devolves power

Supporting fully the idea of agency requires relinquishing power to one’s partners—the power to determine priorities and solutions, the power to represent and speak on behalf of constituents, and the power to create knowledge and set agendas. Above all, it requires a commitment to enabling partners not only to be heard but also to exercise their influence.

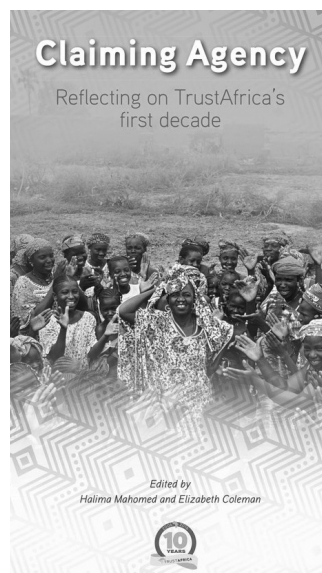
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In her chapter on resourcing women’s rights, feminist author and analyst Hakima Abbas views this as putting the work in

context, but, as she also points out, convenings alone are not enough to enable the priorities of those most affected to emerge: It also takes a concerted effort to reach out to marginalized communities to provide resources and enabling mechanisms for their voices to be heard.

The ongoing challenge for philanthropy, even when moving beyond the networked, more visible organizations, is to constantly explore which are the non-institutionalized voices that need to be included. Indeed, their invisibility and lack of access is often a key part of their problem in the first place.

Sometimes, despite awareness of these voices, bureaucratic processes or difficulties in dealing with accessing disparate voices can result in the establishment of internal barriers within philanthropic institutions. When this happens, the ability to hear and listen to these voices requires a different way of working, an opening up to views that challenge our comfort zones.



“What really matters is the way in which the funds are used.”

It resources civil society and movement building

Linked to efforts to expand and include multiple voices is the issue of movement building. This involves supporting a cadre of African organizations and individuals that can speak with a shared voice, develop collaborative agendas and advance collective policy positions. Several chapters highlight TrustAfrica’s contributions to movement building. In Zimbabwe, for example, Alice Brown sees this playing out in collaborative efforts to advance constitutional reforms.

Writer and activist Fambai Ndirande reflects on how a movement-building approach has greatly helped to advance a more contextualized reflection of the illicit financial flow (IFF) challenge in Africa. Abbas argues that women’s rights movements require quality resourcing, the kind that is possible only when funders apply a movement-building lens that is also African. Thus the funding itself needs to have a pan-African ideological base and an intersectional focus.

It recognizes that the control of resources is more important than the source of funds

Tendai Murisa, TrustAfrica's executive director, emphasizes that the geographical source of the funds is not the ultimate enabler—or dis-enabler—of agency. Foreign funds enabled rather than distorted TrustAfrica's agency, and in turn the agency that was supported on the ground. As Humphrey Sipalla argues, the fact that donors have an agenda “does not necessarily mean that they act to the detriment of African agency”. In essence, it depends on how that agenda aligns with local priorities and how flexible it is.

Fambai Ngirande's chapter on stemming IFFs from Africa shows how funds initially provided by a Western donor, through Trust-Africa, supported research and led to the articulation of a distinctly African agenda with input from across the continent. This new point of view attracted new constituencies, led to a multi-country people's campaign, and is being advanced at the African Union.

In the absence of their own long-term sustainable resources, TrustAfrica and institutions like them find themselves navigating a tricky place: needing to advocate for and negotiate their own agency with their donors while simultaneously aiming to ensure that they devolve the power this agency brings with it.

It navigates being a recipient and disperser of funds

Institutions such as TrustAfrica are often both recipients and dispersers of funds, which places restrictions on their own agency. In turn, as a funder, it must also be mindful of the way in which its own funding processes can have a constraining effect on the agency of its partners.

One important implication is that it limits their ability to plan and strategize together over a multi-year period. Another is that it may prohibit follow-up activities that could expand shorter-term gains into longer-term victories. In some cases, these funding parameters have affected a partner's ability to retain its staff or jeopardize its ability to survive as an institution.

A further consideration is that such funding restrictions can, at times, act as a barrier to more flexible and proactive work, with funded institutions playing what Abbas calls “a firefighter role” rather than developing longer-term preventative strategies. In the absence of their own long-term sustainable resources, TrustAfrica and institutions like them find themselves navigating a tricky place: needing to advocate for and negotiate their own agency with their donors while

simultaneously aiming to ensure that they devolve the power this agency brings with it.

A critical issue: the need for long-term funding

The need for reliable, long-term funding emerges as a major issue in these chapters. Promising movement-building work slowed considerably when donors ceased their funding, when the grant terms expired or when donors changed funding priorities. Several authors conclude that African philanthropic institutions need to have their own independent resources that they are able to use in a flexible way that is responsive to needs they see on the ground.

To be sure, African resources could easily replicate the power structures and modalities of the international aid system or international private philanthropy. What really matters is the way in which the funds are used: an approach that is rooted in locally dictated priorities, with decisions being informed by those most affected.

Why this kind of philanthropy matters

TrustAfrica has advanced transformative change in pursuit of two larger ends. First, to support the development of narratives, positions and priorities that reflect the

realities of those suffering from injustice, and, second, to use them to push for a more grounded understanding, at the seats of power, of the challenges being faced on the ground. This results in more contextualized and locally defined solutions that are transformative.

Our book aims to add further evidence of the unique value of African-led philanthropy. In turn, we hope that it yields lessons for other philanthropic institutions—in Africa and in the global north—that foster African agency and transformative change.

For institutions such as TrustAfrica such change means taking positions that may not be popular or widely accepted, and challenging dominant power relations that have long sought to define not just who sits at the decision-making table, but what issues are up for discussion. Locally informed narratives and positions often tend to disrupt prevailing orthodoxies, and so institutions seeking transformative change must consistently reflect on how to both challenge the systems and yet still retain influence within them.

At the heart of these examples is using leverage to diffuse power rather than centralize it. The ultimate aim is to shift the balance of power relations from elites to people on the ground. That is African agency at work. ■

MELVIN OLIVER INAUGURATED AS PITZER COLLEGE PRESIDENT

Melvin Oliver, who became the sixth president of Pitzer College last July, was officially inaugurated March 25. Dr. Oliver, who at one time had been vice president of the Ford Foundation's Asset Building and Community Development Program, was the executive dean at the University of California, Santa Barbara's College of Letters and Science when he was chosen to head Pitzer, a member of the Claremont Colleges group of institutions in California.

Nick Menzies, who worked with Dr. Oliver in the Asset Building program at Ford as well as in Rural Poverty and Resources, and now is a program associate at the Sierra Institute for Community and the Environ-



ment, was there to help honor his friend.

They are pictured here following the ceremony with their wives, Melinda Herr-old-Menzies, a professor of environmental analysis at Pitzer, on the left, and Suzanne Loth Oliver. ■

PETER GEITHNER: AN APPRECIATION

By Mark Sidel

This article appears in the March 2017 issue of Alliance Magazine and is re-printed with permission. Mark Sidel is Doyle-Bascom Professor of Law and Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and also is serving as the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation Visiting Chair in Community Foundations at the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy at Indiana University.

Peter F. Geithner, for decades a pivotal figure in the Ford Foundation's programs in Asia and a long-time catalyst for the development of philanthropy in the region, died July 29, 2016.

Peter joined the Ford Foundation in the early 1960s and worked there for almost 30 years. He served as deputy representative for India, representative for Southeast Asia, program officer for developing country programs and as the Foundation's first representative for China, in Beijing. Peter also served as adviser to the Asia Center at Harvard University, China Medical Board, Japan Foundation Center for Global Partnership, Rockefeller Brothers Fund and other organi-



Peter Geithner, right, a former president of LAFF, with Dick Magat, its co-founder.

zations, and on the boards of bodies such as the National Committee for U.S.-China Relations, China Center for Economic Research, Center for the Advanced Study of India, and Institute of Current World Affairs.

Peter was the guiding force of the Ford Foundation's extraordinary work in Asia after moving to Delhi with his spouse, Deborah, in the late 1960s. In the ensuing years he worked in or very strongly influenced Ford's extensive philanthropic efforts in Bangladesh, China, India, Indonesia, the Philippines, Thailand and Vietnam. Ford's work in the region has been effective because of its ethos of programming based on local needs and priorities through country and regional offices. Peter represented, defended and strengthened that philosophy in all his working life for Ford.

In his own right, Peter was an extraordinary philanthropic programmer. He understood and deployed the catalytic role that an organization like Ford could play, with exquisite sensitivity to national priorities, customs and institutions. He worked both to build institutions and to support and strengthen individual capacity, always making links between the two.

His extraordinary ability to really listen to people, and his flexibility, integrity, political sense and the decentralized nature of Ford's work, made him the leading philanthropic programmer of his era in Asia of any nationality.

Peter understood very early that philanthropy could build upon the long traditions of giving across Asia towards developing newer philanthropic institutions and practices. Long before most philanthropic colleagues, he deployed Ford assets to build philanthropic and non-profit institutions and infrastructure in the region. Today Asia

is studded with foundations and non-profits and philanthropy has entered a period of rapid growth. These developments owe much to institutions at local, national and regional levels, for many of which Peter Geithner was the inspiration.

I worked with Peter for many years, beginning when I joined the small team that he led to establish the Ford office in Beijing in late 1987 as the first foreign foundation to open an office in China. He led Ford through the development of clear-sighted programs in China, and through the difficult times during and after the Tian'anmen demonstrations and government crackdown in 1989. He saw needs and philanthropic opportunities earlier than others. For example, he began exploring the role Ford could play in Vietnam in the 1970s and 1980s, then provided crucial support when I managed and expanded those programs in the early to mid-1990s. He played similar roles for Ford, and for philanthropy, in many other Asian countries.

With Peter's death and those of Barnett Baron in 2015 and Tadashi Yamamoto of the Japan Center for Intellectual Exchange (JCIE) in 2012, we have lost a key triumvirate of outstanding philanthropic leaders who worked together for many years to build the infrastructure for philanthropy in Asia, and to support the generation of foundation, non-profit and research personnel who have carried forward this work.

Peter Geithner was pre-deceased by his beloved spouse, Deborah, whose own important role in Ford's effective efforts in Asia is well understood by those who knew her. They are survived by four children and nine grandchildren. Alliance mourns the passing of this exceptional philanthropic leader. ■

"Dual-Faith" Education

Sheila Gordon, president of the Interfaith Community in New York City, is the principal author of an article in the April 2017 issue of the International Review of Education that "puts our work educating interfaith families in a global context".

"...today's multi-cultural—and in particular interfaith—families," notes an abstract of the article, "need new educational strategies to help them understand their cultural roots and identify and clarify what aspects of their heritages they wish to nurture and transmit to their children. This paper focuses on a new model for religious education, namely non-doctrinaire 'dual-faith' education..."

She points out that while the model is particular to the United States and to families with Jewish and Christian heritages, "its premises and structure have significant potential to be adaptable to other religious combinations and other cultures and countries."

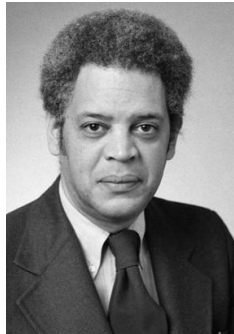
Sheila worked at Ford in Human Resources and in Public Education in two stints, first from 1967 through 1968 and then from 1995 to 2000. ■

IN MEMORIAM

Roger Wilkins, a champion of civil rights for more than five decades, including a brief stint for three years at the Ford Foundation in the early 1970s, died March 26 at an assisted-living facility in Kensington, Md. He was 85.

Mr. Wilkins “waged war against racism from above the barricades,” observed *The New York Times* at the time of his death, “with political influence, jawboning, court injunctions, philanthropic grants, legislative proposals, and commentaries on radio and television and in newspapers, magazines and books”.

He went to Washington in 1962 to join the Kennedy Administration and was named special assistant to the head of the Agency for International Development. He stayed on when Lyndon Johnson became president and was involved in the campaigns



for passage of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965. He later became an assistant attorney general during a period of intense racial unrest.

“The real threat to American life,” he said then, “is our inattention to the really depressed and anguished conditions of the minority group people who live in the ghettos of this country.”

When Richard Nixon was elected president Mr. Wilkins perceived a “turning away from the paths of cultural decency” and left government at the beginning of 1969 to become Program Officer in Charge of Social Development at the Foundation.

For the next three years, including appointment as program adviser to the president, he oversaw funding for job training, education, drug rehabilitation and other programs. But,

noted *The New York Times* article, “he was powerless to support many projects he considered worthy and became disillusioned with the work.” He left Ford at the end of 1971 for a new career in journalism.

He struggled for years over his identity as a black man, writing in a memoir that the everyday “currencies” of black life “evolved away from me....I didn’t know how to talk, to banter, to move my body”. He cited constant struggles with depression, suicidal thoughts and a deep unease as he tried to meet what he perceived as the expectations the white world had for him.

He gradually began to ease out of what he called his “desperate search for white approval” through a new life as a journalist. He wrote editorials for *The Washington Post* that, as part of the paper’s coverage of the Watergate scandal, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1973. He joined the editorial board of *The New York Times* a year later and became an Op-Ed page columnist.

From 1988 until he retired in 2007 he was the Clarence J. Robinson professor in history and American culture at George Mason University in Fairfax, Va. Throughout those years he wrote continually for newspapers and magazines and was a frequent commentator on radio and television.

Dr. Sally J. Oleon, who worked in special programs when she joined the Foundation in 1966 and was a program specialist when she left three years later, died February 15.

She had earned her doctorate from the University of Pittsburgh and, after leaving Ford, worked in several positions there and at George Washington University, including in the office of the vice president for academic affairs. She also was dean of academic affairs at Greater Hartford Community College.

Elissa Scatena, who died April 19, joined the Foundation in 1956 in the personnel office and was a staff assistant and administrative assistant in that office until becoming a grants administrator in 1969. She retired in 1997.

Betty Lou Hoffman, who worked as a secretary in the South and Southeast Asia program and then as an administrative assistant in the Asia and Pacific program, died March 21 in Lancaster, Pa. She was 84.

Ms. Hoffman, who was a graduate of Duke University, worked at Ford from 1965 through 1978, when she retired. ■

A NATION’S HONORS FOR LAFF MEMBERS

Natalia Kanem received the Order of Belisario Porras, in the degree of Grand Officer, from the government of Panama as “yet another of capable, prepared women who make a difference and who devote their time, effort and knowledge to achieve a better society”.

Dr. Kanem, who was born in Panama, is the Assistant Secretary-General and Deputy Executive Director (Programme) of the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). She worked at the Foundation from 1992 to 2005 in the Lagos office in West Africa, in management services in New York and in the Peace and Social Justice Program.

In conferring the honor, it was noted that throughout her 30-year career “she has occupied important positions of leadership in the fields of medicine, public and reproductive health, social justice and philanthropy with significant contributions at a global level.”

She received the award in the Bolivar Palace in Panama City as her 96-year-old mother looked on.

Sir Gordon Conway was awarded the Founder’s Royal Medal of the Royal Geographical Society for the “enhancement and



promotion of agricultural development in Asia and Africa”.

Sir Gordon, a former president of the society, was honored as “a world leader in international development and one of the world’s foremost experts on food security and the sustainable development of agricultural land. For over 50 years, Sir Gordon has worked to improve the lives of millions through his pioneering research, leadership of major organizations, and advice to government on sustainable development”.

During those decades of work, he spent four years, from

1988 to 1992, pursuing his activities as the Foundation’s representative in New Delhi.

The award, given by the society since 1830, is part of a series that is approved by the reigning monarch and known since its inception as being among the highest honors in the world.

“Although by training and experience I am an agricultural ecologist, I am an applied geographer at heart,” Sir Gordon said on receiving the award. “My mother was a geography school teacher, so the subject is in my genes.” ■

The LAFF Society
c/o Nellie Toma
PO Box 701107
East Elmhurst, NY 11370

LAFFing Parade

Emmett Carson, president and CEO of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, will be the featured guest at the Philanthropy NEXT: America's Emerging Donors conference September 14 in Washington, D.C. The conference is sponsored by The Chronicle of Philanthropy.

Carson will be featured in the Insider Interview, a one-on-one discussion.

Since becoming head of the Silicon Valley Foundation in 2007 he has overseen what The Chronicle describes as "explosive growth", increasing its assets from \$1.7 billion to \$8.2 billion, making it the "nation's largest organization of its kind".

"That fast growth has been possible," notes The Chronicle, "because the organization has successfully listened to millennials, women, people of color and other donors that are often overlooked—and moved nimbly to adapt to their needs and interests."

Carson worked in the Governance and Public Policy program of the Ford Foundation from 1989 to 1994 and was the president and CEO of both the Minneapolis Founda-

tion and Peninsula Community Foundation before joining Silicon Valley.

He is named repeatedly by NonProfit Times as one of the top 50 most influential nonprofit leaders in the country, and is the immediate past chair of the Council of Foundations.

Mary E. McClymont, president and CEO of the Public Welfare Foundation in Washington, D.C., was honored at the annual Justice First! Luncheon of the Alliance for Justice, on May 18 at the National Press Club.

She is, notes the Alliance, "one of the strongest advocates for the legal rights of everyday Americans and a true inspiration to anyone who cares about our future as a just and fair nation". The Alliance is a national association of more than 100 organizations "committed to progressive values and the creation of an equitable, just, and free society". The association works "to ensure that the federal judiciary advances core constitutional values, preserves human rights and unfettered access to the courts, and adheres to the even-handed administration of justice for all Americans".

In announcing its recognition of McClymont, the association noted that she is a "true social justice pioneer and has fought for the

rights of the marginalized for over 30 years".

An example of her work with the Public Welfare Foundation is highlighted in an article she wrote on ensuring access in civil courts for everyone that appears on page 7 in this issue of the newsletter.

Such work continues the efforts she pursued as vice president of Ford's Peace and Social Justice program during two periods there, from 1988 to 2000 and again from 2006 to 2008.

Clinton Stevenson, who worked at Ford for more than 30 years and was its director of investment administration, has been named investment director of the Investment Management Engagement Programs (IMEP) of the California Public Employees' Retirement System.

IMEP provides coordination of all the system's asset classes, including emerging and transition managers, responsible contracting, California investment initiatives and diversity and inclusion efforts as well as external manager monitoring and evaluation processes.

The state's retirement system is the largest defined-benefit public pension in the country, investing for more than 1.4 million members and managing a portfolio with a total fund market value of approximately \$312 billion. ■