

Atlanta Results

Your Monthly Resource for Philanthropic News

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First Things First



September 12, 2019
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from the desk of
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A Modern Day Fundraising Dilemma

Reviewing the ethical statements now required to be accepted when renewing my Certified Fund Raising Executive (CFRE) status last month, I was particularly struck by the following points in the International Statement of the Ethical Principles of Fundraising:

- *Fundraisers will always respect the free choice of all individuals to give donations or not.*
- *Fundraisers will not accept donations where the acceptance of those gifts would not be in the best interests of the organization or create a conflict of interest that would be detrimental to the organization's reputation, mission, and relationship with existing supporters and beneficiaries.*

Until recently, I wouldn't have thought about these statements representing donors' and organizations' rights necessarily being in conflict. However, considering recent high-profile cases of gifts being rejected, or being refused before they've even been offered, following these principles in certain circumstances can create quite a dilemma for the modern fundraiser.

On rare occasion, a donor's conflict of interest, such as their own

personal gain, the burden of administering a particularly complicated gift, or a donor's desire to direct their gift for a use outside the organization's best interest requires invoking a review of gift acceptance policies or the consideration of a formal gift acceptance committee – the channels through which fundraisers are shielded from personally deciding whether an unusual gift should be accepted.

Yet, these days, institutions are increasingly facing external pressure to reject otherwise legitimate donations from individuals and families, not on these grounds, but based on perceived immorality on the proposed donor's part. As an example, numerous museums in the United States and England have recently been forced to respond to public pressure by rejecting current and future gifts from the Sackler family, with protesters asserting the family's personal complicity and contribution to the opioid addiction crisis.

It is usually a straightforward decision not to accept a gift when a proposed donor has been convicted of criminal activity. But in recent cases, a donor's political views, their position on a provocative or hotly-debated topic such as climate change, or their legal ownership of a company with controversial business interests have encouraged bystanders to take a vocal, public position on the validity of the donor's giving and to criticize an organization's appropriateness in receiving it.

The essence of charitable giving in America relies on an individual's freedom to make a voluntary contribution to any organization or worthy cause they wish to support. These transactions of the soul can bring indescribable joy and fulfillment to the donor, while providing the resources necessary for an organization to maximize the delivery of its mission. Our job as fundraisers is not to question a donor's character or motive for choosing to be philanthropic; it is to facilitate their ability to give unless some real conflict exists that would substantially impede or damage the organizations we represent.

The values-based questions in play today supersede the function of a traditional gift acceptance committee. An organization's board of directors, with public input as it sees fit, should be the arbiter of whether a gift from a specific donor would be detrimental to its organization's reputation or mission or would harm its relationship with its constituents to the extent that the gift should be refused. But as boards diversify and represent more divergent points of view, debate about the receipt of controversial gifts is only likely to increase, further complicating fundraisers' ethical role in representing both donors' and institutions' interests.

In the end, I believe that the spirit of philanthropy and goodwill that has fueled America's nonprofit sector and provided immeasurable benefit to society will continue to thrive, reconciling the generosity of well-intentioned individuals and families with the organizations that are meaningful to them. And as far as I am concerned, it is a privilege to assist them both in this worthy endeavor.

Atlanta National Philanthropy Day Honorees

The Association of Fundraising Professionals (AFP) Greater Atlanta Chapter will host its 37th annual **National Philanthropy Day Luncheon** at the Georgia Aquarium on November 7, 2019.

Etta Raye Hirsch will be honored as **Philanthropist of the Year**. Hirsch, raised with humble beginnings from a small town in Tennessee, along with her husband created the Henry and Etta Raye Hirsch Heritage Foundation. Since 2004, Hirsch has donated more than \$2 million in annual gifts to the Jewish Federation of Greater Atlanta. She has also contributed toward projects that build future resources, such as LIFE & LEGACY and the Atlanta Jewish Foundation's Family Philanthropy Initiative. Hirsch has served on several boards, including The Atlanta Women's Foundation*, Jewish Women's Fund of Atlanta, Jewish Home Life Communities, Atlanta Scholars Kollel, Temima High School for Girls, The Epstein School and Congregation Beth Jacob.

Jack Hardin will be honored as **Volunteer Fundraiser of the Year**. Hardin, a founding partner of Rogers and Hardin law firm, has committed his life to raising funds and awareness for the homeless. He has served the greater Atlanta area through his longtime involvement with United Way and currently co-chairs the United Way Regional Commission on Homelessness. Hardin has secured nearly \$50 million for Homefirst Atlanta. He also co-founded the Gateway Center, which works to end homelessness through therapeutic programs and community collaboration. Hardin also serves as vice chair for Georgia Works! and is a board member for Grady Memorial Hospital Corporation.

Jon Webber will be honored as **Philanthropic Leader of Tomorrow**. Webber is a longtime supporter of Covenant House Georgia*. Through Covenant House, Webber has served as an active leader and advocate for youth experiencing homelessness and escaping human trafficking in Georgia. In 2019, Webber chaired the Young Professionals Sleep Out. Under his leadership, this event raised more than \$127,000 for Covenant House Georgia's crisis shelter.

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Bits & Bites

Piedmont Healthcare's community benefit grant program, which aims to improve the health and well-being of the community through direct service grants, is now accepting grants through **Monday, Oct. 1 at 5 p.m.** This year, Piedmont will provide \$500,000 in funding for programs that eliminate barriers to affordable, appropriate care or address the current opioid crisis. Grant recipients will be notified in November, and funding will start in January 2020. *Metro Atlanta CEO, 9-6*

The High Museum of Art* received 24 works of art from **Doris and Shouky Shaheen.** The gift represents the entirety of the Shaheens' Impressionist, Post-Impressionist, and Modernist collection and includes works by Matisse, Monet, Modigliani, Pissarro, and Renoir. In recognition of the gift, the museum will display the paintings in the newly renamed *Doris and Shouky Shaheen Gallery in its Stent Family Wing.* *PND, 8-31*

The **Atlanta BeltLine Partnership** received a \$17.5 million commitment from the **Arthur M. Blank Family Foundation** in support of the ongoing development of Westside Park. The gift is the lead gift in the Atlanta BeltLine Partnership's capital campaign. *PND, 8-31*

Now former **Georgia Tech President G.P. "Bud" Peterson** left his post on Aug. 31 after 10 1/2 years. On Sept. 1 he turned the reins over to **Angel Cabrera.** Cabrera stepped down as president of George Mason University in July to come to Tech, where he earned both his master's and doctorate degrees. Peterson will begin teaching mechanical engineering at Georgia Tech in the

winter session. *Atlanta Business Chronicle*, 8-23

Aurora Theatre* named long-time veteran **Katie Pelkey** to the role of General Manager, where she will oversee daily operations, budget and revenue of the \$2.9 million non-profit operation. **David Koté** will also become the theater's new Director of Education/Artistic Associate. Koté is an award-winning director, actor and educator who brings extensive experience to the creative team of the fastest-growing professional theater in Georgia. *Metro Atlanta CEO*, 8-19

The **Woodruff Arts Center** raised a total of \$49 million during its fiscal year that ended in May. In addition to meeting its \$13 million goal for its corporate campaign, the Arts Center also raised almost \$14 million in special gifts and bequests during its annual fundraising drive. Also, the individual divisions raised a total of \$22 million in their specific fundraising efforts. *ABC*, 8-15

Several nonprofit leaders from Atlanta were featured in *The Chronicle of Philanthropy* in a July 9th article titled *Leaders of Color Speak Out*. The article interviewed about two dozen leaders from around the country, and four of them from Atlanta, raising various issues and challenges of being a leader of color in the philanthropic sector. Atlantans featured include: **Qaadira Abdur-Rahim**, CEO of the Future Foundation; **Janine Lee**, president and CEO of the Southeastern Council of Foundations; **Nathaniel Smith**, founder and chief equity officer/CEO of the Partnership for Southern Equity; and **Tene Traylor**, Atlanta fund advisor for the Kendeda Fund, who worked at the United Way of Greater Atlanta before joining Kendeda.

The article can be found [here](#). (Subscription required)

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