of empowering funders to leverage their resources and amplify their impact
I am most proud of being one of the seven founding members and later board chair, great honors and two positions I never dreamed of filling when I started in the field of philanthropy. It also was a thrill to help the organization grow to the point of getting a home of our own and staff to support the volunteers.

— Ervie Smith
former executive director of The Valley Foundation

Celebrating 20 Years!

Two decades ago, a group of trustees and executives from foundations with few or no staff saw an opportunity to unite for the development of our craft. Gathering at a conference under a handwritten sign reading “Are you all alone with millions?” the group met, talked, listened, and took the bold step to form an affinity group for small-staffed foundations, which became the Association of Small Foundations (ASF) and later Exponent Philanthropy.

Exponent Philanthropy is now the largest philanthropic support organization in the country and the only one dedicated to serving funders who give with few or no staff. The organization’s growth and strength is undeniably tied to the individuals who volunteered their passion, leadership, counsel, and countless hours over the past 20 years. Today we celebrate their significant contributions to our organization’s success.

In the pages that follow, you’ll hear from some of these founders and builders. We are immensely grateful for their efforts to secure our start and ensure our future.

— Ervie Smith
former executive director of The Valley Foundation

20th Anniversary Committee

Bruce Conley
Second Chance Foundation

Marty Fluharty
The Americana Foundation

Shirish Dayal
Tarsadia Foundation

Dave Geenen
Doris & Victor Day Foundation

Patrick DeMoon
The Kara Foundation

Judy Peckham
Conrad and Virginia Klee Foundation

Rob DiLeonardi
VNA Foundation

Past and Present Board Chairs

Christopher Petermann
2014 – 2016
William F. Grupe Foundation

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2004 – 2006
L. B. Lane Family Foundation, Inc.

Anne Gunsteeens
2012 – 2014
The J. Willard and Alice S. Marriott Foundation

Charles Fleming
2002 – 2004
The Aunt Kate Foundation

Heather Carroll
2010 – 2012
The Joseph Henry Edmondson Foundation

Ervie Smith
2000 – 2002
The Valley Foundation

Marlene Fluharty
2008 – 2010
The Americana Foundation

Robert DiLeonardi
1998 – 2000
VNA Foundation

Christyne Hamilton
2006 – 2008
Albert Leroy Brown Foundation

Alan Egly
1996 – 1998
Doris & Victor Day Foundation
Twenty years ago I thought philanthropy was nothing more than writing a check and waiting for that warm and fuzzy thank you letter. To be honest, it was that for me, and may still be for some organizations. But things changed for me 20 years ago.

As I turned into the parking lot [for one of the association’s first meetings in Mundelein, IL], the first thing I saw was [fellow founding member] Alan Egly, waiting for me as promised, bouncing on his feet a little and radiating a sense of excitement and anticipation that I could feel before I even opened my car door. He greeted me warmly, and happily helped me carry everything in to what was to be our primary meeting space. He’d found and secured this meeting spot and was eager to show it to me. As I walked the dim, well-worn hallways and took in the scuffed walls and uber-spartan furnishings, my heart sank. We’d rented the place for a song, something like $300, including the mess hall dinner, but its initial impression on me was not a good one.

At some point during the meeting, we took a break, and Alan and I were alone in an elevator heading down to another floor. We were both very tired, and, as the doors closed we were silent, both staring at the floor numbers as they blinked by. Then, whether from exhaustion or excitement or fear or some combination, he suddenly burst out laughing. He turned to me and said, “Are we all crazy?” I said, “Probably,” then joined him in laughing. We were crazy, but we were also right, and the proof is the fact that Exponent Philanthropy is not only still existing, but thriving.

My greatest philanthropy lesson? We are not “alone with millions.” There are now thousands in the Exponent Philanthropy community willing to help one another and advance the field of philanthropy to make this world a better place. I am very proud of the men and women I’ve been able to meet and work with who set the highest standards and have been so willing to be guides, teachers, colleagues, and listeners.

— Marty Fluharty
The Americana Foundation

There is more to philanthropy than just check writing.

Exponent Philanthropy is not only existing but thriving.
Changes, changes, changes. “The only thing constant is change.” So we must grow and adapt, or become irrelevant. The opposite is stagnation and has no future.

As with most foundations, ours has undergone changes over the past nearly 24 years of our existence—some subtle, some not so subtle. There are three areas into which most of these changes fall: focus, geography, and governance.

So how has the field of philanthropy in general changed over the past two decades? Certainly there is more openness and more collaboration. As people began to realize that there are big issues involved, and that we can best address them by joining forces, there has been a coming together of funders large and small who all have a role to play in helping make this a better place.

What has stayed the same? The presence of caring people who sincerely want to make the world a better place, the search for better ways of doing things, and the excitement of being a part of finding solutions.

William S. White
Charles Stewart Mott Foundation

William S. (Bill) White is chairman and chief executive officer of the Mott Foundation, his professional home since 1969. Throughout his career, Bill has played a leadership role in developing and strengthening community foundations and philanthropy support organizations across the United States and around the globe. In 2014, the Council on Foundations honored him for extraordinary leadership and dedication to advancing community philanthropy. A dozen years earlier, the same organization recognized him with its Distinguished Grantmaker Award, which recognizes lifetime achievement in philanthropy.

Bill was instrumental to our association’s start-up and professionalization. At his urging, the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation was the first large foundation to provide funding to the then Association of Small Foundations, allowing the organization to hire its first professional staff. Bill was an early believer in our founders’ vision, recognizing the important role of our member community. The Mott Foundation’s support has been constant throughout our 20 years, and we are indebted to Bill for his initial leap of faith.
My young colleague did not tell me anything I had not already thought of. But hearing it from her helped me focus, and consider doing it in a rather unique way. In the end, we wound up giving the largest single grant we have ever given—and it was for administration. Today, we are absolutely elated with the results.

The above story is Exponent Philanthropy in its essence, an association that provides great resources, great conferences, and, most important, access to great, helpful people—staff and peers alike.

Happy 20th anniversary, Exponent Philanthropy. Thank you for 20 years of helping me run my foundation more wisely, shrewdly, and efficiently than I ever could have done without you.

Winsome McIntosh & Michael McIntosh (posthumous)

The McIntosh Foundation

Winsome McIntosh has more than four decades of experience in the philanthropic community. She has served on the board of The McIntosh Foundation since 1972, and is a founder of the Community Foundation for Palm Beach and Martin Counties in Florida and the Kappa Delta Private Foundation. She is also founder of Rachel’s Network, a membership organization of leading women philanthropists interested in the issues of environment, women and children’s health, and women’s empowerment. Her late husband Michael lent to The McIntosh Foundation his creative vision, passion for justice, and deep sense of civic responsibility.

Together with Alan Egly, Winsome and Michael were instrumental in creation of the Small-Staffed Foundation affinity group that was our start, and then the Association of Small Foundations, including incorporation and approval for tax exempt status with the IRS. As long range planning commenced, Winsome lent her expertise in operations, membership, and volunteer management, including serving as the association’s first executive director; Michael lent his complementary expertise in finance and law.

Winsome and Michael also provided key early funding and the organization’s first “home.” The McIntosh Foundation has remained our supporters for the past 20 years and has provided invaluable guidance along the way.

Alan Egly (posthumous)

Doris & Victor Day Foundation

The late Alan Egly was ordained to The Church of God in 1959 and served parishes throughout New York State and later Davenport, Iowa. He entered community ministry in 1987 and served as executive director of the Illinois-based Doris & Victor Day Foundation from 1987 until his retirement in 2014.

Alan served as our association’s first board chair and worked in concert with Winsome and Michael McIntosh to establish the small-staffed foundation affinity group that was our start, and then the Association of Small Foundations. Alan was one of the organization’s most vocal advocates and personally responsible for securing the association’s initial funding from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation. He is remembered by his peers as an unabashed, engaging force who guided the organization with his strong ethics, principles, and priorities. True to his character, Alan was author of the now infamous handwritten sign that started it all: “Are you all alone with millions?”

Exponent Philanthropy’s previous National Conference was held in 2014 in Washington, DC, and one story tells it all. I was in the exhibit area and ran across a colleague who I had met through Exponent Philanthropy. She is far younger than I, but I always find her close to brilliant in seeing issues and suggesting solutions.

As we talked, I related a current problem facing our foundation: One of our grantees—which does amazingly good work—was having problems with its administration. My colleague suggested we consider a grant earmarked solely to pay for back office help.

My young colleague did not tell me anything I had not already thought of. But hearing it from her helped me focus, and consider doing it in a rather unique way. In the end, we wound up giving the largest single grant we have ever given—and it was for administration. Today, we are absolutely elated with the results.

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“...connections made, which have had a profound impact on me both professionally and personally.”

— Heather Carroll

The Joseph Henry Edmondson Foundation
As we celebrate our association’s 20th anniversary, we also are looking forward to ensure its future. To honor Exponent Philanthropy’s important work, the legacy of the Association of Small Foundations, and the essential efforts of all our members, we launched a 20th Anniversary Campaign this spring to build on our success and invest in our future.

The 20th Anniversary Campaign seeks to raise $200,000 above the amount our annual campaign raises every year to cover general operations—and we are pleased to report that, with generous contributions from members like you, we are nearing close to our goal. If you have contributed, thank you! If you haven’t yet contributed, please consider doing so by the end of 2016.

The funds will allow for new programs and services that deliver additional value to our community. In particular, the additional resources will enhance our ability to provide technical assistance to members.

Exponent Philanthropy relies heavily on member support beyond dues, and your consistent investment in our association and our member community is greatly appreciated.

I worked for a community foundation in 1996, and we were just beginning to understand different ways donors could structure their gifts. We were exploring donor advised funds and considering how they might impact our work and the field. Since then, the variety of giving structures has evolved and grown in some very meaningful ways. In part, Exponent Philanthropy’s name change in 2014 (from Association of Small Foundations) is a reflection of the changing organizational forms of philanthropy and a desire to recognize and embrace the evolving forms and structures for carrying out philanthropic intent.

At a personal level, I have changed in my understanding of my various roles in philanthropy and the value I bring to those roles. Twenty years ago I thought if I could just be the smartest person in the room I would be a valuable asset because I would have all the answers. Now my greatest value, generally, is asking meaningful questions and figuring out how to frame issues. The answers come from those around me and many times from a collection of people.

The foundation I work for today, Hau‘oli Mau Loa Foundation, is celebrating its 25th anniversary this year. Although I wasn’t associated with the foundation 25 years ago, I can tell by reading its corporate records how much it has evolved and grown as well.

In my time with the foundation, we’ve gone from one staff person to five; our board has grown; we’ve added grantmaking initiatives; and we’ve begun mission investing. With each evolution, we have found from Exponent Philanthropy another set of offerings, resources, or member connections that helps us meet these newly identified needs and opportunities. For that responsiveness, we are grateful.

We can only imagine what the next 20 years will bring.

Support our 20th Anniversary Campaign

Invest in Our Future

Looking to the future, my hope for the organization is continued relevance, adaptability, responsiveness, and growth.

— Rob DiLeonardi
VNA Foundation
Thank You to the early supporters of our 20th Anniversary Campaign

List of supporters as of August 8, 2016

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