



## INTERVIEW WITH JOHN MARSHALL – NOVEMBER 1, 2011

*Our State of Generosity*, a project of the Dorothy A. Johnson Center for Philanthropy (JCP) at Grand Valley State University (GVSU), in partnership with the Council of Michigan Foundations (CMF), Michigan Nonprofit Association (MNA), Michigan Community Service Commission (MCSC), and GVSU Libraries' Special Collections & University Archives present:

An interview with John Marshall on November 1, 2011. Conducted by Kathryn Agard, primary author and interviewer for *Our State of Generosity* and Susan Harrison Wolffis, consultant. Recorded via telephone. This interview is part of a series in the project, *Our State of Generosity* (OSoG). OSoG is a partnership of scholars, practitioners, and funders from four institutions – the Johnson Center; CMF; MNA; and MCSC – that collectively form the backbone of the state's philanthropic, voluntary, and nonprofit infrastructure. OSoG's mission is to capture, preserve, analyze, and share the developments, achievements, and experience that, over a period of 40 years, made Michigan a State of Generosity.

**Preferred citation:** Researchers wishing to cite this collection should use the following credit line: Interview with John Marshall, 2011. "*Our State of Generosity*," Johnson Center Philanthropy Archives of the Special Collection & University Archives, Grand Valley State University Libraries.

**Abridged:** The following interview has been edited to assist readability. Extraneous verbal pauses and informal personal conversation not related to the topic of Michigan philanthropy have been deleted. Footnotes to the transcript has been added clarifying any factual errors in the memory of the person interviewed.

Text of the interview questions are as asked. Individuals interviewed have had the opportunity to add or edit their answers in order to provide their most accurate answers to the questions. For these reasons, the edited transcript may not exactly reflect the recorded interview.

**Kathy Agard (KA):** Let's go back to when you were director of the Community Foundation in Rhode Island and had a chance to think about coming to Michigan and in viewing the Michigan infrastructure and who was here. What was your impression, if you can remember, at that time of the strengths and weaknesses of the philanthropic community in Michigan?

**John Marshall (JM):** Well, I don't think I did a very thorough investigation of the state climate before accepting Kresge's offer but once I had done that, [00:08:00] the National Council on Foundations annual meeting came up. I was planning to attend that anyway; it was in Seattle, and so I did, but I hadn't yet moved. Dottie Johnson got wind of the fact that I was coming, and

probably saw that I was on the list of attendees, and therefore invited me to what has become now the standard procedure, that one of the nights is a night for the Michigan delegation to have dinner together. So I was included in that and felt very welcomed, very open, everyone wondering what this person from the East was going to be like. I sat there at dinner talking mostly with Dottie, and by the time [00:09:00] the dinner was done, Dottie said, "Well you know, John, many people in Michigan are going to think that you are quite liberal." Then I started to get to know the climate a little bit.

(KA): Did you have a sense at that time that Michigan [00:10:00] was unique among the regional associations or its philanthropic community, or was it very similar to other states and why or why not?

(JM): I can't say that I, at that time, that I had any real basis for comparison. At that period in time, the community foundations had an annual meeting separate from the Council on Foundations, and it was attended by about 25 people. Amazing things had happened with community foundations all over the country, but they did not reach statewide, there weren't enough of them to have anybody reach out to. In Rhode Island, a small place, there was no Regional Association of [00:11:00] Grantmakers. There weren't enough private foundations and there was only one statewide community foundation and so that never developed. The territory was so small, but everybody knew what was going on, perhaps too much of what was going on, with their neighbors anyway, and still do. Michigan, of course, had so much more territory that there would have been no way to get good practices established and promoted and encouraged the way a good regional association can do and as obviously CMF did and does.

(KA): My understanding was that Stanley Kresge was at one of the [00:12:00] very first founding board meetings of CMF. Did anybody in the foundation ever talk about Stanley Kresge's personal role in the development of CMF?

(JM): I know that he was there. I know that Bill Baldwin was one of the first board members, I believe; Stanley being the chair or actually honorary chair of Kresge, and Bill Baldwin being the chairman. Stanley, by the way, turned that around and said that he was the ornery chair, not the honorary chair. The most beatific, smiling person that I have ever met, so that was a real contradiction, which he enjoyed every time telling people. But I know they both attended and I think Bill was one of the original incorporators, [00:13:00] or he being a lawyer might have been involved with writing it up. I don't know.

(KA): Let me move to your own history, bringing you then into Michigan. Can you tell us the story? Dottie said to make sure to tell you hello and wanted to wish you well. She had told me that you had been really the founding energy behind the Community Foundation for Southeastern Michigan. Could you tell us the story of the development of the Community Foundation of Southeastern Michigan?



(JM): Sure. I will try to boil this down a little bit. They had established one in 1915. That is one year after Cleveland, the first one in America. They had established [00:14:00] enough permanent endowment, I think, in the hands of maybe one bank or two banks that they had a small grantmaking program which was still in existence by the time I arrived in Michigan in 1979, but it was only about a corpus of about a million dollars. They, as I understand it, the directors got together once a year in December and made small grants to a number of nonprofits in the Detroit area. There was no outreach, there was no attempt to build it, and, in fact, it had reverted to a private foundation status and controlled by a bank trustee, which one I don't remember.

So [00:15:00] Homer Wadsworth was, at that time in 1979, was the Executive Director of the Cleveland Foundation, the first and among the larger of the Community Foundations then. He came to a meeting in Detroit, and I sat next to him. I had known him from those Community Foundation meetings, and he said, "I never understood why you don't have a community foundation here in Detroit." He pledged himself to come help if anybody ever got interested in this, so what I did was to write a letter. Actually, I was sitting next to the then director of the [00:16:00] separate but linked research arm for the United Way, something Community Service; I can't remember the name of it. Anyway, I told the story about what Homer told me and he said, "Well, if you wanted to do something about it, you should write a letter to Joe and Gil Hudson," which I did and Joe agreed to put a little committee together and we started talking about it.

That committee grew, and we got to the point that Dottie was involved with it. She wrote the first white paper on what a community foundation could be in Detroit. I took that and fussed with it and wrote the second one, [00:17:00] and at that point it became clear that the Hudsons had a longer range interest in this than I knew about because Homer had made the same offer to Joe Hudson and had come to Detroit and gotten nowhere sometime back. I don't know how far back. With the, you know, the fortuity of bumping into Homer Wadsworth again, with the persistence of Homer Wadsworth to proselytize, with the continuing interest on the part of the Hudsons, I suppose Dottie and I were sort of the newcomers on the scene as far as Detroit was concerned, sort of new legs, [00:18:00] in a way.

She being very familiar with other Michigan Community Foundations, and I having just left one, it all kind of came together.

There were a lot of issues and it took about two years, I think, but finally it did. One of the issues was whether it would be part of the United Way, which was then called United Fund, I think, or separate; we pulled hard for it being separate. Some of the trustees of the United Fund pulled the other way. The statement was made that they could do it internally far better than some brand new organization could, etc. We responded, to ourselves, [00:19:00] *well why haven't you done it already?* But as well, we said, "No, it would be confused. If we can build up a plan and some incentives to make it happen, and present it as a fresh new idea for the Detroit Metropolitan area,



and if we can put it in the context that all of our neighbors are far ahead of us in doing this already. We tried one way apparently and it stalled. We can put some new impetus; maybe we can do something with it.”

Ultimately, the Hudson-Webber Foundation put up, I believe, \$100,000 to give it three years of running time so the bills could be paid. United Way, I believe, also put in a grant for a six figure amount; I am not sure exactly what that was, I can't remember now. They offered office space. Mariam Noland was hired from the Minneapolis Foundation and, oh Dick Huguely, that was his name, he was the starting director while they were doing the search for the permanent director. He had no intent of staying longer. He had already retired from the community organization, whose name I cannot remember. [00:21:00] I proposed to Bill Baldwin and Ted Taylor, Ted having been very much involved with this, on the same committee which had grown quite a bit, that we find a way to support this new activity while at the same time taking Kresge out of annual funding for the United Fund. This had been a practice that had happened since New Detroit was established after the 1967 events and was the only organization for which we provided annual funding, a clear exception, and therefore, we were not geared to set out expectations for them [00:22:00] or they to us that they could report on.

We didn't have program staff to follow their activities, and so what I proposed was that we do two things: We put a grant of \$3 million dollars into the new community foundation as permanent endowment and that it be used as the new board of the community foundation saw fit, but with the understanding that that amount of capital had provided annual income to the United Foundation for the following purposes. They would first consider that before awarding the grants elsewhere, and we informed them that we would no longer expect to receive applications for annual support. [00:23:00] Three million, another two million was put up as a challenge grant to be paid when they, starting the new foundation with a campaign, had raised four million and so our total was five million, which I think at that time was one of the larger starting gifts for a community foundation.

(KA): John, did you ever, at that time, think that it was going to be what it is now, over \$100 million dollars and one of the leaders in the country.

(JM): It is over \$600 million dollars. One of the greatest pleasures I had because I kept seeing people in Rhode Island—we came back here for vacations—was every time I would come back from Rhode Island to Detroit, [00:24:00] I would tell people how much money the Rhode Island Foundation had and that it was so much more than they did, with one fifth the population base. That was only topped when Mariam and company achieved the \$600 plus million which was announced at the 25th anniversary, which then surpassed Rhode Island, so now I am doing it the other way.



**Susan Harrison Wolffis (SHW):** [00:25:00] I spent a lot of my career covering Pat Johnson at our foundation in Muskegon. Why was it important for that area to have a community foundation? The Detroit area? Why was that such a focus of yours? What would a community foundation do that some of the private and the family-run foundations couldn't provide? In leadership or in practicality?

(JM): It is a different type of foundation, for one thing. It is very different in its governance. [00:26:00] It is not one person's money that has been socked away into an endowment for 10 years or forever. It is a lot of people's money as they have emerged lately; they are philanthropy agents serving the whole community. Some of the money comes in and goes into a donor advised fund and most of it might get spent with guidance on how to spend it. Family foundations and private foundations have boards of directors that are sometimes diverse but not always really representative of the community. They tend to be, even when trying hard not to, tend to be limited in their perspectives simply because of the way they are organized. Sometimes, it is all one family, sometimes it is a fund that was [00:27:00] spun off from a corporation and the people who are responsible for it are officers of a corporation. The model of community foundations where all the trustees receive no pay, serve for specific terms, under bylaws with great openness in terms of their reporting, and meet a public support test, which means they have to be doing something with their grant budgets and their programming, or why would anybody give them more money? If people don't give them more money each year, they fail the public support test and would have to start paying excised taxes. Any community of any size that did not have a community foundation, doesn't have this form of governance. [00:28:00] The growth in community foundations, I think, bespeaks the effectiveness.

(KA): Being a little bit aware of the fact that we have two hours and it is going to go fast. I want to move a little bit to Campus Compact. Again, I know that you brought that idea to Michigan and shepherded it through until it is one of the strongest Campus Compacts in the country. Can you tell a little bit about how that happened?

(JM): Well, that is very pleasing to me, and it should be even more so to the Kellogg Foundation, [00:29:00] who really got it started. I was aware of Campus Compact, the national, because I had come to know one of the three college presidents who got it started. That was Howard Swarer who was at Brown, where now Campus Compact is headquartered. By then, I had come to Michigan and had gotten involved with CMF and had been aware of the power of—what this project you are on is to explore—how people in such a broad geography can actually convene themselves [00:30:00] and get things to happen.

What we did was I asked Deborah Wallace, who is now Deborah Landesman, when she was program officer at Kresge to take a three-month reduction in her workload and choose a project. We offered that to all of our program officers in that day. This is the one she picked which was: how could we create in Michigan, a state chapter, of what seemed to be, on the national scope, a



good idea; community service based on a campus setting, integrating the campus into community and exploring experiential learning at the same time. We had this idea that this could be done [00:31:00] and I found myself sitting across the aisle of a bus in Kansas City going to the the Art Museum in Kansas City [Nelson-Atkins Museum of Art], again on one of these host evenings of the Council on Foundations meetings. Across from me was Frank Newman. He was then the President of the Education Commission of the States. He was previously the President of the University of Rhode Island, and I was asking him about this idea. He found himself in Detroit about a year later and came by and saw me and said that he [00:32:00] thought that John DiBiaggio would be the right person to convene, which he did.

I am sure because of his relationship with Russ Mawby—they were working together on a lot of other things—that this got assigned to Peter Ellis, is that the right name?

(KA): That is correct.

(JM): Peter not only recommended a grant for this, but he expanded it by about three times. All we were looking for was some basic [00:34:00] support of an office, which Michigan State ended up contributing anyway, and Peter came up with the idea that there should be these small grants that people on every Michigan Campus Compact campus could apply for.

If you were a student and you had an idea, you could apply for one of these small grants; if you were a faculty member, you could apply. They weren't huge money, they were \$5,000 apiece, but that is hard money for students and faculty to get their hands on in tight budget times. That was just enough to stimulate what became, what is it now, about 40 campuses? I think we started with 12. It was sort of a competition, these college presidents coming to these things. I am sure they came in their first instance because they thought that both Kresge and Kellogg [00:35:00] would smile upon them for being interested, for participating, but they ended up kind of competing with each other. If they had applied for a grant and gotten it, and then it didn't work too well, that was embarrassing. If they hadn't anybody on their campus who had an idea yet and didn't apply, that was embarrassing. The combination of that little bit of money, the fact that there was an office somewhere, reasonable leadership on the staff side to make this thing happen, and finally, the fact of the students themselves telling their stories, giving their testimonies when we got together, which is another key component of the MCFYP program, I believe. But the best strategy on a white paper does not compare to an honest, enthusiastic [00:36:00] statement of commitment and success.

(KA): Great. I am struck by the fact that the pattern appears to be kind of the planting of an idea and then gathering people and then the analysis in the white paper and then if the gods smile, moving forward. If you were teaching a course, John, to graduate students in how to move forward a social agenda, is that a path? What path might you take?



(JM): That is one path. [00:37:00] It is a very effective path as we have been giving examples. As long as you have the ingredients and that is that you have some entity that will listen and support and introduce it to others; that is basically the role that CMF has done so many times, and that individual foundations have sometimes done. Frankly, I think it is more effective when it comes from an organization of many parts like CMF, rather than just one single entity. The problem with this—if this is all true—the problem with it is: what do you do in a community or region that lacks anybody that has the wherewithal to get it started? [00:38:00]

(KA): You really need to go back and start the entity first, right?

(JM): No, it can be done. It always has been done. It just takes longer for the people who don't have a Kellogg to turn to or a Hudson-Webber or whoever.

(KA): Why was it important—the so-what question—why Campus Compact? What difference does it make?

(JM): Well I think that, as we discussed a little earlier, that when it got started there was no such thing as mandatory community service. [00:39:00] Colleges have for a long time had entities that would encourage good works.

For instance, let's back up to the current time. There was, on the campus of the University of Michigan, a University Christian Association [Student Christian Association]—or a name of something like that—who operated a camp for a long time out beyond Fenton. It had a lake in the middle [00:40:00] of it and 50, 60 or 80 acres, or something. That eventually got turned over to, I think, the Michigan Children's Hospital, or to the university itself, and has not been operating for a long time. There is a group, now, trying to turn it into one of the Paul Newman camps and they actually have secured a lease from the University, a 25-year-lease with another 25, and have been busy working on a board

Regardless of what happens to that, here is an example that these student organizations have gone back for probably 100 years anyway, and there has always been some effort to do something.

What Campus Compact does is to stimulate [00:42:00] it from within, let students initiate new projects, let faculty get involved and also ride now on the wave of community service, which Michigan Campus Compacts origination preceded, and finally there is the very interesting prospect of experiential learning. I just sat with a group of medical students at Brown Medical School. Since I had so recently served on the board of the Health Foundation of the Americas, which is a support organization for the National Alliance for Hispanic Health, I raised the issue of cultural sensitivity and language sensitivity in the doctor-patient relationship, [00:43:00] which for them is a real issue. Women will not respond to a man's questions the way they would to a



woman's, for instance, in the Hispanic culture; language differences can get all tied up where the physician expounds and the patient doesn't hear, doesn't know, or the patient tries to describe conditions and the physician does not understand what's being described and misdiagnoses. You can imagine the complications, and so one of the things you can do at the Brown Medical School, you can be a concentrator in medical policy and advocacy.

One of those students [00:44:00] was so concentrated, and I think this issue was maybe new to her. It was a short conversation but I think she's now thinking about it and trying to figure out what dent she could make; you know, it is a national issue that really needs attention. The point is if she has a chance—well, she is on a campus which launched a Campus Compact—maybe she can find a way to turn that into a program that puts more than just relying on an interpreter to prepare the physician to do the primary care.

(KA): Could you talk us through the development of MCFYP and maybe weave into it the tax credit? What was the underlying thinking about taking on this big initiative?

(JM): Well, this is Dottie's story, and I think it is her crowning achievement, aside from [00:46:00] all of the blossoming programs at CMF, but I think that this is the one that really sprung from her head and consumed a great deal of her passion and her determination. She would have to respond to why—if I'm right about that—why it is so. But my guess is that Dottie, whose membership included so many community foundations to begin with—along with corporate and private foundations—understood the beast and saw the value. She also could look at her own membership and say, "Well this is a way to grow my membership." This is a big state and she plotted it out on the map and said, [00:47:00] "We could really grow philanthropy, sort of on a retail level, by encouraging community foundations." That applied to the older ones as well because organizations have stages; they have growth stages and then they have slowing down stages. It all depends on their leadership and the economy and a lot of other factors, but just because they are 60 or 80 or 100 years old, it doesn't mean that they don't need a little shot of rejuvenation from time to time.

MCFYP became both a way to grow existing foundations and a way to fill in those blanks on the map, [00:48:00] which she was very proud of showing. Everybody puts up the mitten to show the map of Michigan, on their hands, but of course hers had community foundations written on it. She did that for what? Five years? Is that what it took?

And why did it work? I think it is—as we discussed before—for the community that didn't have one—there was that looking over the back fence and saying, "Well, they have one next door, this county has one and we don't? Why don't we see if we can't do this." There is that pride and comparison with others. Secondly, there was some money available. It wasn't huge money, but it was pretty good [00:49:00] matching money, that they wouldn't want to leave on the table and let somebody else take when they could have taken it.



There was help in how to do it—how do you staff up a foundation, how do you handle the legal work, how do you make financial relationships? Finally it was, you know, all of this could have been put on the table and people could have still said, “Well, we are busy working on the hospital campaign for the next three years” or something like that.

The one thing that I think pulled it all together was the choice of getting youth into grantmaking. No matter how many press releases we put out, no matter how many dinners we held, how many awards ceremonies and so forth, it was always the kids who [00:50:00] stole the publicity. They were the ones that are very hard—especially in a community setting—to ignore. Because people know each other’s kids and their own and they want to be associated with things that will help them grow as individuals and as citizens. That kind of thing created a growth spurt in community foundations in Michigan, that I doubt has been replicated anywhere else and yet could be, should be. It is a movement that is growing anyway, but this [program] made it happen sooner and probably better. People understand that, intellectually, it is a good thing, but doesn’t ensure [00:51:00] action on their part or success even if they act. If they understand it emotionally at the same time, that’s a pretty powerful incentive. That is what creating that theme of youth and philanthropy, I think, did.

(KA): When you think back at it, what are you most proud of that really worked with MCFYP? I will ask you the reverse of that in a second.

(JM): Well, in a way I think my role in MCFYP was simply to get out there and try to show enthusiasm for what was happening. I think I had the bonafides to do that, having come from a community foundation before Kresge, and people realized that I wasn’t getting paid to do it, [00:52:00] that it must have been important to commit the time that we did commit to it.

Finally, I think it was fun to have fun while we were doing it. It wasn’t always fun for Dottie, but it was fun for us. We turned up some every interesting stories out there on the “Hustings.” I think it was on that Fremont trip, where we met with the youth group and the adult trustees. They were around the table, and the adult trustees in the outer ring around them. We got the kids started talking about how they were going to apply the youth grant monies [00:53:00] and what the needs were. I guess that was the first question: what are the needs?

This must have been in 1985. One young girl said that she was really concerned because everybody had an Internet connection. They weren’t texting by then, but they had Internet. The threats to kids in a small community in that time frame were car accidents and early pregnancies. She said, “What makes me worry about this is that when we get to the reproduction chapter in the biology book, the teacher skips it, and says, ‘Talk to your [00:54:00] parents.’” I was dumbfounded. It was interesting to see all the kids nod their heads and see the reaction of the elders sitting around them in the outer ring. That too was an eye-opener. I think the work was valuable. I think it



simply was a new rallying point in each of these communities from which a lot of new things could happen.

(SHW): I am interested in your personal path into the field and the world of philanthropy. What brought you to this? And to perhaps go beyond the lessons learned, what makes Michigan so special?

(JM): Well, I can tell you about personal background in that, after I graduated from college [00:57:00] in the middle part of the Vietnam War and elected to go to OCS [Officer Candidate School] and serve in the Navy for three years. Coming out of that, I worked for a couple of years in a steel company, specialty metals company, I should say, and worked for Brown where I had gone. I was an alumnus for five years before ending up as the associate director of development fundraising position. I found myself blocked there and started searching for something that would combine my new skills, I suppose, with the chance to advance. It just so happened that the Rhode Island Foundation [00:58:00] had only a part-time director who was ready to retire. I did that for five years, which combined my fundraising experience with a new experience for me, grantmaking.

I had always felt that the community foundations were the most honest in a way. That is, if they succeed it is because they are doing two things right, not just one, and that is they are making the kind of grant that people admire them for and that permits them to go ask some of the same people for money to do more grants. They succeed based on their success in a very market-sensitive way; they make their own market, and if they are doing it well, they are doing well [00:59:00].

I actually was approached by Kresge through a mutual friend when Ted Taylor was looking for a vice president, and I was very happy living where I was. I was executive director of a foundation which then had \$23 million dollars and was growing it. I had two young children, and I didn't expect to move anywhere. But the ability to come to Kresge, a national foundation at a time, was an opportunity for me there to grow in my career and knowledge, act on a bigger screen, and work with good people and a [01:00:00] good program.

Finally I looked at the amount of money that Kresge was giving away at that time, which was I think about \$35 million a year, and I looked at the assets of the Rhode Island Foundation, which were \$23 million dollars total, and I said there is a difference of scale here that I really need to think about. Coming to Kresge as the vice president, there was a staff of about 10. When I became president, I think we had 17. When I left, after 27 years, we had 32, [01:01:00] and our assets went from about \$650 million to \$3.4 billion. These are only numbers, but it does express that it was quite a ride.



I felt myself very fortunate to be given the chance to work up through that organization. It captured everything that I had done beforehand and put it to better use, I think, in a bigger context. I found in Michigan the kind of climate in which you could stay stuck in your own corner and do just your type of grant, or you could get out, get involved, and have an effect on programs [01:02:00] that your own limited funding couldn't fund, and that was a great pleasure to me. It is for all grantmakers, when you can find some other grantmaker who'll pay the grant to do your project.

(SHW): Is Michigan unusual in how the different foundations work together?

(JM): Well again, people could respond to that question with opinion, but I don't know how many of us would have great knowledge of any place except of where we are. I know that Michigan was a good place for accepting the offers of people who wanted [01:03:00] to do more outside their own sphere. It was also a good place to encourage people to do that. I must say that I think it was the very welcoming and positive atmosphere created by Russ Mawby and Dottie, individually and together, which helped set the climate that I tried to describe. It was part of their wiring, I think, to get people to do more than they were charged to do, and they did it by inclusion rather than [01:04:00] dictating.

I don't know how to compare that with what happens in New York State or in Ohio or in California. I know people who have positions like theirs, too, or like my own in all of those places, but I don't know for sure how these things work their way out. I don't think anybody does. You see every once in a while people will try to measure giving from one community to another or one state to another. You come out with a list that says this state is cheap and that state is generous and so forth. If you did the same thing five years later it might be very different. I think it's a very hard thing to measure. There is an atmosphere that is more important [01:05:00] than the numbers to try to measure something like this. I think that Russ' *bon ami* and Dottie's focused enthusiasm were what it took, and I think we see the benefits that were derived from that all over the landscape.

(KA): Can you talk a little bit about—the negative way would be say what *didn't* work, but the way that the foundations always put it is—what do you think were the lessons learned across all of these projects and what you see happening in Michigan?

(JM): Well, I guess I go back to MCFYP, which I think was almost a total success in every respect. Again, I don't have the benefit of current knowledge, but I know it was a concern to Dottie and to those of us who were still meeting [01:09:00] as a group at that time. It was very important to put pressure on everybody to succeed with this, to say that we were going to have available to everyone in Michigan a community foundation. Some territories were assembled to meet that goal without necessarily a confidence that they would thrive, and I think there were early problems with putting a lot of territories together in the U.P. (and what else are you going to do in



the U.P.?) There were problems with coordinating them, and so I think instead of having a lot of little ones, we tried ultimately to convert some little ones [01:10:00] into regional ones. Maybe that is a normal outcome of following how the work goes and taking remediation steps along the way as needed, but I just had the feeling that the design had not been able to incorporate some of the surprises that were found. But that is a minor part of that program which, in other respects, fixated beautifully.

The question, of course, is once you incentivize people to take these steps, once they are there and it is up and going, then does it thrive? And I have no idea. I almost think that the longer I am involved with trying to start things in philanthropic, [01:11:00] public charitable activities that the funders are too quick to declare victory and move off to something else when what they have done is to set up some pretty fragile enterprises. That may be the nature of the beast, but since every funder is itself unique and free to do as he/she sees fit within the law—and within the sort of the moral code or the good practices that should bind all of us—they are free to do it. I almost have a feeling that sometimes in organized philanthropy that [01:12:00] we should take a longer view, and I am not speaking about this program, I am talking about everything.

(KA): When you were thinking about talking with us. Was there anything that we haven't asked that you were thinking needed to be in the record, saved for history?

(JM): No. I think we talked about the mainstays. I just think that what should be conveyed is that the optimism which sort of says that anything is possible [01:13:00] should be put alongside the necessity of having champions for whatever the activity is and supportive, but not necessarily intrusive or invasive funders. You can garner a lot of publicity. Any funder can garner a lot of publicity for program success, self-described, by giving big amounts of money and celebrating it with your own internal public relations department. The risk is that you will start to believe your own press [01:14:00] and never really evaluate what is done and become so hungry for the next success that you will move on to another project before the project just started has really taken hold.

I am speaking broadly across the whole field when I say this, not about any of these institutions we have been talking about here. I see that as something that we all should be aware of. I think in the examples we have shown here this has not been a factor, but there are plenty of other examples. If you are setting this out as something that people should learn from, you really need to pull in some examples [01:15:00] of things that were done with the best intentions but didn't work too well. They are out there, obviously—and maybe you can do it in the abstract—but you can't very well haul up some foundation's pet project that didn't work and put it in your book.

(KA): It is a real dilemma the field isn't it? People have difficulty talking about failure or about things that didn't work out as you expected them to work. It's really hard because then everybody is learning from scratch again.



(JM): All of these lists of organizations by themselves are evidence [01:16:00] of taking forward steps and clearly some having worked better than others. Of course, what does work better than others *mean*? It depends on the individual, but it is like asking somebody to choose amongst his children. If this comes out as, you know, Michigan's greatest hits, that is fine, but it doesn't really tell the whole story.

