

Letter from the Chair

December 23, 1947 was the type of early-winter day we know all too well in Pittsburgh. Temperatures were in the mid-20s with an inch of snow. But, as temperatures climbed into the mid-30s, the snow turned to rain.

The weather may have been unremarkable. But what happened that day, in the Board Room of T. Mellon and Sons at 525 William Penn Place, was anything but.

Richard King Mellon would provide the funding for the Foundation, but its Trustees – Constance Prosser Mellon, Arthur B. Van Buskirk and Joseph D. Hughes, and also Arthur M. Scully, on behalf of the Corporate Trustee, the Mellon National Bank and Trust Company – would be the sole decision makers on what grants would be funded. Richard King Mellon said he “had every confidence they would

remain in that role until her death in 1980, an extraordinary 33-year tenure of service.

At that first meeting, under her leadership, the Board approved 29 grants totaling \$117,525 – an amount equivalent to more than \$1.5 million today. There were numerous grants to local nonprofit institutions, such as a \$20,000 grant to the former Western Pennsylvania Hospital. And there was a \$100 grant to Ducks Unlimited



**RICHARD
KING
MELLON
FOUNDATION**

**VISIONARIES
WANTED**

It was then and there that the Richard King Mellon Foundation held its very first Board meeting. Richard King Mellon – my grandfather – had filed the papers to create the eponymous Foundation a month earlier.

According to the minutes, he opened that first meeting by stating his desire to devote a substantial portion of his wealth to charitable purposes – and he was convinced the best way to do so was through this newly created philanthropic Foundation.

authorize distributions from the Foundation in a wise and prudent fashion.” He asked that the new Trustees “give appropriate consideration” to the charitable causes that he had personally supported before the Foundation’s founding – but even then, he added, this “request was in no sense legally binding on the Trustees.”

And with that, Richard King Mellon excused himself from the meeting. The Trustees turned to their first order of business, and elected Constance Prosser Mellon – my grandmother – to be the Foundation’s first Chair. She would

in New York City – a modest precursor to what became the Foundation’s extraordinary national environmental conservation program, which, 75 years later, has helped to conserve more than 4.5 million acres of environmentally precious lands in the United States, touching all 50 states.

Over those 75 years, the Foundation has awarded more than 8,000 grants and program-related investments, totaling more than \$3 billion. And it has done so while growing its endowment, to enable even more generous

philanthropy in the future. Richard King Mellon recognized that, while the challenges of today are urgent – the challenges of tomorrow will be, too. And so the Richard King Mellon Foundation remains a perpetual foundation.

This 2022 Annual Report documents the 75th year of the Richard King Mellon Foundation, and the second year of our 2021-2030 Strategic Plan. We received 646 applications for funding in 2022. In response, we awarded 303 grants and program-related investments (PRIs), totaling more than \$152 million. And we continued in 2022 to broaden significantly the circle of visionary grantees with whom we work. The 2022 grant and PRI recipients included 71 organizations that never before had received Foundation funding, eclipsing the record for new grantees set the year before.

In the pages that follow, you will read stories of some of the visionaries we funded in 2022. The leaders and organizations you will meet in those stories are inspiring representatives of our remarkable grantees. Yet they are only a small fraction of the extraordinary people and groups we worked with in 2022, all of whom are worthy of such stories.

In Conservation, we awarded 102 grants and PRIs in 2022, totaling more than \$56 million.

In Economic Development, we awarded 55 grants totaling more than \$38 million.

In Economic Mobility, we awarded 79 grants totaling nearly \$21 million.

In Health & Well-Being, we awarded 34 grants totaling more than \$14 million.

In Organizational Effectiveness – our program to help trusted nonprofit partners to enhance their impact – we awarded 18 grants totaling more than \$2 million.

And in Social-Impact Investments – our program to invest in for-profit companies with strong social missions that align with

our Strategic Plan – we invested nearly \$5 million in 15 promising companies. Four of those companies were discovered through our second “Pitch Competition.” You can read about the winners of that competition on page 57.

The 646 applications we received in 2022 were bolstered by the eight Requests for Proposals issued by the Foundation in 2022, to generate



applications in areas of particular import to our communities. We issued three RFPs in Economic Mobility; two Conservation RFPs; two Health & Well-Being RFPs; and a joint RFP between our Economic Development and Social-Impact Investment programs.

All our grantmaking is conducted in strict accordance with our Strategic Plan. But that plan still gives us the latitude to respond to unforeseen events. So when the Pittsburgh region was preparing for a potential influx of Ukrainian refugees, fleeing the Russian invasion, we awarded grants totaling nearly \$500,000 to help four social-service agencies to prepare.

While we welcomed many new partners in 2022, it also was a year to say goodbye. We bid a fond farewell last year to a beloved colleague, Lawrence S. Busch, who retired as a Trustee and the Foundation's Assistant Treasurer after 39 years of exemplary service to the

Foundation. As the Foundation's Trustees noted, in a unanimously adopted resolution, “Lawrence S. Busch's dedication to the Richard King Mellon Foundation over nearly four decades ... helped to embed, within the Foundation, institutional ideals and standards that are a proud legacy of his service, and a worthy standard for future generations of Trustees and staff.” We welcomed Paul A. Hannah, our board Secretary, to become a Trustee in his place. And Edward J. Morgan assumed Larry's duties as Assistant Treasurer.

We hope you enjoy the stories and accompanying photography in this year's Annual Report. We further hope their stories will inspire other visionaries in our communities to apply for Foundation funding. Since that first Board meeting in 1947, the Foundation has focused, not on our own ideas, but on the visionary ideas of our grantees and other partners. It is a privilege to play a small role in their important service to our communities.

RICHARD A. MELLON
CHAIRMAN AND CEO

