Embracing the Urban Problem

In helping to launch Neighborhood Progress, Incorporated, The Cleveland Foundation had escalated a battle to save the inner city previously fought for years by a subsidiary, the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation.

The Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation was a unique philanthropic experiment that had operated under The Cleveland Foundation's loose auspices for six years during the sixties. Established in late 1961, amidst growing national uneasiness about the future of American cities, the new Associated Foundation would have a profound influence on the older philanthropy, spurring its interest in an urban agenda and prompting its reemergence as a catalyst for change in the public arena. Indeed, one cannot appreciate how The Cleveland Foundation came to play such a significant role in the remaking of Cleveland in the seventies and eighties without understanding the hidden origins and radical innovations of its mentor, the Associated Foundation of the sixties.

The Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation (GCAF) was the result of a collaboration between the Ford Foundation and a former Distribution Committee member, Harold Clark, one of the community's most prominent business and civic leaders. Believing, with the Ford Foundation, that the resources of The Cleveland Foundation were being underutilized in the late fifties in combating the city's postwar stagnation, Clark had wanted to create a new philanthropy to set an example of research and experimentation for The Cleveland Foundation to emulate.

Shrewdly, Clark and his allies never made plain their reformative in-
tentions for the Foundation's $41 million endowment, in which the Cleveland establishment now took considerable pride of ownership. Instead they cloaked their plans in solicitousness for Cleveland's entire philanthropic community. At a luncheon to announce GCAF's creation on December 18, 1961, given by the Distribution Committee for more than 200 probate lawyers, trust officers of banks and trustees of other local foundations, the committee's chairman, Ellwood H. Fisher, explained that GCAF would dedicate itself to exploring "possible solutions to broad problems that are too extensive and too costly to be attacked by existing organizations, which must concentrate on solving today's urgent problems today."

Although legally a not-for-profit Ohio corporation with its own staff and 11-member board, technically GCAF was a new trust fund of The Cleveland Foundation. "All of its funds will go for studying community needs, proposing solutions to problems and making these findings available to philanthropic, service and government organizations," Fisher noted. "The foundation is also expected to finance pilot and demonstration projects when these may point the way to new community ventures."

Finally, Fisher reported that the new entity had been awarded grants of $1.25 million by the Ford Foundation and $1.25 million by the Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Fund, the largest private foundation in Cleveland, over whose board Harold Clark presided. The income and principal of both grants were to be expended in five years, at which time the grantors would consider renewing their awards.

Then Fisher, who chaired the Fisher Bros. Foods supermarket chain, for which Clark served as corporate counsel, introduced Kent H. Smith. The retired chairman of Cleveland's Lubrizol Corporation and former acting president of Case Institute of Technology, Smith had been appointed to chair the new Associated Foundation, and he now elaborated on its plans.

"We have resolved that we will not develop a large staff," Smith said. "... Instead, we will seek out the excellent researchers in our universities and colleges, in our Welfare Federation and other civic organizations, and encourage their cooperation in combined attacks on the most important community problems. In research, as in foundation activity, the emphasis will be on cooperative projects. We will not supplant, but supplement."

Smith also noted the Foundation's intention of creating an advisory
committee "to help in considering the problems we face and the priority with which they should be attacked." He then introduced James Adolphus (Dolph) Norton, who been hired as GCAF's president. Norton, a former professor of public administration at Florida State University, had come to Cleveland five years before to head a study of the need for metropolitan government, which had been chaired by Smith's predecessor at Case, T. Keith Glennan, and financed in part by the Ford Foundation.

That afternoon's Cleveland Press carried a story of the luncheon headlined: "$2,00,000 Fund to Study and Solve City's Big Problems." A follow-up story published the next day featured an interview with Norton, who further clarified GCAF's role: "It will be the troubles of people, especially those crammed into the city of Cleveland, that the new foundation will try to solve." The story was headlined: "New Foundation Seen Focusing on Hough."

Like everyone connected with the creation of the Associated Foundation, Dolph Norton harbored large ambitions for the new fund. In the end no one's expectations were to be fully met. Yet the demonstration project must be judged a success in that it reestablished a tradition for philanthropic leadership of metropolitan affairs that today inspires not only the work of The Cleveland Foundation (with which the Associated Foundation eventually merged), but that of most other big-city community foundations as well. The way the collaborators' separate hopes and aspirations for a better Cleveland came together as a powerful, revitalizing force is instructive.

He had had no say in the founding of the Associated Foundation, but Cleveland Foundation director J. Kimball Johnson realized that he ought to be doing more.

A longtime civil servant who had held administrative posts in a variety of federal social service agencies, Johnson had sought the Foundation's directorship after Leyton Carter's sudden death in 1933, in order to avoid being transferred to the Chicago regional office of the newly created U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare. Johnson, who had come to Cleveland as a boy in 1914 (the year the Foundation was created), had served his adopted home well during the Depression as the local head of the Civil Works Administration, which put 42,000 Clevelanders back to work. The former regional director of the Federal Security Agency, which had been subsumed into HEW, he also grasped
the changing dimensions of the welfare problems facing Cleveland as it approached the new decade of the sixties.

Hardly a month passed without some agency sending The Cleveland Foundation a proposal to launch yet another social service program in one of the city's East Side neighborhoods, which were crumbling under the accumulated weight of an influx of uneducated, unskilled Southern blacks who had come North seeking factory jobs during and after each of the world wars and now constituted nearly 30 percent of the population in the nation's eighth-largest city. Usually Kim (as his friends called him) would check to make sure that the proposed program had the blessing of the Welfare Federation, theorizing that if an agency's proposed budget had survived the scrutiny of the Federation's lay oversight committees and professional planners, then it was safe to recommend its programs to the Distribution Committee for funding.

Yet something about the Boy Scouts' request for monies to recruit troop leaders in Hough had given Johnson pause. By his reckoning the Foundation had poured some $400,000 into Hough on a project-by-project basis since his arrival, and now the Boy Scout brass were sitting in his office and telling him that in 12 months of street-pounding there they had yet to scare up a single volunteer leader! Something had to be done once and for all to stem the dramatic decline of this once-fashionable neighborhood.

Bounded today by Euclid Avenue on the south and Superior Avenue to the north, East 107th Street to the east and East 55th to the west, Hough had originally been farmland. In the mid-19th century the pastures had sprouted a village called East Cleveland, which was annexed to Cleveland in 1872. Soon thereafter Euclid Avenue east of 55th had begun its transformation into a prestigious address. Prominent Clevelanders had sought refuge from the city's noise and congestion in this outlying district transected by a splendid new residential boulevard called Hough Avenue (which took its name from early settlers Oliver and Eliza Hough).

By the fifties, however, the well-to-do had moved on to the suburbs, and Hough had become home to mainly middle-class ethnics who owned their own places or rented commodious suites in large brick apartment buildings built in the twenties. Ten short years later most of the ethnics had fled from the postwar influx of Southern "in-migrants" (as they were dubbed by the sociologists), which had created a demand housing market
in the central city, where the newly arrived blacks found themselves by
unwritten law confined. The city’s razing of entire slums in preparation
for building freeways or urban renewal had only served to exacerbate the
housing shortage.

By the beginning of the sixties, Hough had reached its peak popu-
lation. More than 71,000 persons, nearly 53,000 of them blacks,
jammed into its confines. (City officials looked the other way as landlords
carved up former single- or two-family dwellings into cramped suites in
order to squeeze out the last possible dollar in rent.) Nearly one-half of
the residents were on relief, many having fallen victims to the recession
of 1958, which saw large numbers of manufacturing workers laid off,
ever to be recalled, as the increasing use of automation and new ma-
terials such as plastics and aluminum reduced the work force needed by
steel and related industries. Between 1953 and 1961 Cuyahoga County
(named for Cleveland’s winding river) had lost 65,000 manufacturing
jobs, and the hardest hit were those with the least seniority: the recently
arrived blacks.

Furthermore, an ugly cycle was developing. The city’s welfare costs
had skyrocketed 500 percent in the decade preceding 1960, as the chi-
dren of the idled workers themselves began to drift onto the relief rolls.
According to a survey taken by the Cleveland public schools one month
before the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation was formed in late
1961, two-thirds of the out-of-school youth between the ages of 16 and
21 living in the central city were unemployed. Nearly three quarters of
these young people, estimated at 5,000 or 6,000 strong, had dropped
out of school. In Hough, however, the percentage of unemployed youth
jumped to 79 percent. Although it was but one of 30 census tracts in
Cleveland in which non-white residents constituted a majority, Hough
was well on its way to becoming a symbol, known around the world,
for the anger of American blacks toward the inequities of opportunity
their country afforded them.

After the Boy Scout representatives had departed, Kim Johnson had
taken it upon himself to write his Welfare Federation associates and
strongly suggest that some new, coordinated approaches to solving
Hough’s multitudinous problems ought to be explored. The Welfare
Federation responded by promptly forming a lay study committee.

A display of such initiative by Johnson was rare, by his own admi-
ission. With his presence required at an endless succession of Welfare
Federation meetings (the director of The Cleveland Foundation was an ex officio member of both the Federation's board and its planning committee), and with only his stalwart assistant, Dorothy Ruth, and a stenographer to organize and process an ever-expanding mound of paperwork, there was, Johnson once told an interviewer, little time to think and act other than mechanically. Then, in his very next breath, Johnson admitted: "It's an excuse." Justifiable or not, such self-professed cursory evaluation was the basis on which the Distribution Committee made its decisions to award 251 grants totalling $1.9 million in 1961.

Of course, with regard to roughly 30 percent of the Foundation's annual income, the Distribution Committee had no real say, the donors having designated in their wills a specific recipient (the "Three-Corner-Round Pack Outfit" camping program for underprivileged boys, for example). It was the routinized processing of the Foundation's broadly restricted and unrestricted dollars that troubled Harold Clark, and out of his concerns the Associated Foundation would be conceived.

Then in his mid-70s, Harold Terry Clark had been a member of the Distribution Committee during the forties and fifties, but his reputation as Cleveland's most influential philanthropist came from another source. When Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., died on October 5, 1957, he left Clark in charge of his trust fund. Hanna, scion of a Great Lakes iron ore- and coal-shipping fortune, had instructed that the fund be liquidated within five years of his death, with $33 million to be given immediately to the Cleveland Museum of Art. That left Clark, who had been Hanna's personal attorney, with more than $40 million to distribute.

Clark's philanthropic instincts had long tended toward bricks-and-mortar projects. As a member of the prestigious Cleveland law firm of Squire, Sanders and Dempsey (which he had joined in 1906 after graduating from Harvard Law School and left in 1938 to start his own practice in order to have more time to devote to community pursuits), Clark had interested a group of civic leaders in helping him organize a natural sciences museum for Cleveland in 1920. He later became president of the Cleveland Museum of Natural History, as well as the Art Museum. With both museums located in University Circle, the home of more than 30 cultural, educational, and medical institutions, it is not surprising that a first-time federation of Circle institutions aimed at turning the area into a veritable Acropolis was the beneficiary of one of the first grants Clark made after Hanna's death. Because of his high visibility in the
Circle's cultural affairs, Clark had been asked by Keith Glennan, president of Case Institute of Technology, which was one of the three largest landholders in the Circle, to advise on the creation of the University Circle Development Foundation (UCDF). The Hanna Fund’s subsequent $2-million gift to UCDF in 1958 had helped to launch a 10-year capital campaign to improve the physical infrastructure of the Circle.

Clark's interest in urban redevelopment was further spurred by a speech given in the early sixties by Adolph W. Schmidt, president of the A. W. Mellon Educational and Charitable Trust in Pittsburgh. Schmidt had described the role of the Allegheny Conference on Community Development in rebuilding an area of downtown Pittsburgh known as the Golden Triangle. "What the Pittsburgh story has demonstrated," Schmidt said in a later address on the same topic, "is that a cooperative and unselfish spirit on the part of its civic leadership, assisted by the strategic application of private and public funds, has been able to work miracles in as gloomy and dismal an outlook for a city as ever existed in the country." The Allegheny Conference's "full mobilization of philanthropy," according to Schmidt, had been one of its outstanding accomplishments. Harold Clark decided that he would try to engineer a similar miracle in Cleveland.

The city's corporate leaders were already mobilized around the issue of downtown urban renewal, which they viewed as Cleveland's most pressing problem. In fact, one of Clark's fellow Hanna Fund trustees, John C. Virden, had played a leading role in organizing a local counterpart of the Allegheny Conference. Virden, president of Eaton Manufacturing Company, a maker of auto parts, had in the early fifties chaired a civic committee that was studying how to encourage the renewal of downtown Cleveland, whose development had stagnated during the Depression. One, maybe two, major new office buildings had been built since 1929, when the Terminal Tower, the tallest skyscraper in the world outside New York City at the time of its construction, had gone up on Public Square. Since then, blight had overtaken entire quadrants of the city's center.

The study resulted in the creation in 1954 of the Cleveland Development Foundation (CDF), a not-for-profit corporation enthusiastically backed by the business community, which raised $2 million for CDF to invest in redevelopment projects. CDF's strategy focused first on building low-income "relocation" housing, so that slum land could be cleared in preparation for urban renewal. Then, in 1960 it unveiled a master
plan for downtown redevelopment called Erieview that had been underwritten in part by The Cleveland Foundation, on whose board Virden sat. Designed by internationally known architects I. M. Pei & Associates, Erieview was a $100 million project to build new government, office and apartment buildings, retail spaces and even a hotel in a blighted area immediately northeast of downtown overlooking the lake.

Clark was so impressed with these accomplishments that the following year he moved to ensure the continued operation of the Cleveland Development Foundation, which had been subsisting on annual handouts from The Cleveland Foundation and the Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Fund. On January 31, 1961, the trustees of the Hanna Fund announced the establishment of the $5 million Community Development Fund as a new trust of The Cleveland Foundation. The income from the fund, to be used to provide permanent operating support for the Development Foundation, was placed under the control of a newly created advisory committee chaired by Eaton's John Virden. Also on the committee were the chairman and chairman-elect, respectively, of the Development Foundation, Thomas F. Patton and Elmer L. Lindseth. (Patton, who was president of Republic Steel Company, the city's largest employer, and Lindseth, president of the Cleveland Illuminating Company, also a major corporate presence, would later be asked to join the board of the Associated Foundation.)

Less than a month later, on February 22, 1961, when the Hanna trustees announced a $1 million gift to The Cleveland Foundation bearing the name of the Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Special Purpose Fund, Clark set in motion another key element of his stratagem to replicate the Allegheny Conference miracle in Cleveland. The raison d'être of the new fund was "to study and evaluate the methods and programs employed by The Cleveland Foundation and by other charitable trusts and foundations...; to study the charitable needs of the area... and the activities of charitable organizations in meeting such needs...; and in general to support and encourage by all means which the Distribution Committee may approve, the development of a sound, efficient, and forward-looking charitable program." Most likely because its purpose had still to be fulfilled, the Hanna Fund gift was not made public at the time.

Even as Harold Clark took the first cautious steps toward recharging The Cleveland Foundation, the Ford Foundation was engaged in its own
deliberations on the subject of strengthening local philanthropy. The discussion, which would ultimately lead to the $1.25 million seed grant to the Associated Foundation, had originated in the Public Affairs Program division, then under the directorship of Paul N. Ylvisaker. A visionary and entrepreneurial former political science professor, Ylvisaker (pronounced ILL-vuh-sah-kur) had, since joining the Ford Foundation, pushed and prodded the division away from a long-standing preference for supporting academic research into attacking urban problems head-on.

The GCAF grant was one of a series of three the Ford Foundation made to smaller foundations in the early sixties in the hopes of demonstrating, as a model for other communities, what a professionally run local philanthropy could accomplish through action-research. The series had originated in Ylvisaker’s desire to move out of safe and sane hospital, university and similar do-nothing grants. We had a large increase in income to the Foundation about that time, too, and the battle was joined over how we were going to allocate it. I guess I was leading the fight to begin getting after the more gutsy urban problems.

It had also struck me about the same time that there was a hell of a lot of philanthropic dough in this country—and it was mostly going down the drain on kinds of projects Ford itself had funded during the Eisenhower years, when everybody worried about McCarthyism.

These two thoughts—how to get Ford more involved with tough problems, and how to get other philanthropies involved, too—seemed to converge. The notion of Ford block grants to local foundations was aimed at both problems and presented a possible way to gain the large-scale leverage necessary for getting this country to wake up to social change.

The first grant in this series, for $1.25 million, went to the Kansas City (Missouri) Association of Trusts and Foundations,\(^1\) founded in 1949, by none other than Homer Wadsworth, the man who would go on to head the revitalized Cleveland Foundation. (Ironically, Ylvisaker, who had come to know “this lone wolf out in Kansas City” as a result of a grant Ford had made to the association’s research subsidiary to conduct a metro-government study, would later credit Wadsworth with having given him the idea for the series. Wadsworth had initially sought support only for his own philanthropic institution, but wisely suggested that Ford make three grants in order to avoid suspicion that it was favoring Kansas City. “Homer is a person who could control everything
subliminally," Ylvisaker later recalled, only half-jokingly. "He would come to our offices and we would wonder what it was he was program-
ing us to do for the next year.")

With an endowment of approximately $12 million in 1961, the Kan-
sas City operation at the time had less than $500,000 to distribute each
year, and Ylvisaker’s grant represented a 50 percent annual increase in
income over a five-year term. "It unbuttoned me," Wadsworth would
say later, allowing that the expenditure of Ford monies on "community
action"-style philanthropy had freed up the association’s resources to be
used on projects dear to him: as a carrot to induce the city’s health care
providers to join in the creation of a state-of-the-art medical/education
complex on a 135-acre urban renewal site known as Hospital Hill and
also to persuade the University of Kansas City, a floundering private
college, to become a part of the Missouri state higher education system.
Wadsworth’s work in Kansas City would foreshadow his accomplish-
ments in institution building in Cleveland.

Even before the Kansas City grant had been announced in March
1961, Ylvisaker had entered into discussions with Harold Clark about
a similar grant for Cleveland. Clark had taken the initiative of traveling
to New York City to ask Ylvisaker: "Wouldn’t it be wonderful if Ford
and Hanna got together?" The Public Affairs Program director had come
away from the meeting with the impression that (in the words of an
internal memo on the subsequent Associated Foundation grant) "... a
number of local philanthropies in Cleveland might be encouraged to
enter into some sort of cooperative effort. ... The city had available
the main ingredients for developing a broader program of research and
action; what it has lacked is the integrating force."

Paul Ylvisaker soon realized that he knew exactly who could provide
that integrating force: Dolph Norton, his former classmate at Harvard’s
Littauer School of Government.

James Adolphus Norton was born in 1922 in Haynesville, Louisiana,
a town of 2,500 located in the parish of Claiborne in the northern part
of the state. (Two years before, the U.S. Census had revealed that, for
the first time in history, as many Americans now lived in towns as lived
on farms.) Norton’s mother, Sue Annie, was a former schoolteacher. His
father, George Norton, a salesman of farm implements, had started a
hardware store in Haynesville after World War I, shortly after oil was
discovered in north Louisiana, and the business had soon expanded into furniture and through that sideline (as is typical in many small towns) into undertaking. "Mr. George," an employee once remarked, "just don't know the meaning of can't"—an observation that would come to fit his son as well.

Norton was reared a Southern Baptist in what had before the oil boom been hill country. The only blacks he knew well as a child worked as domestics in his home or for his father. Black youngsters, if they went to school, attended one of countless all-black schools built throughout the South through the generosity of famed Chicago philanthropist Julius Rosenwald, an early chairman of Sears, Roebuck and Company, who had challenged black communities to better themselves through the then-innovative device of offering matching grants for school construction. Primarily due to his father’s ameliorating example, Dolph Norton emerged from this hothouse environment a liberal on the issue of race.

Although Norton remembered hearing about lynchings and witnessing cross burnings as a boy, he also remembered his father more than once announcing that he, George Norton, would never join anything that required him to hide his face. A community leader in part by virtue of owning one of Haynesville’s most popular hangouts, the general store proprietor often used the early-morning gathering of men around his coffeepot as an opportunity to smooth whatever racial antagonisms might then be in the air.

Norton senior admirably put his money where his mouth was. When the Depression hit and his neighbors could no longer afford to pay for even a plain pine casket, George Norton came up with the idea of starting a cooperative insurance plan called the Claiborne-Webster (after the parishes involved) Christian Burial Association. At its height 75,000 white families were enrolled, offsetting the losses Norton sustained in operating the Haynesville Burial Association, a perennially unprofitable service he ran for the benefit of the parish’s blacks.

In the early thirties George Norton found himself traveling so frequently to Baton Rouge to defend his new business from overregulation by the state legislators, who were being pressured by the big insurance companies to crush just such upstarts as the Claiborne-Webster Christian Burial Association, that he decided to run for the state House of Representatives. His platform, according to his son, consisted of one plank: "Since I’m going to be down there anyway, why not just send me on
down?” Norton senior served one term, during which time he arranged for his son to become a House page—an experience that fueled Dolph Norton’s later interest in government, a subject in which he earned undergraduate and master’s degrees from Louisiana State University and another master’s degree and a Ph.D. from Harvard University.

Despite a passion for politics, Dolph Norton ultimately decided to go into teaching; a child of the Depression, he was concerned about job security. Having completed his first master’s degree, Norton served as a radio operator in the U.S. Army Air Force during World War II. He then became an instructor at the University of Texas. He moved on to take a second master’s from Harvard, and in 1949 he became an assistant professor in the school of public administration at Florida State University. By 1952 Norton had completed his Ph.D. and become chairman of the division of instruction within the school, a position he held until 1956, when Case president Keith Glennan persuaded him to move to Cleveland to head the Metropolitan Service Commission, which Glennan chaired.

Although Norton had frequently consulted with municipalities and states on matters of public administration, Metro, as the not-for-profit commission was dubbed, would be a bittersweet learning experience for him. While it gave him a unique perspective on community affairs that would prove invaluable in his leadership of the Associated Foundation, Metro itself was not a success. The commission had been established in the mid-fifties by Cleveland’s business and professional leaders, who saw metropolitan government as one key to the city’s revitalization. By conducting and disseminating expert studies on a variety of governmental services ranging from mass transportation to public health, Metro was expected to persuade county voters of the wisdom and efficiency of a form of governance that they had rejected at the polls three times before. This political agenda had never been publicly acknowledged, however, as it was perceived that an “independent” commission would have more credibility. A Ford Foundation grant of $125,000 had also been helpful in distancing Metro from the appearance of partisan politics.

Within a year of his arrival Norton had pulled together a staff of researchers, a regiment of outside consultants and a full complement of civic “study groups” and begun work on the first of what would become 29 published reports. However, before Metro’s painstaking education of the electorate could be completed, one of its younger and more active
supporters, Seth C. Taft, an attorney at Jones, Day who harbored ambitions of becoming Cleveland's mayor, began a drive to place a new county charter issue on the ballot. In November 1958 voters elected a 15-member county charter commission, and in the rush to write a charter by the next mayoral election, Metro's findings were never properly examined and debated. The following November metropolitan government was once again defeated at the polls, largely because black voters feared that they would lose the political clout they had slowly gained in Cleveland's city council.

Norton was not without work for long. One of the positive outcomes of Ford's metro studies grants was that Paul Ylvisaker had built a network of able associates around the country, and he was not going to stand by and watch a man as talented as Norton slip away. A Ford Foundation fellowship allowed Norton to spend 1959 sorting out Metro's lessons as a visiting professor at Western Reserve University. In 1960, the year the Census reported that two-thirds of all Americans now lived in metropolitan areas, he accepted a position with Case as a professor of area development in the hopes of building what amounted to an urban studies department.

Norton brought to the task a sophisticated understanding of the multitudinous problems facing Cleveland, a hard-won appreciation for the intricacies of Cleveland politics and a network of business, government and civic contacts in both the white and black communities. To that network he would, during his sojourn at Case, add two invaluable future allies: retired industrialist Kent Smith and Barbara Haas Rawson. Smith was then serving as Case's acting president in the absence of Keith Glennan, who had been called to Washington by President Eisenhower after the Sputnik crisis to became the first director of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration. Rawson, a well-known volunteer active in the League of Women Voters and the PTA in suburban Shaker Heights, became Norton's part-time assistant. Rawson was to accompany Norton to the Associated Foundation, where her title of administrative assistant would only hint at her contributions as Norton's right hand, sounding board and local historian.

A year after he had left Case to begin work at the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation, Norton's thoughts on "The Metro Experience" were published in pamphlet form. Among the conclusions he had reached was this intriguing observation: "... the metropolis has no regularized
democratic procedures for choosing its goals and bringing the community’s resources to bear in achieving them.” Save for the notion of public accountability, he could have been describing the function of the Associated Foundation, which would be established partially as a result of the corporate community’s anxiety over its failure to achieve metropolitan government.

Shortly after Keith Glennan returned to Case to resume the presidency in February 1961, he received a telephone call from Paul Ylvisaker of the Ford Foundation. Ylvisaker related the details of his meeting with their mutual acquaintance Harold Clark, expressed his willingness to consider funding Clark’s concept of a “forward-looking charitable program” if only the right person could be found to lead it, and shared his belief that that leader was Dolph Norton. Would Glennan be willing to release him from his teaching duties? With Case in the midst of a campaign to win an $8 million grant from the Ford Foundation, which had publicly announced its interest in strengthening engineering schools around the country, Glennan had more than one reason to concur. Ylvisaker and Glennan also discussed asking Kent Smith, a member of The Cleveland Foundation’s Distribution Committee, to get involved. Smith, who was a great admirer of Glennan, subsequently agreed to advise Norton on developing a fundable program.

On July 17 Clark met with Kent Smith and other members of the Distribution Committee at his request to discuss the Ford Foundation’s interest in backing a local philanthropic demonstration project. To underline the importance of the matter, Clark had asked Tom Patton and Elmer Lindseth of the Cleveland Development Foundation to accompany him. At that meeting the Distribution Committee was persuaded that Norton should be retained to undertake a study of the city’s philanthropic resources in preparation for making a formal request to the Ford Foundation, with his fee and expenses to be covered by a $5,000 grant from The Cleveland Foundation’s (Hanna-donated) Special Purpose Fund.

Norton immediately began setting up interviews with trustees of important local foundations, as well as meeting with Clark for regular brainstorming sessions. “Harold was particularly interested in nudging all of philanthropy: ‘Do something, don’t just sit back,’” Norton would remember Clark saying. “I went and talked to him a dozen times, and as we talked, he said: ‘We’ve got to do something to make other people do things. We’ve got to point out the directions for them. We’ve got to
provide leadership’—which was the whole idea that all these people had been talking about.

“Every one of them felt we’d just spent a lot of money looking at metropolitan government and the voters had turned it down,” Norton continued. “We obviously had some problems that came out of the depression of 1958. Also those were the great days of urban renewal. Cleveland was one of the foremost cities in urban renewal [in terms of acres targeted], but we had gotten off the track. All of these things were sitting, and everybody said: ‘What can be done to push them, how can we make them go?’ They were all feeling pretty antsy about it.”

On August 1, Norton mailed a progress report to Kent Smith, who was vacationing in Europe, in which he mentioned that Clark foresaw the possibility of the Hanna Fund’s matching a Ford Foundation grant. (Indeed, as the discussion evolved, it became clear that the Hanna grant would not be forthcoming without Ford’s participation, for reasons discussed below.) Acting independently, Elmer Lindseth also wrote Smith to urge him to head up the demonstration project—a leadership role that Lindseth believed could only be taken by “someone in the inner circles of The Cleveland Foundation. . . . [T]his practically boils down to you . . . .,” he added. “I think you can also be helpful by indicating your interest to Dr. Ylvesaker [sic].”

On August 25, at a second meeting of the Distribution Committee to which Clark, Lindseth and Patton had again been invited, Norton presented a rough draft of a request to the Ford Foundation. It called for the establishment of an entirely new foundation. How Norton had come to the conclusion that a separate entity was needed would later be detailed in an evaluation of the Associated Foundation grant written by the Ford Foundation in 1966:

It was felt that a new foundation was needed in Cleveland, quite separate and distinct from existing foundations, but some means had to be devised for establishing it that would certify its legitimacy and avoid the severe problems that were felt inevitable if it were to be established by only a few local citizens. . . . It is to be noted that Clark required that the Hanna grant be matched by the Ford Foundation. . . . The reason for this was not that Ford Foundation money was needed—the Ford Foundation name was. Clark felt that had he tried to start a new foundation on his own with Hanna funds, [it] would have been seen as a high-handed attempt on the part of just three men (Clark and the two other trustees of the Hanna Fund) to determine the course of philan-
thropy in Cleveland, and perhaps even more seriously it would have been perceived as a slap at The Cleveland Foundation.

... One way of getting around this difficulty would have been to make a grant directly to The Cleveland Foundation to be administered by that Foundation itself for the purposes desired. But Clark, Smith, Lindseth and their associates of like mind did not think The Cleveland Foundation could do the job.

... Furthermore, it was felt desirable to involve a larger and somewhat different group than the Distribution Committee in the new effort. ... Harold Clark wanted, Smith told us ... to "get men of money around the table" to talk about the urgent problems of Cleveland.

Once it became clear that a consensus had been built for establishing a separate operation, discussion turned over the course of the summer to a consideration of what was the most politic means to set it up. From Ford's 1966 evaluation would come an account of the strategizing:

The most important ... means was the use of the Ford Foundation name, primarily because of its prestige but also because it would mean that outside money was coming into the city—and local organizations could reasonably agree to agree about obtaining some extra money. Another means was to have the Ford and Hanna grants made to The Cleveland Foundation. While the latter was to exercise no control over the funds, it was by this means made a party to the proposal. ... A third means was by talking about an association of or cooperative arrangement among local foundations. ...

And so it was that, on November 8, 1961, the Distribution Committee of The Cleveland Foundation, in conjunction with the Hanna trust and four other area foundations, submitted to the Ford Foundation a formal grant request entitled "A Proposal for the Greater Cleveland Association of Foundations." The document, which had undergone several drafts under the watchful eyes of Clark in Cleveland and Ylvisaker in New York, outlined four distinct roles for the proposed Association, whose operating expenses were to be paid for by income from The Cleveland Foundation's Leonard C. Hanna, Jr., Special Purpose Fund. They were: "to encourage research on and solutions of community social welfare problems of Cleveland, Ohio and its vicinity; to establish priorities for community action thereon; to make grants for research, pilot, experimental and other projects toward the solutions of such problems; and to encourage wise use of private philanthropic funds."

The mission statement may have had a familiar ring to Ford Foun-
ation president Henry T. Heald; it had been lifted practically verbatim from a speech he had made earlier that year in St. Paul, Minnesota, to the National Council on Community Foundations, in which he had described the conception of community foundations that Ford was trying to foster with grants such as that which had been made in Kansas City and had expressed the national foundation's willingness to support similar efforts elsewhere.

The proposal for GCAF was signed by all five members of The Cleveland Foundation Distribution Committee and the three trustees of the Hanna Fund. One of the Hanna trustees had appended a handwritten note: "Approved on behalf of the Elizabeth Severance Prentiss Foundation Board of Managers. By Lewis B. Williams, President." Attached were letters of support from the officers of three other prominent Cleveland foundations—the Louis D. Beaumont Foundation, the Kulas Foundation and the Elizabeth Ring Mather and William Gwynn Mather Fund—as well as the governor of Ohio, the mayor of Cleveland, the president of the Cleveland Chamber of Commerce and the president of Case Institute of Technology, among others.

Eight days after the grant request was mailed, Harold Clark, Kent Smith, Elmer Lindseth and Ellwood Fisher met to appoint themselves trustees of the new foundation, of which it was agreed that Dolph Norton would serve as president and Smith as chairman. They also named three businessmen with strong civic interests to the 11-member board. The final four slots went to officers of the "cosponsoring" organizations.

On December 12, 1961, four days after the Ford Foundation had unofficially notified The Cleveland Foundation that its request for a $1.25 million grant had been approved, Cleveland Foundation counsel Seth Taft, who had drawn up the Articles of Incorporation for the new foundation, notified Ford by phone that the Greater Cleveland Association of Foundations would henceforth be known as the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation.

The change was made at the insistence of Edgar A. Hahn, the treasurer of the Beaumont Foundation. According to Kent Smith, Hahn was concerned that "from the [original] title . . . the inference might be drawn that 'this great big combination would henceforth assume all charitable responsibilities of the community'—in other words, that the title might seem to arrogate to the foundations that sponsored or participated in its activities the major charitable burdens in Cleveland." If
the objective of the new foundation was to stimulate other foundations, especially The Cleveland Foundation, to work more aggressively on solving community problems, "it was felt that the word 'associated' would carry the significance that the new foundation, being 'associated with' the sponsoring foundations, was essentially of service to them."

On December 15, the Ford Foundation mailed Ellwood Fisher an official confirmation of the grant. Privately, officials at Ford expressed some concern about the dimensions of the undertaking it was supporting. "This is not to say that the proposed new association . . . can or will spring full-blown into the same efficient and effective operational pattern as that of the Kansas City Association," an internal memo stated. "It will take patience and wisdom to achieve such a pattern among individual foundation trustees and officers long accustomed to complete autonomy and often isolation."4

As Paul Ylvisaker had feared, the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation got off to an unprepossessing start in spite of having come together so quickly and seamlessly.

Of the more than $300,000 it awarded to seven projects in 1962, better than two-thirds went to the Welfare Federation of Cleveland, the perennial beneficiary of Cleveland Foundation support. With the exception of two seemingly modest grants for less than $20,000 each that would in retrospect prove to be the first signs of future trailblazing,5 the remainder of the foundation's first-year activities seemed unfocused and scatterbrained. This lack of purposeful direction would later be attributed by the Ford Foundation's grant evaluators to an unresolved internal debate over the Associated Foundation's goals and objectives—an impasse that was exacerbated by the inevitable settling-in period required to forge a viable working relationship between Dolph Norton and his high-powered board.

Having watched three years of painstaking preparation for regional government come to naught when the Metropolitan Service Commission was brushed aside in 1958 by the county charter movement, the new president of the Associated Foundation had been anxious to lose no time in getting to work on the multitude of urban woes his experience with Metro had helped him to identify.

Nine days after the Associated Foundation was officially announced,
Norton wrote to Paul Ylvisaker about his intention to instruct the foundation board on a course of immediate action:

Dear Paul:

The Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation has been launched with enough fanfare. The Board of Trustees includes a distinguished list of outstanding gentlemen from Cleveland, many of whom may not fully understand all the political processes but all of whom have proven [to have] a substantial and abiding concern with the problems of the city. . . . At the first meeting of the Board . . . I hope to explain to them the type of action which an agency like this one can best be involved in, the kinds of problems we should address ourselves to first, and the fact that there are going to have to be more degrees of [staff] freedom involved than some of them currently understand.

Norton had a very clear idea indeed of what action the foundation should undertake. His conception of its purpose was lofty, but certainly in keeping with the idealistic temper of the early sixties. The Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation, as Norton saw it, ought to be an agent for the full flowering of urban society. In language still embryonic, Norton propounded to the trustees, "A major emphasis of the GCAF should be on the development of opportunities for citizens of Greater Cleveland and the allied development of their abilities to make use of these opportunities."

Determining the foundation's mission was not Norton's prerogative, however. It was the board's. And Harold Clark's "men of money" were not going to be dictated to by a 34-year-old former academician with horn-rimmed glasses, a lanky build and a country-boy manner (though these features masked a shrewd and highly creative mind). Building a consensus among the board on a specific course would consume the better part of the Associated Foundation's first year.

At its first official meeting with Norton, on January 31, 1962, the GCAF board tabled a discussion of criteria for evaluating grant requests, acting instead on motions to approve a first-year budget and the leasing of office space. Three rooms were taken on the sixth floor of the National City Bank Building in downtown Cleveland, providing Smith and Norton with private offices (Norton's doubled as a conference room), while administrative assistant Rawson and a secretary sat at desks in the ante-room. They were a family, felt Rawson, who, in addition to her regular duties as Norton's detail person, cheerfully handled all of Smith's cor-
respondence and other needs—a display of team spirit that Smith would soon repay quite dramatically.

The question of the foundation’s objectives was taken up again at a board meeting on April 24, with the result that Norton was asked to serve as staff liaison to a three-person subcommittee charged with articulating them. By the time of the Associated Foundation’s board meeting in May, some progress had been made. The subcommittee had roughed out a list of criteria for evaluating projects to be funded; the criteria were approved in principle at the next board meeting in June. Priority among grant requests was to be assigned according to the “seriousness of the problem [to be addressed]; [the] possibility of action within a reasonable time; the use of existing research [capabilities]; and the use, testing and evaluation of new techniques.” Preference would be given to those “programs that will make possible better decisions and lead to action on questions of interest to large numbers of people.” By early summer, agreement had also been reached on the need to take the initiative in seeking new projects in addition to those for which requests might be received.

But which initiatives should be undertaken? Debate on this subject soon revealed that Norton and some of the members of the board had very different ideas of GCAF’s mission. One faction favored committing all the foundation’s funds to a single large project that (as Ford’s later evaluation described it) “would leave a highly visible mark—that would enable the Board to say, ‘This is what the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation has accomplished.’” In a letter dated May 28, 1962, to Kent Smith, GCAF trustee Frank Joseph pushed for the foundation to focus on

the revitalization of the center of the city. . . . There obviously should be a large parking garage under the Public Square, Superior Avenue [at Public Square] should be underpassed, the Square should be beautified, there should be a rapid to the Airport, the Terminal Tower should be an airplane ticket and baggage forwarding center, etc. Also, institutions such as the Aquarium and the Play House, which are looking for new homes, should be encouraged to come downtown.

There are a lot of . . . different groups working on [these projects] but there has been no . . . attempt to coordinate them. This would be something that is very tangible and would bring great credit to the Foundation even if we were able to implement only a part of it.
In a follow-up note, Smith deftly countered Joseph’s argument, observing: “Revitalization of the center of the city is, I am sure, something that everyone feels is important. . . . I question, however, whether either of the sources of our substantive funds would be happy with our selection of a program which seems to relate to physical development rather than to human problems.”

Retraining of the unemployed and economic development in general also were advanced as possibilities for making a big splash, but agreement on which to pursue even among members of the “single-project” faction was never reached. “They were talking in terms of billion-dollar projects, and with $5 million, you can’t do that,” Norton later recalled. He had continued to push for a varied approach covering at least eight different program categories—community planning, economic development, education, the elderly, housing, public affairs, race relations and youth—as the best way to achieve “a billion dollars’ worth of results.”

“Norton’s attitude was that he had to bring the Board along and get them to see the true light, and if this attitude was transmitted to the Board in any fashion, it could not have helped matters much,” Ford’s grant evaluators would note. “Except for Smith, none of the Board members knew Norton and they were not used to people like him. He was an idealistic professor, and to the men of money gathered around the Board table he acted and sounded like one.”

The details of the Associated Foundation’s growing pains would not merit recounting were it not for the public and private influence that the organization, when finally united in purpose, would go on to wield in Cleveland during the tumultuous sixties. In the years preceding the election of Carl B. Stokes as Cleveland’s mayor in 1967, the Associated Foundation would spark or shape public debate on the need for improvements in the schools, race relations and city governance, thus helping to create a climate for reform. Acting on the new ideas generated, GCAF would help to make possible such sweeping changes as the creation of the first publicly supported community college in the state, the integration of Cleveland’s near eastern suburbs and the total overhaul of the creaky management structure of City Hall. After Stokes’s historic election as the first black mayor of a major American city, the Associated Foundation (which had by then combined forces with The Cleveland Foundation) would work hand-in-glove with the new mayor to ensure the success of his programs, providing him with unbudgeted personnel
and additional resources needed in his battle to rebuild Cleveland after
the physical and emotional destruction wreaked by the Hough riots in
1966.

The Associated Foundation's deep involvement in public affairs—an
eexample of civic leadership that in time Cleveland's community foun-
dation and those in other large cities would emulate—was in keeping
with the spirit of Goff's surveys. But such activity would have been
untenable without the support of Kent Smith, whose leadership of the
fledgling endeavor lent it instant credibility with the Cleveland estab-
lishment.

Kent Smith was the eldest of three sons of Dr. Albert W. Smith, a
founder and director of the Dow Chemical Company and longtime chair-
man of the chemical engineering and mining engineering departments
at the Case School of Applied Science, where he and Herbert Dow had
been roommates. Kent Smith was himself a Case-trained chemical en-
gineer. In 1928 he and his brothers helped to found the Cleveland Gra-
phite Oil Products Company, a lubricant manufacturer that the brothers
built into the Lubrizol Corporation, a diversified chemical concern listed
today among the Fortune 500. Smith was president of the firm—which
had mushroomed during World War II after developing a lubricant that
could be added to oil to prevent truck breakdowns—until the early fifties,
and chairman until 1959, when he retired and devoted himself full-
time to civic affairs.

Having recently completed his duties as acting president of Case (to
which he reportedly donated $20 million during his lifetime), Smith
had the time to chair the Associated Foundation in 1961. In contrast
to his fellow trustees, the majority of whom were unable to attend the
foundation's monthly board meetings with regularity, Smith came into
work from his home in suburban Gates Mills nearly every day. He im-
mersed himself in the details of the foundation's administration, even
taking appointments with grant seekers and writing evaluations of their
proposals. Scarcely a Sunday would pass at the Rawson household with-
out a telephone call from Smith checking on new developments. Smith
(who died in 1980 at age 85) also had the temperament for the job.
"Kent was a very, very disciplined person," Joseph D. Pigott, a member
of Case's administrative staff during Smith's tenure, would later say. "If
there was an organized way of doing something better, rather than shoot-
ing fish in a barrel, Kent would try to do it." Although a staunch Re-
publican at the ballot box, Smith was a pragmatist at heart. He saw the Associated Foundation as conceived by Norton as the most efficacious way to solve the city’s bewildering array of problems. In fact, Smith’s willingness to go to bat for Norton’s ideas may have saved the Greater Cleveland Associated Foundation from ending up as merely an interesting footnote in the annals of philanthropy.

Smith’s crucial intervention came during a year-end review of Norton’s performance, when the board decided not to give Norton a raise. As the Ford Foundation later reconstructed it, this was a critical juncture for the new organization:

The Foundation still did not have a developed program, and this vote of no confidence did not augur well for its prospects of developing one in the future. At this point Smith stepped into the breach to save both Norton and the conception of the Foundation that he and Norton were nurturing. He told the Board that if it wanted him, Smith, to remain as Chairman it would have to give Norton the raise and one more year of trial. At the same time he said that he would work closely with Norton during that year and conduct his own appraisal at the end of it. If at that time the Board and Smith did not agree about Norton’s value and talents, Norton would have to go. . . .

The board agreed to give Norton another year, and Smith and Norton began conferring individually with those members thereafter unable to make the regular monthly meeting to keep them apprised of all progress. Smith also began counseling Norton on how he might communicate more effectively with the board. With men of a practical mind and bent, Norton learned, it was a mistake to begin a discussion of any problem by making an emotional appeal to conscience or proposing a high-sounding solution. Rather, Smith suggested, start with a dissection of the problem and let the answers follow naturally from that—an approach with which businessmen such as he and his fellow board members were more comfortable. (Smith’s penchant for rational analysis would be driven home for Rawson the day Smith took her and Norton to lunch to ask them, in all seriousness, to explain why they were Democrats.) Smith’s tutoring forever indebted Norton to the industrialist, whom he would later characterize as one of his greatest teachers.

By the end of 1963 Norton had earned the full support of his board. “Precisely what kind of activity do we believe offers the greatest opportunities for philanthropic contribution to the future of Cleveland?” GCAF’s annual report for that year asked. The foundation’s public re-
lations firm, Edward Howard and Company (which also handled Lubrizol's public relations), had helped Norton, Rawson and Smith draft the answer. It was emphatic. "It is activity focused on the urban problem—the problem of developing an urban society in which each person can reach his fullest potential, make the greatest possible contribution and receive in full the rewards of his participation."