



**RACE, GENDER,  
AND LEADERSHIP  
IN NONPROFIT  
ORGANIZATIONS**

**MARYBETH GASMAN, NOAH D. DREZNER,  
EDWARD EPSTEIN, TYRONE FREEMAN,  
AND VIDA L. AVERY**



# Race, Gender, and Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations

### **Also by Marybeth Gasman**

**Marybeth Gasman**, Valerie Lundy Wagner, Tafaya Ransom, and Nelson Bowman, *Unearthing Promise and Potential: Our Nation's Historically Black Colleges and Universities* (2010)

**Marybeth Gasman** (Ed.), *The History of Higher Education: Methods for Uncovering the Past* (2010)

**Marybeth Gasman** and Christopher Tudico (Eds.), *New Essays on Black Colleges: Triumphs, Troubles, and Taboos* (2009)

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**Marybeth Gasman**, *Envisioning Black Colleges: A History of the United Negro College Fund* (2007)

Alice Ginsberg and **Marybeth Gasman** (Eds.), *Gender and Philanthropy: New Perspectives on Funding, Collaboration, and Assessment* (2007)

**Marybeth Gasman** and Katherine V. Sedgwick (Eds.), *Uplifting a People: Essays on African American Philanthropy and Education* (2005)

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### **Also by Noah D. Drezner**

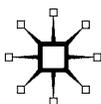
**Noah D. Drezner**, *Philanthropy and Fundraising in American Higher Education* (2011)

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Marybeth Gasman, Noah D. Drezner, Edward Epstein,  
Tyrone Freeman, and Vida L. Avery

Foreword by Charles R. Stephens

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This book is dedicated to those who bring us laughter,  
comfort, and inspiration.

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## Foreword

Some years ago, as a member of the faculty of a well-regarded fundraising training program, I was assigned to conduct a training session for senior students at an Oklahoma seminary. The choice to send me to deliver the training was made, I am sure, solely because I was then chief development officer at one of the nation's largest theological centers. When I arrived and met my contact, it was clear that the fact that I was a person of color had not been communicated.

By the time of the first break, all anxieties had been relieved and the training program was progressing nicely. My host, in all candor, indicated that he did not know “my people” were engaged in this work, this work of philanthropic fundraising, advancing America's tradition of giving and sharing. When he was told that this had been, at that time, a 20-plus year career for me (now 50-plus), he was absolutely amazed. Sad to say, this attitude about people of color and philanthropy continues even until today.

Typically, in the minds of the majority population, philanthropy is practiced, primarily, by the majority. People of color and other minorities, primarily, are the recipients of philanthropy. The assumption is that majority-defined philanthropy (giving that benefits unknown others) is the only philanthropic practice that matters. The attitude is that “our people” are not on board with that concept yet and are not likely to be at any time in the foreseeable future even though examples to the contrary are all around us. Clinging to this misconception has resulted in philanthropy by people of color being characterized in terms such as mutual benefit, faith-based focus, community-based bootstrap

assistance, and social and civic club benefits. When a person of color makes a gift to an institution external to his or her community, the action is highlighted in media outlets as a significant departure from the norm.

This attitude toward philanthropy among people of color has also contributed to the lack of interest among scholars in studying and documenting philanthropy by people of color. Why would one be motivated to study something that does not exist? And certainly if people of color are not philanthropic, why would anyone deign to hire them to manage philanthropically-focused institutions? Further, why would programs in philanthropic studies seek out people of color to engage as students in their programs? So the lie feeds on itself and becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Then along comes *Race, Gender, and Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations*, which speaks eloquently to the achievements of several outstanding individuals whose life circumstances lay waste to the misconceptions about people of color and philanthropy. It is important to note that the examples here are but a few of the hundreds who have persevered against enormous obstacles to achieve in a field that has been tremendously unwelcoming. This book, seriously read and reviewed and integrated into philanthropic studies classrooms, will help to de-sensitize the negative environment impeding the inclusion and advancement of racial and ethnic minorities and women in America's philanthropic enterprise.

For its continuing credibility around the world as a nation where philanthropy and diversity are foundational elements to ultimate democracy, America needs to internalize the seminal lessons about philanthropic endeavor by people of color and women imparted by *Race, Gender, and Leadership in Nonprofit Organizations*.

Charles R. Stephens  
Former Chair,  
International Association of Fundraising Professionals

## Acknowledgments

A few years ago, I was asked to be on the board of Third Millennium, an initiative dedicated to increasing knowledge about philanthropy in communities of color and among youth populations. At one of the initiative's meetings, the board members were told about an oral history project that was being conducted as part of the Third Millennium work. Female and African American leaders were being interviewed about their experiences working for nonprofits and foundations in the United States. As someone who has written books on both African American philanthropy and gender and philanthropy, I asked how the interviews would be used. After a short discussion, I offered to produce a book based on the interviews—and this book is the result of those efforts.

Pulling this book together was an endeavor that took the contributions of many individuals. First, I'd like to thank Larry Smith, the director of the Third Millennium Initiative, and his staff. Likewise, I am grateful to the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy for once again supporting my work and trusting me to conduct research under the auspices of the center. I would like to thank the W. K. Kellogg Foundation for funding the Third Millennium Initiative and this project, in particular. I am also grateful to Angela Logan, who conducted the oral history interviews that were used in this book and Dwight Burlingame and Tim Fischer for their guidance throughout the research, planning, and writing process.

Several of my research assistants at the University of Pennsylvania helped me on this project, including Tafaya

Ransom, who compiled the supplementary bibliography, and Darryl Peterkin, who helped me to conceptualize the book's organization. I was also supported throughout the writing process by my research assistants Valerie Lundy Wagner, Julie Vultaggio, April Herring, Esther Ra, and Thai Nguyen. In addition, my colleagues at Penn provide a supportive work environment in which it is easy to thrive personally and professionally. Often there are others who offer support in meaningful ways, although they are not directly connected to a research program. I am grateful to Nelson Bowman for his friendship and advice while I was writing this book. I thank my sweet daughter Chloe, who is always the inspiration for all that I do. I will always remember this book, in particular, because there was a huge snow storm in Philadelphia and Chloe begged me to stop writing and go out and play.

Lastly, I wish to thank my coauthors on this book project. Noah Drezner and Vida L. Avery are both my former Ph.D. advisees. They have made me immensely proud. Both have accomplished so much in a short time and remain my good friends. Tyrone Freeman is my mentee. He sought me out and asked if I would serve in this role, and of course, I obliged. Tyrone is pursuing a Ph.D. at an institution other than my own. Often-times, people ask me why I work with so many young people around the country, and for me the answer is that it's a way to give back—a way of paying forward the success I have had in my own career thus far. I can't wait to see the future success Tyrone will have. And Edward Epstein has been a constant source of inspiration and support to me for the past 20 years. He is by far the most intelligent and compassionate person I have ever encountered in life.

Marybeth Gasman

I cannot truly write the words to thank my father, David Drezner, for the love, confidence, and support that he has given me throughout my life. His love for me is clear in all of his actions and has been a source of strength and encouragement. My mother,

Linda Drezner, of blessed memory, although we only had ten years together, is the one person who inspired my passion for and the study of philanthropy—both monetary and service—most.

While my nuclear family is small, I am blessed with an extended family that is always there for support—a special thank you to my Aunt Judy and Uncle Steve Lippard, my cousins Alex, Josh, and Sandra Lippard; Irene and Donald Greenhall and Audrey Greenhall and George Chressanthis. Beyond my family, over the past few years, I have been privileged to have had wonderful friendships that morphed into familial relationships—those type of connections where you would do anything for them and they likely would do the same for you. These extended families have given me not only support, strength, and abundant happiness over the years but also the chance to engage, be inspired by, and play with a number of children. I am continually amazed and motivated by all of the children in my life. They are sweet, loving, intelligent, and innocent—the kind of innocence that pushes me to strive for the world that they see through their eyes—one in which social justice and civil rights are commonplace. Thank you in particular to Chloe Epstein, Philip, Matthew and Christopher Baldrige, and my little cousins Emily and William Chressanthis along with Lucy and Annie Lippard for continuing to make me believe.

Without the support and friendship of them and their parents, I am not sure where I would be. In particular, I wish to thank Marybeth Gasman, Edward Epstein, and Alan Baldrige, who welcomed me into their families and lives as if I was always there. I look at the strength of our relationship and feel as if you are the siblings that I never had. I thank each of you for allowing me to confide in you and having the opportunity to learn from your wisdom.

Additional appreciation must go to Marybeth Gasman. Marybeth has kindled a passion within me to formulate an active research agenda, while having a love for the classroom, and a dedication to students. Marybeth's commitment to her scholarship and to her teaching has inspired me to develop a teaching and

research philosophy that is shaped by a commitment to civic responsibility. She is simply a mentor on whom I will always model myself.

Noah D. Drezner

I am thankful to Marybeth for nurturing my career in research and writing, and for providing comic relief. My daughter Chloe always inspires me to do good work. Lastly, I am grateful to all those on the board and staff of the University City Arts League who gave me a new perspective on nonprofit leadership and board governance. I will carry those lessons with me wherever I go.

Edward Epstein

I thank God for his many blessings. I thank my beautiful wife, Michelle, for her love and support throughout this endeavor and every day of my life since we met at Lincoln University (PA) as freshmen years ago. To my children, Alexander and Olivia, I love you and thank you for loving me unconditionally. Always follow your dreams! To my parents, Rev. William and Carolyn Freeman, thank you for giving me a love of learning. I thank the best sibling in the world, my dear sister, Lanniece Hall; Union Baptist Church of Orange, New Jersey; and all of my family in New Jersey, Delaware, Pennsylvania, Illinois, Maryland, Virginia, and North Carolina. Throughout my academic career, I have been blessed with strong, supportive mentors who encouraged my writing, so I'd like to thank LuElla Peniston, Sheila Foor, Linda Keys, Lilya Wagner, and Andrea Walton. I also thank Dwight Burlingame, Les Lenkowsky, the Philanthropic Studies faculty, Angela Logan and my colleagues at the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University. To my wonderful coauthors, it has been a privilege sharing this experience with you. Finally, I want to thank Marybeth Gasman, who befriended me as an awestruck doctoral student three years ago at a conference and has supported me to no end ever since. An inspiration and a friend, she is truly a model

mentor and a testament to the power of—what I call—teaching as philanthropy.

Tyrone Freeman

I would like to thank Marybeth Gasman for providing this opportunity and encouraging me to get back to what I love: research and scholarly writing. I am most grateful for her unyielding confidence in my abilities and for her love of the field of philanthropy that led to her being my dissertation chairperson. I would also like to thank my parents, Dr. and Mrs. Parnell Avery, for their unwavering support and encouragement with all of my endeavors. Additionally, I am grateful to my sister, Sibyl Avery Jackson, for understanding the plight that writers and scholars go through when starting from scratch, churning an idea around in their heads, and finally laying it down on paper. Michael Bieze has always been my collegiate soul mate and lent a helpful ear when I needed it. And lastly, I am thankful to Pat Smith for editing my rough drafts and allowing me to talk through my ideas, even though at times they were confusing even for me.

Vida L. Avery

# Introduction

Race and gender, but especially race, are still subjects that are hard to address, even in social change organizations.

—The Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2005<sup>1</sup>

As we write, global economic turmoil is affecting the foundation and nonprofit world in a way that it has not for some time. Such instability is bound to occur, and bound to recur, as the world of philanthropy is not immune to business cycles. But as we have found in doing our research, issues of diversity, inclusion, and organizational effectiveness present an ongoing and more vexing problem, regardless of the economic situation. Women and people of color are increasingly dominating communities in the United States in terms of numbers; yet the staffing of the philanthropic and nonprofit arenas does not reflect the communities these entities serve. Because of the demographic shift within the past few years, the U.S. Census Bureau now identifies some states as “majority-minority.”<sup>2</sup> Because of this change, most spectrums of the nonprofit arena are focusing attention on diversity and inclusion, from reviewing and developing grant-making policies to analyzing the racial composition of the staff, CEOs, and trustees in order for these organizations to run more effectively.

Research on philanthropy among women and African Americans has grown over the past ten years with the publication of several major studies. Marybeth Gasman and Katherine V. Sedgwick edited *Uplifting a People: Essays on African American Philanthropy and Education* in 2005, which focused on myriad forms of philanthropy within Black communities, both in history and in the current day. However, this research pertained mainly

to African American philanthropists and not the Blacks serving in leadership positions at nonprofits.<sup>3</sup> In 2007, Alice Ginsberg and Marybeth Gasman edited a volume titled *Gender and Educational Philanthropy: New Perspectives on Funding, Collaboration, and Assessment*. Although this book looked closely at gender issues, the subject matter was strictly grant making. The authors detailed the work of certain leaders of nonprofits and talked about the way that their gender influenced their grant-making activity as well as the importance of using a gender lens when distributing grants.<sup>4</sup> Bradford Smith, Sylvia Shue, Jennifer Lisa Vest, and Joseph Villareal authored a book titled *Philanthropy in Communities of Color*, which focused on philanthropic behavior in Black, Latino, Asian, and Native American communities. The authors worked to dispel the myth that philanthropy is only an act of the wealthy. They argued that ethnic philanthropy is defined by people of modest means sharing with people they know well. The book hints at ways to secure philanthropic contributions from these communities but does not delve into the leadership of the philanthropies with which they are involved.<sup>5</sup>

Janice Gow Petty wrote *Diversity in Fund Raising*, which also focuses on philanthropy in communities of color and offers strategies for fundraising within these communities. Again, however, no attention is paid to leadership within the nonprofits that seek to raise funds from these communities of color.<sup>6</sup> Mary Ellen Capek and Molly Mead, in their book *Effective Philanthropy: Organizational Success through Deep Diversity and Gender Equality*, recommend strategies to nonprofits that want to strengthen their commitment and dedication to diversity and gender equity. Capek and Mead, though, do not cover the lives and experiences of nonprofit leaders.<sup>7</sup> Lastly, Sondra Shaw and Martha Taylor authored *Reinventing Fundraising: Realizing the Potential of Women's Philanthropy*, which pertained to women as philanthropists.<sup>8</sup> Like the Gasman and Sedgwick book, this one offers a new perspective on philanthropists but does not center on leaders within the nonprofit setting.

In addition to these scholarly and practitioner-focused books, numerous studies have been conducted on foundations' and

nonprofits' internal structures and staff compositions, forums convened for diversity dialogues, and coalitions formed to place diversity on the philanthropic sectors' agenda.<sup>9</sup> For example, a 2008 survey published jointly by CompassPoint Nonprofit Services, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Meyer Foundation, and Idealist.org and titled "Ready to Lead?" describes in detail the challenges facing the rising generation of nonprofit leaders.<sup>10</sup> What is missing from this research is a close examination of the experiences of current female and African American employees in high-level positions with foundations and nonprofits—those who can provide insight into the cultural and life experiences they bring into leadership positions.

Additionally, in 1999, the Council on Foundations published "Cultures of Caring: Philanthropy in Diverse American Communities." This report examined potential ways to expand the use of institutional philanthropy in four population groups: African Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and Native Americans. The report aimed to expand institutional philanthropy within these communities. It used interviews of affluent donors from these racial and ethnic communities, as well as fundraisers, foundation staff and board members, tribal leaders, church leaders, and scholars, to understand how these communities view philanthropy in their own cultural context.<sup>11</sup>

Our book centers on the lives and experiences of this group of foundation and nonprofit leaders. We have examined race and gender as constructs and provided a theoretical background for understanding their effect on the psychosocial development of the individuals. We explore their family backgrounds and childhood experiences as well as the impact of education on their lives and future leadership. We also delve into more personal topics and probe the influence of religion and spirituality on the leaders' decision making and disposition toward philanthropic work. We illuminate the leaders' personal perspective on their multifaceted development and experiences. Much like any leader, these individuals faced challenges in their careers and have made personal sacrifices to dedicate their lives to doing work in the third sector. We explore these challenges and sacrifices throughout the book.

The book is organized into seven chapters, besides this introduction. Chapter 1 provides short biographies of each of the leaders who were interviewed for the book. The next chapter delves deeply into the constructs of race and gender and looks at the influence of these factors on the leaders' lives and careers. Chapter 3 examines the leaders' background and family influences. Here we explore the impact of parents, role models, and home environments as well as the effect of historical events and movements on the lives of the leaders. In Chapter 4, we examine the leaders' experiences in primary and secondary school as well as higher education. Chapter 5 examines the effect that religion and spirituality had on these leaders' lives. Belief has had a unique and abiding role in the culture of various minority groups and in the movements that brought about emancipation and equality. At the same time, a profound tension has existed between traditional religious culture and the push toward gender equality. In Chapter 6, we draw upon the voices of the leaders to delve into the challenges and difficulties that they have faced in their roles and in their ascension to leadership. And the last chapter provides a conclusion that brings together the main themes and ideas in the book. We end the book with a supplementary bibliography to aid future scholars in addressing research related to philanthropic and nonprofit leaders.