

THE FIRST MONDAY REPORT

Thoughts on Fund Raising for Campus Ministry

Office of Lutheran Campus Ministry Advancement
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“The Gender Behind the Gift”

“The rate at which women are acquiring wealth today is as significant a change in society as when women received the right to vote.” Jessica Bibliowocz, manager of John A. Levin, a New York Investment house

The obituary headline in the *Minneapolis Star Tribune* read, “Philanthropist Arleen Carlson dies at 93.” It presented the community with the life of a woman who loved to give to charitable organizations and, beyond that, loved the people whose lives were affected by the generous donations she and her family provided over the span of several decades.

She was born in South Dakota and moved with her father as a young girl to the Twin Cities in 1917. H\The time was ripe for entrepreneurs and her father and brother built a retail clothing business, bearing the name Klad-ezee. Later, at the University of Minnesota, she met her husband, Curt. He, too, was an entrepreneur who sold soap for a time for Proctor and Gamble. But he soon struck out on his own to form the Gold Bond Stamp Company. Arleen was supportive of her husband’s ambitions in many ways, including an annual reading at the company’s Christmas party and entertaining a host of business guests. She developed interests in the Twin Cities Opera Guild, the Boys and Girls Clubs, and the Twin Cities Women’s Association.

As the family business grew to encompass a huge travel and entertainment empire (The Carlson Companies), she found ways to begin her own philanthropic style. After her husband died, she announced the gift that she and Curt had planned for years—a gift of \$10 million to the University of Minnesota’s Carlson School of Management. The family’s philanthropic gifts to the U of M total over \$46 million. On her own she gave a \$1 million gift to the United Way. She taught Sunday School at Hennepin Avenue Methodist Church for years and gave the gift because she felt that the United Way “follows God’s teachings” to feed the poor, tend to the sick, and to help the less fortunate.

Despite the family’s wealth, Arleen kept early furniture from the couple’s first apartment when she decorated their 15 room French mansion. She said, “We tried to but things that last and build on that. It didn’t all come at once; if you get it all at once, it’s not as much fun.” She was often referred to as “the glue that held everything together.”

I offer all of this commentary on the life of one woman philanthropist as a way of opening a discussion about the special, particular role of women as givers. There is considerable conversation these days about the way in which women give and the reasons they have for their generosity. For a long time we have

worked under the tacit assumption that a gift is a gift, regardless of the gender of the giver. We usually saw motivation to give through the masculine eyes, either assuming that women had no money to give or that if they did they gave it for the same reasons that men did.

Several years ago a number of women began to re-focus attention toward a movement called “Women in Philanthropy.”¹ (Bibliography at end of article) One of the movers behind the movement is Martha Taylor, who is known to many of us in campus ministry circles. Her day job is with the University of Wisconsin Foundation in Madison. She and others identify key ways in which women donors differed from men. They indicate that women are more keyed into stories about giving than reasons. Giving is more of a decision of the heart than of the head. Women are interested in the Six C’s of giving: create, change, connect, commit, collaborate, and celebrate.²

Here is some important statistical information to consider:³

- 51% of the U.S. population is female and 57.5% of the working population is female⁴
- 80% of all women will be solely responsible for their finances at some point in their lives.
- Women control more than half (51.3%) of the privately held wealth in the U.S.
- Women purchase 81% of all products and services in the country. Consumer spending by women is \$3.7 trillion per year. They purchase 51% of automobiles, 80% of healthcare products and 51% of electronics.
- There are 62 million women-owned businesses in the U.S.⁵
- Women now own 50% of the investment wealth. At some point in their lives 9 of 10 women will manage their own finances.
- In education the number of degrees awarded to women is rising.
- In the transfer of wealth over the next few decades, (\$41 to \$136 trillion by 2044) Baby Boom women and their aging mothers will determine where most of this wealth goes. Consider that 22% of women never marry, 52% of marriages end in divorce, and 75% of women become widowed (current average of widowhood is 57).
- Women have the power to influence well over \$50 billion per year in foundation and corporate gifts. 71% of corporate giving programs are led by women and 56.3% of community foundations are run by women.

Kay Sprinkel Grace has identified 10 important things to know about the impact of women in philanthropy.⁶

1. Women seek relationships, not recognition. In the older style of “checkbook philanthropy” men accepted recognition in the form of plaques, dinners, etc. and didn’t worry about an ongoing relationship with the organization. Women helped to balance the scale by emphasizing that what they received for their gift was a relationship, not just an award.
2. Women have very personal motives, as well as an ethic of personal commitment, in their giving. They are involved because of direct personal experience, often around a family or community crisis. Interestingly, men are beginning to follow suit.

¹ Currently housed at the Indiana School of Philanthropy, Indianapolis, IN

² Martha Taylor and Sondra Shaw-Hardy, *Contributions*, January-February, 2005, pp. 19-20

³ Information from 2003 ALDE Conference, Susan Rice, Sally Blowitz, Julie Reinke

⁴ U.S. Census Bureau

⁵ Center for Women Business Research

⁶ *Contributions*, November-December, 2000, pp. 4, 10-11

3. Women give from a greater sense of tradition. Young girls see their mothers volunteering and making donations, however small, and they tend to emulate them when they are grown.
4. Women want to see the continuation of philanthropy, and are committed to an intergenerational continuum. Women are interested in cultivating youth as givers. They want to see the “transfer” of responsibility for doing good through giving.
5. Women get involved before giving. They will often give time before committing to a major gift. They need to gain confidence in the organization; they want to build relationships. They want to see if there is a fit with their values. Again, young men are beginning to align their checks with their interests, but women have led the way.
6. Women want to make a difference. Therefore, we need to help women donors see the good that their gift does and provide a way to become involved. Grace says, “We need to honor each gift of any size as a piece of the donor’s heart and belief system.”
7. Women want recognition in their own right. They want to be recognized for who they are as individuals, not as extensions of their husband or family. Recognition at this level is important.
8. Women feel a responsibility to give. Again this is learned at an early age by most women and some men. They have a sharp sense of responsibility for community well-being. With the expansion of community to include global dimensions, so women’s sense of social responsibility increases. Women are able to express and act on their values.
9. There is a need to create a climate for women’s giving. Can we shape our culture to invite relational gifts and make a difference and do so at a young age? Can we find ways to appropriately reward the donor that honors the person as well as the gift? Can we find ways for women and men to influence each other?
10. We need to take a look at women as fund raisers and how we can capitalize on the immense human talent we have in our constituencies. The old barriers of women only asking other women are disappearing. If listening is key to soliciting a gift, it is generally true that women are better listeners. Women tend to know the organization better because of their involvement as volunteers or relational networks. Plus, many women now have the means to make a true peer gift prior to asking another person to give.

In short, Grace summarizes her points as:

- The need for involvement
- The presence of values as the driving motivation
- The need to see results and make a difference
- The need to give back
- The need to find meaning in relationships and results.

In a presentation to the ALDE Northstar Conference in April, 2005, Jennifer Norris Peterson listed the following barriers to women’s giving (although many of them are changing):

1. There aren’t many role models
2. Women don’t feel ownership of their husband’s money.
3. Women give only to the charitable interests of male family members
4. Women lack knowledge about the spectrum of ways to give
5. Women can have a “bake sale” mentality
6. Women don’t know about financial matters
7. Women fear outliving their resources and becoming a “bag lady.”
8. Women give small gifts to many causes.

The key, Peterson says, is to recognize where women are coming from culturally and personally and help them gain the need information and skills to be wise philanthropists. They need to be encouraged to identify their passions and develop a giving plan. They need to be encouraged to find their own voices and seek out role models, while being such models for others.

Campus ministry can provide a significant ministry to young women who are becoming part of the larger world of women donors. They can provide models and mentors. They can talk openly about money and stewardship. They can help young women find their voices and identify life passions. They can build networks and maintain relationships, especially as women move from campus into society.

When you look again at the life of Arleen Carlson, you will notice many of the connections mentioned above. Spend some time with women you can identify as philanthropists or potential donors. Find out about them, what excites them, what is important to them, and how they might hope to express their values through a significant gift to your campus ministry.

Bibliography

www.women-philanthropy.org based in Madison WI seeks to educate and advance women as donors. Click on the “resources” section for articles by Martha Taylor and others.

www.women-philanthropy.umich.edu University of Michigan site contains a host of articles and resources.

www.okstate.edu/hes/programs Oklahoma State site

www.uwfoundation.wisc.edu Wisconsin site

www.women.support.ucla.edu/ University of California LA

www.re.org/ Resourceful Women in the Bay area who want to change the world by teaching progressive women with wealth to use their money powerfully

www.workinggroup.org/ advocates for increased support of lesbian and gay issues within organized philanthropy.

www.womenphil.org Includes research and newsletter

www.sojourner.org the May 2000 issue has several articles

www.wfnet.org Women’s Funding Network contains several reports