



## **The Changing Role of Women in Philanthropy**

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The KCI  
Leaders in Philanthropy® Series

April 12, 2007

When I was asked to prepare some comments on the changing world of women in philanthropy, I thought of my Grade 9 social studies assignment – “The French Revolution was neither” – DISCUSS! I think what I’ve found in thinking about this speech is that a lot has changed and a lot hasn’t. In preparation for this speech, I went back as far as I could in history to examine the origin of women’s role in philanthropy. Not surprisingly, I discovered that, sure enough, it was a woman who first invented philanthropy!

Yes, surely you must remember the very first act of charity .....when Eve selflessly donated a good portion of her apple to someone who was clearly in need of some assistance – a man!

And what was her reward?

Was there a thank-you ad in the newspaper?

Was she the guest of honour at a Gala Ball?

Was the Garden of Eden renamed Eve’s place?

NOT A CHANCE!!!!!!

Her reward was that she immediately was forced to go shopping for clothes, she unceremoniously had to cut her vacation short and, on top of it, she ended up with labour pains and menopause!

No wonder women have been slow reclaiming their place as leaders in philanthropy!

We all know that, over time, women’s roles in philanthropy have evolved – from helping soldiers, widows and orphans and from hosting society balls and fundraising events to taking a more active role in the issues and organizations of our communities. Slowly, we are gaining in our accumulation of wealth and in our positions in society and business and we are also taking a more active role in the organizations and causes we support.

So I guess you could say it's true, the world of women's philanthropy is changing. The real issue, however, is that it's not changing fast enough.

This is where I'd like to focus my thoughts today – on the things women can do to pick up the pace of change:

Firstly, we need to sound a wake-up call. We need to call attention to the things that are holding us back from being as effective as we can be, particularly as this relates to professionals in the world of philanthropy.

Secondly, we need to unleash our pocketbooks and our passions at the same time, in order to make the greatest impact, and

Thirdly, we need to blaze new trails by re-inventing our roles and our approaches to philanthropy and flexing our entrepreneurial muscles for the things that matter to us.

### *Sounding a wake-up call*

When I think of a wake-up call, it's never a pleasant thought. It may shock you to know that I hate early mornings and will do anything to avoid them. My husband has to coax and cajole me out of bed and even then – I move as slowly as possible

If you'll excuse the metaphor - I think we all tend to want to avoid the wake up call. What I mean by that is that we don't have a clear idea of what the reality of women's roles in philanthropy are today.

I, myself, have been lulled into a false sense of feminist security in that everywhere I look in the non-profit world I see women – as volunteers, as executive directors, as board members. And it's true. They are everywhere. According to an article in Future Leaders in Philanthropy women fill 68% of nonprofit staff positions and 60% of all executives are female. Sounds impressive.

It's not until I uncover the facts that I get my little jolt. The article goes on to say that women are over-represented in nonprofits with budgets of less than \$500,000 and under represented in nonprofits with annual budgets of \$5 million or more. In the largest non-profits – those with budgets of more than \$50 million, men account for nearly 85% of CEO positions.

Not only are women underrepresented at the highest levels, they also tend to make less money than their male counterparts. According to Heather Joslyn, in her article *Charity's Glass Ceiling*, "survey after survey shows that female executives and fundraisers make less than males in similar jobs at comparable organizations, and that women, while heading the majority of all charities, are far less likely to lead the largest ones." She goes on to say that in a comprehensive survey conducted by Guidestar, examining 65,000 charities, leaders of groups with annual budgets between \$25 million and \$50 million, men's median salary was 24% higher than women's. In groups with budgets of more than \$50 million, their salaries were 46% higher.

It was timely to learn this because, as Chair of the United Way Board, I just had to review the compensation of the female President & CEO. Considering the new expectations we have of leadership, innovation and entrepreneurship, I feel it's low – and I had to ask myself – why? If this were a man, would it be higher? Would a man be more insistent on lobbying for more money? Probably – because women always undervalue themselves and we let them! I do it too because the job always seems more important than the compensation.

It's time for a wake up call. For the women who are in positions of influence, either from the donor side or the board side, we need to address this disparity and properly appoint and compensate capable, competent women in the sector (even if they don't demand it!) Now that we are beginning to come into our own in the business world, and are invited into positions of influence in philanthropy, it behooves us to be a powerful voice for our female friends in the nonprofit sector so that we can address these disparities and bring balance back.

The next wake up call is in the manner in which we approach women to invest in philanthropic organizations. As I mentally reviewed the last few years of fundraising history with the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, I was appalled at how often we tended to cultivate male donors and how rarely we focused on female donors. Yet, according to the St. Louis Jewish Federation, women's ability to give money and influence family philanthropic decisions is enormous. They have specifically identified four groups of women to court as donors: widows and women over 55; the wife of the

traditional “Mr. and Mrs.” Donors, women who have or who inherit wealth and high-level professional women.

For all our rhetoric about women in power, and women being key decision makers – I am surprised by how easily we can revert to traditional views about men being the key decision makers and source of wealth. I do it myself ALL the time. I know the men with money, so if I’m going to ask them for a gift, I go to lunch with them. It’s so pathetically short sighted and lazy that I’m sorry to admit that even as late as last week I did it again – called up a major donor and didn’t include his wife.

You’ll be glad to know that as a result of doing this speech, I subsequently did invite the spouse and hope she’ll attend. It’s just smart policy. You know people are not immortal and that some day the wealth this elderly man has will end up in her or the family’s hands (so remember the kids too!) and it’s never too soon to cultivate the relationships. Plus – maybe she’ll be able to influence him positively to support your cause!

I think of my mom – who is still often forgotten by charities and gets quite annoyed when people don’t even think to approach her, i.e. the Laurier Club, she always went as my dad’s guest and liked to go. She was never asked to join when he died and had to go to great lengths to offer her membership money – not very smart on the part of the Liberals and we read every day about their financial woes and this is a good example of why!

I love the story of Mrs. Killam. My husband received a generous Killam scholarship to do his Ph.D at Dalhousie University. When we got to Halifax everywhere we went, it was the Killam Library, the Killam Hospital, the Killam Park – you name it Killam had given money. It was only later we found out the real story. As many of you know, Walter Killam was an absolutely outrageous miser despite being a fabulously wealthy man. He loathed philanthropy and vowed he’d never give a cent to anyone. Well – the second he died, the long suffering Mrs. Killam began to give away his fortune to every charity she could find and to get the last laugh on her husband, she did it all in his name so that now, much to his chagrin he is known as one of the greatest Canadian philanthropists of the century!

If we don't give ourselves a wake up call and court women, we miss the opportunity to inject billions of dollars into things women traditionally value, like our arts and cultural groups. With regard to arts and culture, women have known forever that they matter, but often culture is on the bottom of government and corporate budgets. We always hear about finance ministers putting new money into health and education and rarely is arts and culture even mentioned. Yet, studies and pundits like Jane Jacobs and Richard Florida, are now proving that communities with a flourishing arts and culture scene attract business, and knowledgeable and creative workers and are strengthened immeasurably, so NOT only is arts and culture support the right thing to do, it turns out it's the SMART thing to do – and women know it! At a recent Asper Foundation meeting a vigorous debate ensued over an arts gift. If my dad had been alive, we'd have been hard pressed to approve it and my two brothers lined up against the gift. My mom was ready to back down but I argued that we had every right and responsibility to support the arts if they matter to us – our instincts and values matter!

The next wake up call is our failure to engage young women in the world of philanthropy. I still see lots of guys around the fundraising tables – especially in United Way and too few young women. My first five years of marriage were spent in Halifax. I was quite content practicing corporate and commercial law while my husband pursued his Ph.D. at Dalhousie. The total investment in my community could be summarized by a couple of activities – one - volunteering for the Liberal Party and two, visiting an elderly lady in a nursing home – whom I only befriended because I was representing her family in getting a power of attorney signed. Five years later, it was an easy and quick decision to return to Winnipeg, mainly because I had not invested emotionally or financially in the community in Halifax.

When I returned to Winnipeg at the age of 29, I was invited to participate in one of the Manitoba Theatre Centre's Lawyer's Plays. I was inspired by the fabulous people in the legal community who volunteered their time for the show. I developed respect for MTC when I witnessed how hard they worked to develop theatre in Manitoba. Soon they asked me to join the board, which shocked me because I thought I was far too young and that Boards were for older, more accomplished people. This ultimately led to a two-year term as president and a major role in raising \$5.6 million for the theatre's first capital campaign and now co-Chairing the \$10 million Endowment Campaign. All

because I had been asked. I give the Manitoba Theatre Centre credit for recognizing that although I wasn't Izzy Asper, I ended up being in charge of our CanWest corporate philanthropy and we have sponsored MTC for over a decade and I have personally made major gifts not only annually, but to the Capital Campaign and now to the \$10 million Endowment Campaign. We need to be cultivating the next generation of Gail Aspers!

We are sitting on a virtual gold mine of ideas and capacity from young Canadian women. Hannah Taylor, for example, at the age of 12 has already raised over a million dollars for homeless people through her Ladybug Foundation and is being recognized around the world for her tenacity and extra-large heart. I know why a lot of women don't get involved and it's mostly related to family responsibility, but the trouble is, if you wait till your kids are grown, it's almost too late. There's just no interest in getting involved, so we need to court people as I was and my kids turned out just fine!

I do have some good news. Women have the ability to help change the world. As I said before, women have a huge capacity to give money. Studies indicate that, in the U.S. alone, women own 43% of stock portfolios with values over \$50,000 and 45% of investments in other markets. They own one-third of America's private business and control between 50% and 60% of the wealth in the U.S.

I guess the trick is to get them to part with it. A few years ago I was at a friend's home and had an outrageous debate with her about investing in the community. She had two kids in private school, recently put a new, expensive addition on her home and never had trouble adding to her wardrobe or going on lavish trips around the world. Yet she spent much of the afternoon justifying why a gift of \$36 to the CJA was more than appropriate. And I know she spent double that taking her kids and their friends to McDonalds for lunch that afternoon!

Gloria Steinam has been quoted as saying "Your checkbook is a reflection of your values. Just give us what you paid for your last pair of shoes."

I really felt like throwing my shoes at my friend that day.

However, I am the eternal optimist and my undying hope is that this type of attitude is the minority. I encourage women to begin to consider at least 1% of their income as donations. If we all did that, I think we could make a substantial impact.

It is estimated that women have the power to influence well over \$50 billion dollars per year in foundation and corporate gifts in the U.S. alone. According to Shaw-Hardy and Taylor in “Reinventing Fundraising”, “Whether they inherit, earn, or marry money, women are becoming a powerful financial force, and they are increasingly looking at money as a way to change society for the better.”

So, women are finally in the position to come to the table with money, but more importantly, they bring their passion with them. Sondra Shaw-Hardy from her study of women in philanthropy concluded that women like to create new programs, change society, connect with each other, collaborate, make deep, commitments and celebrate their accomplishments. Actually – sounds just like men! My concern is that women don't flex their influencing muscles enough and even though they're often heads of corporate and family foundations, they end up being order takers and implementers without voicing their concerns or preferences. Women need to recognize that our experience and knowledge merit consideration when setting budgets and policies.

Accordingly, I believe we need to speak with a louder and much stronger voice. We need to drown out the voices chanting – “fix the potholes” and increase the volume on the call for support for things on which women place a priority. For public artworks, beautiful gardens and architecture, for performing arts programs in the schools, for social services, women's health issues and educational opportunities for women. When we speak with one voice, our voice is strong.

By the way, I thought it was a stroke of brilliance when the National Arts Centre approached seven women – me included – to donate \$50,000 each to fund the world premiere of a stage adaptation of Margaret Atwood's acclaimed *The Penelopiad*. It was a win – win in that women benefited in all ways. It was a play by a woman about women. It will be funded by women and it will provide jobs for women in the performing arts

I don't deny that more and more, women are often the first to respond to the needs of women's organizations or projects serving women. I certainly feel an obligation to do that. But we're not doing enough of it. It's our job to mentor, support and encourage other women and to create a healthier environment for them to be successful.

And that leads me to my final point, blazing new trails.

There is a new brand of philanthropy emerging - social entrepreneurship. People like Jeff Skoll, Bill Gates, Bill Clinton, Al Gore are bringing a new brand of thinking to solving the world's problems.

Skoll said, "wherever you find humanity at its worst in the world, you'll find a social entrepreneur working for change." These individuals are thinking in new ways and with new-financial models to bring change to the poor and bring them back into the global economy. Social entrepreneurship can be applied many ways to many different models for philanthropy.

There's no better example of social entrepreneurship in Canada than the Canadian Museum for Human Rights, which has a national and international education objective as well as an economic development component. My father was an entrepreneur starting CanWest Global and when he saw there was no means by which to teach our kids our social history, to engage them in solutions to address intolerance in our country and in the world and to create an iconic, architectural symbol of Canada's unwavering commitment to human rights – he didn't complain about it – he set out to build it with great enthusiasm, I might add!

I must admit, although, I've always taken a strong interest in human rights, I'd never have initiated something like this in a million years. I'd have just continued taking kids on our Foundation's Human Rights Education Program, which culminates in a 3-day trip to Washington. I think there is a difference between male and female philanthropy. We see more men doing what my dad did – initiating brand new projects – whereas women haven't been as noticeable in this kind of activity. My inclination is to support existing institutions and strengthen them instead of diverting money to new sexier ventures. In fact, there is often a backlash against new things – you hear: "What do we need this for?"

We don't have enough resources for existing initiatives.” And I've said this myself disdainfully. Well it's sort of like having the third kid – some how you find the time and money and can't imagine life without them 10 years later.

And I've learned new things can energize people and strengthen older organizations. And what would the world be like without entrepreneurs? Think of all those things we thought we'd never need, that they started or invested – like the photocopier – and imagine trying to do without them. But for the entrepreneur's vision thousands of things wouldn't exist. Men get this in philanthropy, women need to start as well. As I said, I'd NEVER had dreamed of doing a Canadian Museum for Human Rights. It's way out of my comfort zone. As a lawyer – we don't initiate, we take orders and implement. So this was a new and wonderfully challenging experience for me and it's been an amazing and invaluable educational journey. I have taken up the torch to complete that vision because it is undoubtedly the right thing to do even if it's not my forte. It's like exercise – it's good for me, but you're happy when it's over (though who knows, maybe I'll become a deal junkie like my dad was!) To get this job done I will rely, in part on the women across Canada to understand the difference this can make to our children as it helps all of us to deal with real human rights issues like bullying, racism, sexism and discrimination. Women do feel a strong passion for the topic because they know all too well how quickly the rights we enjoy can disappear if we are not vigilant.

Interestingly, as I fundraise for the Museum, and as I meet with male philanthropists, I find myself talking about the tourism opportunities, the economic impact, the “brag” factor as well as the student education program. They often say they will get back to me – and they often do – and after much deliberation, they make a generous donation.

In contrast, three weeks ago, we showed the video about the Museum (which is on the website, by the way) to the Board of the Manitoba Nurses' Union. As they watched it, the sound of tears and sniffles in the room were audible. When the lights went up – they wrote a check immediately for \$100,000 – an unprecedented donation. The next day – they came and picked up 25 more DVD's and hundreds of star pins to pass the word around across the country.

In a second, they got it and their passion sustains it. That's the power of women. When we get it, we are impassioned by it, we do something about it and we stick with it.

I asked my friend Susan Lewis, President of United Way of Winnipeg about the capacity for women to be social entrepreneurs. She thought about it for a few moments and said that women traditionally were not in the same position to take risks financially and in other ways. They were the mothers, the nurturers watching with pride, and caution, as their children accomplished milestones. Now, she says, with the wealth and the positions they are achieving, it's a new era. They can bring a new kind of entrepreneurship – one that includes collaboration, focus, and passion. “Let's face it, “she said. “we still haven't been able to solve poverty and other major issues. We need a new formula.” Now – with more and more women becoming entrepreneurs, there's no reason why we can't also initiate brand new philanthropic endeavours. Susan and I are, in fact, working on a new initiative to resolve Winnipeg's complex poverty issues and it's really exciting to be in on the ground floor of the creation of a new entity that has the potential to change the lives of thousands.

Perhaps now, it's time for women to work with men or lead the men – and find a new way to get it done. It's time we trusted in our beliefs, our values, our instincts, our training, skills and resources and go forth to initiate new philanthropic endeavours.

We've come a long way since Eve and the apple. And we've got a long way to go. However, these are exciting times because I believe we can change the world – and when we do – we'll put a plaque on it. In honour of Eve.

Thanks very much, everyone.