



LAFF

THE LAFF SOCIETY Promoting social and professional contacts among former staff members of the Ford Foundation

Spring 2022, No. 101

FRANKLIN A. THOMAS, 1934 TO 2021

LAFF Remembers Franklin Thomas: Co-Presidents' Reflections

By Suzanne Siskel and Betsy Campbell

We are honored to introduce this special memorial newsletter commemorating the life and work of Franklin A. Thomas.

We both joined the Ford Foundation toward the end of Frank's tenure as its president, when the Foundation was a thriving, pathbreaking organization. As program officers in our first roles at Ford, we were challenged to be creative, pragmatic and supportive of the Foundation's partners.

We joined the Foundation after the major reorganization that Frank led and, therefore, were heavily influenced by his vision of a grantmaking organization that concentrated on broad programs, and that believed in the power of partnerships among communities, non-profit organizations and policy makers to organize, build institutions and innovate in ways that could affect the lives and wellbeing of large groups of people in societies throughout the world.

While we did not work directly with Frank, we sought to live up to his expectations for excellence in all aspects of our work and to be worthy of the great privilege afforded us as stewards of some of the Foundation's resources.

We learned from the insights he offered during officers' meetings as we presented grants for approval, and felt great pride in sharing with grantee partners that the

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When **Franklin A. Thomas** died three days before Christmas, praise for a well-lived life of achievement and influence flowed from throughout a world he sought in many ways to make better.

The trajectory of that life has been carefully explored: child of immigrants from the Caribbean, a youth



spent in near-poverty on the mean streets of Brooklyn, academic scholarship to Columbia University, an Ivy League basketball star, law school, private practice and public service, and 17 years as president of the Ford Foundation.

This special issue of The LAFF Society newsletter is a tribute to the man, his accomplishments and his legacy from many who worked with him.

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Co-President's Reflections

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Foundation's president had led a community organization himself.

We know that the LAFF Society emerged in response to Frank's extensive reorganization of the Foundation, and hope that he would be touched by the camaraderie among its members, the shared sense of pride in the Foundation's achievements, and the often-repeated phrase that working at the Ford Foundation was the most fulfilling job we've had in our careers.

As you will read in the poignant essays in this newsletter, our LAFF colleagues have identified many themes that resonate well with our memories of Frank and his leadership.

One of the most significant refrains is that Frank's reorganization rescued the Foundation from financial collapse. Another, that he shifted its programmatic direction to an emphasis on human rights and social justice.

Those of us who had the honor of working at the Foundation during his tenure appreciated his powerful influence, which stemmed from his quiet but firm approach to leadership.

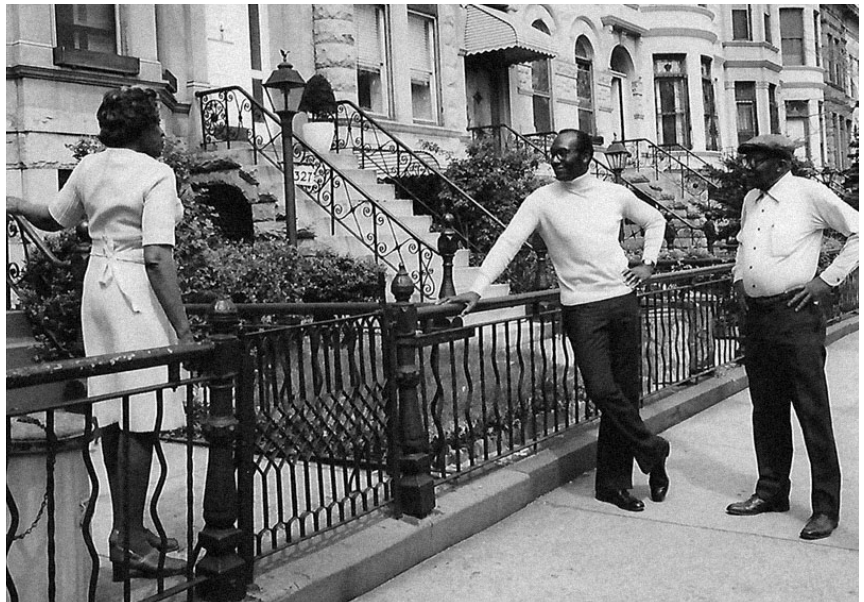
Indeed, as a former trustee is quoted in one article, he transformed the Ford Foundation "from a technical assistance organization to a humanistic organization".

Frank urged program staff to give grantees more independence and responsibility, believing that people closest to the problems facing their society or community were well placed to develop solutions. He also believed in taking risks in grant making, using the Foundation's resources wisely while recognizing that philanthropy has the unique advantage of being able to test ways to affect positive social change and to learn from both success and failure.

Many tributes have, of course, commented on Frank's contributions to the transformation of South Africa, which is a living legacy of his commitment to social justice and human rights.

Those of us who had the honor of working at the Foundation during his tenure appreciated his powerful influence, which stemmed from his quiet but firm approach to leadership.

The remembrances compiled in this special edition of the newsletter attest to the ways Frank inspired all who served at the Foundation during his tenure and to the broad and deep impact his leadership had on so many. ■



Thomas, center, talks to residents of the New York neighborhood of Bedford-Stuyvesant, where he grew up after his immigrant parents moved from Barbados and Antigua.

Franklin A. Thomas

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These are the words of people who recall the impact on their lives from the way he lived his, who attest to the bedrock integrity that underlay his ambition, commitment, perseverance and endurance.

They have taken with them from those encounters the indelible markings of his skills and insights to discuss how, in many ways, personal and professional, Frank Thomas' example influenced their lives and their work at Ford and in varied endeavors since they left the Foundation.

Frank Thomas "always said we should leave the earth better than we found it", writes one, and that ideal is evident in all that is written here.

These tributes are one small catalog of his accomplishments and impact, including re-imagining the Foundation ("just the sort of fresh air that the rarified Ford

Foundation needed"), promoting human rights and social justice ("transformed the Ford Foundation from a technical assistance organization to a humanistic organization"), providing guidance to those he believed in ("mentored a whole generation of African-American men and women"), epitomizing leadership ("he was a quiet man, but when he spoke people listened"), motivating those who worked for him ("with confidence, trust and kindness"), believing firmly in risk-taking (it's "what we do"), spare but undeniable in his praise ("I am not displeased with this," he told one Foundation officer).

And they remember the personal side of the man: how he registered approval in meetings with simply a quiet smile, how he was affable and approachable in social gatherings and how, in those gatherings, he outshone everyone on the dance floor.

"Well," he once said, "you learn things hanging out on street corners." ■

The LAFF Society

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HE LEFT THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE

By Susan Beresford

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Franks Thomas always said we should leave the earth better than we found it. He did that at the Ford Foundation, which he led brilliantly for 17 years.

His modesty and reserve, well known to those of us who worked with him, meant that the structural and program changes he wisely made were often unheralded within philanthropy, which tended to focus instead on the fact that he was the first Black leader of a major philanthropy.

I was lucky to have been at the Foundation before and after his tenure, and I am pleased now to help celebrate his legacy after his death in December at age 87.

When Frank was named president of Ford in 1979, he inherited a strong and forceful institution whose future was threatened by a period of dangerous overspending and a sharp asset decline. I recall a board meeting when trustees confronted the possibility of dissolution of the Foundation should the overspending continue. Frank persuaded the board that the Foundation should be stabilized by immediately reducing costs and setting future expense levels using a formula based on changes in asset value over time.

With the board's agreement, Frank introduced new spending and investment policies and significantly reduced the staff's size. Putting these plans in place led to institutional stress and turmoil, which he managed with dignity and determination. But it also had the desired effect. Ford's financial health was restored, and through the rest of his presidency both the endowment and spending grew substantially.

Frank's fundamental interest was to ensure that Ford would help reduce human suffering and disadvantage, and support people and institutions addressing peace, education, culture and democratic governance. He inherited an institutional structure with clear separation between the United States and international grant-making programs and staff; within each geographic domain, strong program identities had created silos that competed rather than reinforced each other. As a trustee, Frank had pointed out the possibilities of cross-program and cross-national learning, and so when he became president, he promoted the concept and practice of "one foundation".

With that concept in mind, and after studying the Foundation for a year, he re-organized the grant-making operations, identifying a unified worldwide agenda that enabled staff and grantees to visit and learn from each other and staff to move from one part of the world to another. Today, such ideas are the norm, but when Frank introduced them in the early 1980s, they were unsettling to those accustomed to more traditional ways of working.

I can speak with authority about this because I had at times been reprimanded for trying to bridge Ford's U.S.-international divide in grant-making, and I saw the resistance he encountered when he re-organized the Foundation.

Frank was committed to building a diverse staff that resembled the world we worked in and that understood his ideas and approach. He often said that the strength of the Foundation resided significantly in its employees worldwide.

A FOCUS ON DIVERSITY

Frank was also committed to building a diverse staff that resembled the world we worked in and that understood his ideas and approach. He often said that the strength of the Foundation resided significantly in its employees worldwide. This meant not only hiring and supporting talented people with fresh perspectives drawn from varied backgrounds but also expanding grant-making programs advancing rights and opportunities for women, people of color and those from disadvantaged and marginalized backgrounds.

In fact, the first major grant-making effort he proposed to the board involved doubling the size of women's programs worldwide and asking the Foundation to look to the role and needs of women no matter what kind of work their grants supported.

Equally important was Frank's determination to build the Foundation's respect for its grantees. For example, he encouraged them to use grant funds to pay for the consultants they needed rather than having the Foundation make the arrangements and require the consultants to report to the grant-making staff. Frank had found the former Ford practice misguided when he was a grantee; he was

head of the Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, a New York community development group.

This approach also led to rethinking how Ford deployed staff members in its developing countries programs. In 1979, the Foundation had hundreds of experts serving as advisers in overseas government departments. Frank ended the practice and instead focused staff and grant making on support for emerging civil -society organizations.

WARNING AGAINST ARROGANCE

In these and other ways, Frank Thomas modernized the Foundation and equipped it for future generations. I was among the lucky beneficiaries of his philanthropic vision, following him as president. His changes empowered my team and grantees for the next decade and more.

Since his death, I have received many emails from staff and grantees worldwide who knew his gifts and accomplishments. Many of his colleagues spoke not only about what he did but also how he did it—with modesty, quiet wisdom, steely determination, and care for each of us working with him.

Many staff members recalled how he warned them not to feel self-important just because they deployed large sums of money. They recall his admonition to remember that their satisfaction should come from directing the grants for the public good: strengthening leaders and their organizations, nurturing new ideas and bringing attention to urgent needs and problems. His commanding presence reinforced the strength of these ideas and values.

Of course, Frank's leadership extended well beyond Ford, including work in government and the business world. He was well known for participation in efforts to end apartheid in South Africa and in that country's rebuilding. He played a crucial role in the 9/11 Fund, helping restore the city he loved and lived in. He was a man of great talent and strength, and we are all better people because of what we learned from him. Frank Thomas surely left the Ford Foundation and the world better than he found them. ■

Susan Berresford was president of the Ford Foundation from 1996 to 2008. She joined the Foundation in 1970 as a program assistant, then led its grant-making efforts to serve women before she was tapped for several senior leadership roles.

A MAN OF “VISION, TENACITY AND DIGNITY”

By Barron “Buzz” Tenny

I had the good fortune to work at two organizations led by Frank Thomas: Bedford Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation and the Ford Foundation. At both organizations his extraordinary set of qualities—vision, tenacity and dignity—were much in evidence.

Frank was clearheaded about the purposes of the two institutions and how they should relate to the people they served. He saw to it that Restoration addressed the full range of issues facing the Bedford Stuyvesant community—physical, economic, cultural and social—and that the residents were actively engaged in every step of the development process, from planning and construction through property management.

At Ford, he recognized that the people closest to the problems had special insights that those with offices on East 43rd Street lacked and needed to be involved in fashioning the solutions. And he believed that grantees should operate creatively and independently, not as agents to carry out a Ford Foundation agenda.

Frank was an institution builder. I can't imagine anyone else could have turned a fledgling community development corporation into the robust, enduring institution that Restoration became. Similarly, the changes that Frank instituted at Ford in the early years of his presidency—rightsizing the organization, overhauling its spending and investment policies, unifying its program division and establishing a set of programmatic themes to serve as the basis for all grant making worldwide—fundamentally transformed the organization and, in my view, created the modern Ford Foundation.

Frank's conception of the proper relationship between grantor and grantee was shaped by his experience at Restoration. Most significantly, as a grantee he had many dealings with Ford relating to Restoration's largest project, the development of a commercial center on a blighted block in Bedford Stuyvesant. Ford was a guarantor of 85 per cent of a \$4 million loan from Chemical Bank for construction of the center.

To assist Restoration with the project, Ford engaged a consulting firm, which was paid by and reported to Ford. While appreciating the value of getting expert advice, Frank found the structure of the arrangement unsatisfactory. When he became president of Ford, he immediately changed the Foundation's



Franklin A. Thomas, center, at a Foundation board meeting with his predecessor, McGeorge Bundy, on the right, and the board's president, Alexander Heard, a former chancellor of Vanderbilt University.

practice so that grantees would receive funds to engage their own consultants.

The following episodes reflect how Frank developed his conviction that a foundation must understand the needs of its grantees and provide the required support. They also demonstrate his courage and capacity to assert himself.

On one occasion in the early days of the center's development, I sat next to Frank at a meeting of the staff team working on the project. Construction was underway but there was only one signed lease. Frank was holding a letter from the head of Program Related Investments at Ford expressing concern about Restoration's lack of progress in finding tenants, and seeking particulars as to how it planned to take necessary action. I watched as Frank drafted a response to the letter. It began: "Dear ___, Get us some f---ing tenants."

Subsequently, we were able to interest Lerner department store in serving as the center's anchor tenant. In order to consummate the deal, we consented to Lerner's non-negotiable demand that its lease contain a provision that excluded several brand-named women's clothing stores from the center. But, under the terms of the construction loan agreement, all commercial center leases required Ford's prior written approval.

After we submitted the proposed Lerner lease to Ford, we heard back that Ford would not approve the lease because its outside counsel had opined that the exclusionary clause constituted a violation of antitrust laws. I then had a call with Ford's outside

counsel, who rejected both the legal arguments and the practical reasons I offered in support of approving the lease. When I got off the phone, I went to Frank's office bearing a copy of the lease. I reported the phone conversation to Frank, who, without hesitation, took the lease from me and signed it.

It was a privilege and a pleasure to work closely with Frank Thomas over many years. I have no doubt that but for him my professional career would not have been as fulfilling as it turned out to be. He took the chance of giving me a good deal of responsibility but never told me how to do my job. I did, however, get a great education from watching him in action and engaging with him on work matters.

Frank was understated and not one to lavish praise. I remember feeling good when he returned a work product of mine with a handwritten note saying, "I am not displeased with this."

I have fond memories of engaging with Frank on interesting and challenging projects at Restoration and Ford, of shooting the breeze on subjects of mutual interest (family, basketball, music) and of socializing (often as a foursome that included his wife, Kate, and my wife, Ursula). Frank played a major role in my life and I am grateful. ■

***Buzz Tenny** worked at the Ford Foundation from 1983 to 2011 as special assistant to the president (1983-1984), vice president, secretary and general counsel (1984-1997) and executive vice president, secretary and general counsel (1997-2011).*

CELEBRATING THE REMARKABLE LEGACY OF FRANKLIN THOMAS

By **Darren Walker**

President of the Ford Foundation

Franklin Thomas was a giant: an American original; a singular leader; an iconic figure in the history of the Ford Foundation and philanthropy, our city and all cities, our nation and the world. And just as Frank shaped a half century of human progress in our neighborhoods and around the globe, he shaped the course of my life, as a mentor, counselor and friend.

I first met Frank many years ago in Harlem when I, a fledgling nonprofit executive at Abyssinian, hoped to emulate his astounding work with the Bedford-Stuyvesant Restoration Corporation, the granddaddy of community development corporations.

To me, Frank was the consummate New Yorker. The son of immigrants from Barbados and Antigua, he made a life in Bed-Stuy and never left it behind. But he was also the quintessential leader of a new school of urbanism, a philosophy of revitalization that

put people and communities at the center.

This philosophy found expression in the many institutions that Frank served and strengthened: at the agency that later became the Department of Housing and Urban Development, the United States Attorney's Office for the Southern District of New York, the New York City Police Department and, of course, in Brooklyn, where Frank's profound legacy endures street by street, block by block.

At the Ford Foundation, Frank's perspicacious voice still echoes and his long shadow still looms. During his tenure as president from 1979 to 1996, Frank presided over the groundbreaking Study Commission on United States Policy toward South Africa, an indispensable ally of the anti-apartheid movement, and forged a fateful partnership with Nelson Mandela, championing South Africa's constitution and opening the first Foundation office in the country.

He also helped to establish the Local Initiative Support Corporation, which has supported countless neighborhood revitalization efforts.

And in our own institution's most perilous hour, after a 90 percent depletion in our endowment's real value during the 1970s, Frank courageously rescued us from insolvency. He made painful, unpopular decisions that set us on a path to long-term sustainability and made possible two generations of impact to follow.

While Frank surely changed the world, perhaps equally remarkable is what never changed about Frank: his humility, his generosity, his equanimity. Long after his tenure at the Ford Foundation, he made time to dispense wisdom and perspective from a small office in the Chanin Building on East 42nd Street, guiding me through good times and bad.

He taught us all to do the right things in the right way, to act with righteousness, not self-righteousness. To be in Frank's presence was to feel awe, reverence and gratitude. I miss him, and appreciate every word and every moment we shared.

Let us all strive anew for the equanimity that Frank so graciously, gracefully embodied. ■

GRANTEES: "UP FRONT AND IN THE CENTER"

By **Charles Bailey**

Frank Thomas and I met for the first time on the tarmac at the Khartoum airport.

He had just flown in from Cairo; it was early afternoon and the weather was, as it nearly always was, dry, bright and hot: 120 degrees in the shade. Frank and Kate, his wife, together with another Foundation trustee and several Ford staff, were stopping off in Sudan enroute to the August 1982 Trustees Meeting in Nairobi.

I had arrived just six weeks earlier to join three Sudanese staff in an office overseeing grants for refugee programs, legal aid, customary law and maternal and child health run by **Ann Lesch** and **Cynthia Myntti**, program officers in Cairo. To these, **John Gerhart**, the Representative, charged me to add a new initiative in Land and Water Management under the banner of the Rural Poverty and Resources (RPR) Program.

When he became president, Frank Thomas reorganized the way program staff framed and therefore thought about their grant making. He underscored the notion that staff should live and work as close as possible to those who were tackling significant challenges with Ford

money. He pioneered the idea of One Foundation, where staff working on similar issues in different societies around the world could easily connect with and consult each other.

Frank believed that grantees should be up front and in the center, captured in Ford's characterization of itself as a "resource for innovative individuals and institutions worldwide". And he modelled being ready with just the right words, clear, concise and low key, when the opportunity arose to speak to people in high positions of authority.

For Frank, Sudan was a test of these propositions and he wanted to see everything. We drove 120 miles south to Wad Medani, the headquarters of the Gezira Scheme, which irrigated an area half the size of Connecticut. Sudanese grantees there were examining more equitable distribution of irrigation water, as Ford grantees were already doing in India and the Philippines.

Back in Khartoum, we invited all Ford grantees, including Hasan Al-Turabi, Sudan's attorney general, to a reception on the terrace of a hotel overlooking the Blue Nile. I have an indelible image of Frank, impeccable in a white shirt, and the AG, impeccable in a

flowing white Jelabiya and turban, standing eye to eye, speaking lawyer to lawyer. Frank is talking in a clear, concise and low key way about human rights.

Fourteen years later, staff and trustees are in Cape Town for a Trustees Meeting, Frank's last as president. He went around the large table speaking quietly to each person. When he got to me I said, "Frank, I never felt any limitations at Ford except my own. Thank you for that." "Charles," he said and, smiling, briefly bowed his head.

But perhaps my best memory of Frank was the first meeting of RPR staff worldwide, in Cairo in 1984. After dinner on a boat on the Nile we danced. Frank was by far the best dancer of all, supple and perfectly matched to the beat. We stopped and someone said, "Wow, what a dancer!" Frank replied, eyes twinkling, "Well, you learn things hanging out on street corners." ■

Charles Bailey, now an advisor on the effects of Agent Orange in Vietnam, worked at the Foundation from 1972 to 1976 and again from 1982 to 2011 in several overseas offices and at Ford's headquarters in New York City.

“A TRUE HUMANITARIAN”

By Shepard Forman

I was privileged to work for Frank for more than 15 years, coincident with his tenure as President of the Foundation. Exceptionally smart, demanding but supportive, he led the Foundation with determination and decency, drawing the best from his staff. He built an institutional environment of trust and confidence in which we could flourish.

For me, it was a period of intense learning and growth, during which I developed an abiding appreciation for Frank as a person and as a boss. I remain ever grateful for the opportunities he gave me.

When Frank became president, I was working in the Foundation's field office in Brazil, on leave from the University of Michigan. I had been offered a job in New York as Program Advisor in the Latin American regional office, and the impending changes at the Foundation made me uncertain. Rumors from headquarters questioned whether Frank's storied career prepared him to take command of the Foundation's overseas operations and tackle the complexities of international affairs programs.

Some old Foundation hands argued that that created an opportunity; others reassured me that the International Division was an entity unto itself that would insulate the job from any real change. The first premise proved true, but because of Frank's deep understanding of international affairs, global politics and policy rather than any lack thereof; the structural predicate proved to be providentially wrong as Frank moved to cross-fertilize domestic and overseas programs in a unified program division.

Frank's command of international law and politics was on full display when he urged me to consider the Foundation's experience in domestic civil rights while drafting a human rights paper for the Board. A true humanitarian, he wanted to move the program from high principle to its effects on people's lives. In doing so, we would take the lead from actors in the locations where the problems were felt and possible solutions best understood.

When the board adopted the civil and political rights centerpiece of the paper but rejected the section on social and economic rights, fearing its association with Soviet-era rhetoric, Frank reasoned we should rethink it as social justice, a hallmark of the Foundation's work ever since.

The same philosophy, commitment and practical approach held true when discussing a redraft of the board paper on Governance

and Public Policy. It was the Reagan years, and Frank was concerned about the effects of downsized federal social programs on state and local governance and the community development programs with which he was so familiar. He urged the Foundation to focus on budgets and the priorities they evidence, and on public-private endeavors that could ensure continuity in people's welfare at the local level. Human needs, democratic participation and good governance became the universal principles of the program, irrespective of any constraining national boundaries.

Frank's perspicacity and purpose was evident again when, in 1981, he began to envision a Foundation response to HIV-Aids, only then beginning to manifest itself as a global problem. With no Foundation program in health to house it, Frank encouraged us to focus on the public policy and rights concerns of the socially marginalized men among whom the disease first surfaced.

With patience and calm deliberation over the course of several board meetings, he built support for a program that would ultimately influence a response to the pandemic that ravaged men and women across the globe.

Closer to home, Frank countenanced care and assistance to six young staff members who tragically succumbed to the disease.

At the end of the 1980s, with the Soviet Union in the process of dissolution, Frank reasoned it was time to free the International Affairs program from its Cold War moorings. While not abandoning long-standing issues of peace and security and international economics and development, he encouraged a reorientation from United States foreign policy to multilateral solutions to global problems, bearing down on issues of poverty and hunger, refugees and migrants, and the civilian victims of intra- and inter-state conflicts.

It was a prescient perspective on the direction globalism would take over the next quarter century and—in a fitting recognition of this essential part of Frank's legacy—one that the Foundation has recently restored to its agenda. ■

Shepard Forman worked at the Foundation from 1977 to 1996 in the Human Rights and Governance and International Affairs programs, and in the Rio de Janeiro office. He is a former president of The LAFF Society.

A LEADER WITH “VISION AND COURAGE”

By Barry Gaberman

For those of us who were part of Frank's time at the Foundation, there were two aspects to that experience. One was personal, the other institutional.

On the personal side, I had been with the Foundation for almost eight years when Frank became president, first with the Indonesia field office and after that with the then Asia/Pacific regional office in New York. I had a few opportunities outside the Foundation and it seemed the right time for a change. Then, unexpectedly, I got an offer to be part of the transition.

To help decide whether to accept that offer, I met with Frank to get a glimpse of his vision for the Foundation. It was a vision based less on strategic security issues and more on social justice and human rights. It was a vision that put gender, diversity and equity as a priority in everything the Foundation did, not as just a cluster of discrete program categories among many others.

I was sold and mesmerized by the clarity of his vision. I stayed for another 27 years,

first under Frank and then under **Susan Berresford**, his successor.

While the institutional aspect carried less of an emotional jolt, it was no less important. It contained three important components that were imperatives from the trustees.

The first was to tie the Foundation's expenditures to the reality of its resources. The trustees had made the decision that the Foundation should strive to operate in perpetuity. To do so, the real purchasing power of the Foundation's endowment had to be preserved. That meant that Frank had to have the courage to endure the pain of budget cuts in the short run.

The second institutional component was to bring the Foundation's structure into compliance with its resources. The hard reality was that the Foundation had the super structure of an organization meant to spend more than \$200 million but was spending half that amount. If the first component was painful, the second was even more so. It meant paring the staff by letting many good people go. It took
Continued on next page

FORGING “NEW PATHS ON MULTIPLE FRONTS”

By Judy Barsalou

My preference for this fond remembrance of Frank Thomas is that it be filled with anecdotes that reflect intimate personal knowledge of him developed over his long tenure. The truth is that my best-remembered interactions with Frank occurred when I was starting at the Ford Foundation in 1982, limited by the fact that I was a very junior member of the program staff.

Part of an incoming wave of young women, initiated by Frank, who fundamentally altered the demographics of the Foundation's staff in New York and abroad, I was a temporary, junior program officer whose duties involved backstopping the offices in Cairo and Khartoum and responsibility for all grantmaking in Israel. Based at the time in New York, I attended “Officers’ Meetings” whenever a grant focusing on the Middle East was under discussion.

Presided over by Frank, these meetings involved review of “Requests for Grant Action”, where program staff defended RGAs justifying grants of \$50,000, which required Frank's approval. If an RGA made it

A Leader...

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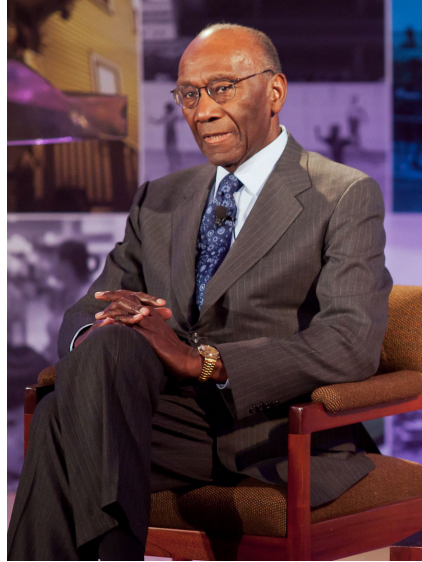
courage for Frank to stay the course considering the open criticism the decision evoked.

The last institutional component involved making the Foundation operate as a single, integrated organization. Over the years its programming had devolved into many silos that seldom interacted. The major split was between the United States and the overseas programs. But it didn't stop there. There were also fiefdoms within the various U.S. programs and among the geographic regions of the overseas programs.

Frank was convinced this was an obstacle to an overall Foundation mission and vision. It was also an obstacle to the transfer of learning across the substantive and geographic program areas. After careful study and reflection, he put in place a new program structure that broke down the silos. He was criticized for not moving faster, but once again he had the courage to stick with his vision.

The two attributes of vision and courage is how I remember Frank. ■

Barry Gaberman worked at the Foundation from 1971 to 2006.



In his collegial and good-humored way, Frank led the Foundation to forge new paths on multiple fronts and demonstrated qualities that any young program officer would do well to emulate.

onto the agenda, chances were Frank would approve it at the meeting. But occasionally the presenting staff member faced a tough round of questions, and the proposed grant and its RGA were subject to further scrutiny, revision and rare disapproval.

Presentations at these meetings were always brief given that the RGAs were circulated in advance. Questions raised by Frank and others were probing but generally unemotional, and a great way for the greenest of junior program officers to learn about the Foundation's priorities, strategies and values.

At the time, there was no document more sacred in the organization than the RGA, over which program staff labored. Draft RGAs were vetted by more senior officers before being allowed to land on the officers' meeting agenda. Up to that point, the Foundation had a long history of grantmaking in Israel, which mostly included support for agricultural and social science research and related endeavors. But I had also inherited responsibility for a relatively new portfolio of grants that sought to improve relationships between Jewish and Palestinian civil society leaders.

My early travels around Israel exposed the disquietude of the latter and disinclination for continued participation because these encounters, held at universities and

NGOs around the country, led to no concrete means of redressing legalized discrimination. Instead, Palestinian Israeli participants urged a civil rights approach to our work, inspired in part by the American civil rights movement of the 1960s.

Back to Frank: He presided over the officers' meeting where I sought approval for a grant to Israel's oldest human rights organization. But my presentation was followed by strident objection from one of the Foundation's senior officers, a man decades older and infinitely more experienced than I, upset that the RGA addressed problems of law-based discrimination.

Frank listened quietly, thanked me for my efforts and indicated that he would give the RGA further thought. Later that day, Frank approved the grant, without amendment.

In his wisdom, Frank allowed the denunciation of the proposed grant without rebuke or explicit disagreement in the meeting. Clear in his own mind that this was a direction he wanted to follow, his respectful handling of a senior member of his management team preserved his relationship with him while approving the Foundation's first explicitly human-rights-focused grant in Israel.

In his collegial and good-humored way, through this grant and many others, Frank led the Foundation to forge new paths on multiple fronts and demonstrated qualities that any young program officer would do well to emulate. Under his leadership, programming in the region began to pivot from land and water management, agricultural economics and maternal and child health, among other issues, to a more rights-based approach to development.

His mastery of such strategies in the United States was instrumental in informing work in overseas offices, and he often led without appearing to lead, a surprising quality for a physically imposing man whose quiet authority was exercised with a light touch.

His interest in diversifying the Foundation's staff significantly increased the number of women, persons of color and, in the overseas offices, nationals from the region. These innovations profoundly affected programming and enhanced the credibility of the Foundation as an instrument of social justice.

He is much missed. ■

Judy Barsalou worked at the Ford Foundation from 1982 to 1990 and again from 2008 to 2011 in the New York headquarters, the Cairo office and the Developing Country programs.

HOW TO LEAD: TRUE TO ONESELF AND “WITH CONFIDENCE, TRUST AND KINDNESS”

By Mora McLean

Franklin Thomas’s numerous accomplishments belie any notion that he defined “success” as the result of pure luck. So a recent quote of his, from an interview published by his Columbia Law School alma mater, caught my attention. Intriguingly, he characterized his life as “unplanned” and the “ordinary...byproduct of some forms of experience”.

To me this was his way of saying: “Making history is not a solo enterprise.” Rather, the impact of individual lives is most fruitfully examined in relation to others and context.

Frank’s pithy reflection squares with his interest in Black Studies. The Foundation’s major support for the discipline throughout the duration of his 17-year tenure testifies to this. Frank was acutely aware that Black Studies in the United States came into being in response to Black Power demands of the 1960s. Proponents advocated a liberatory form of education, a corrective to the deeply embedded false ideas that Africa and its worldwide diaspora have no meaningful history (apart from encounters with white Europeans) and have played no significant role in the creation of the modern world.

African area studies, the field of my undergraduate major in the late 1970s, was also part of this politically contested terrain of knowledge production.

For me, the complement of scholarship and activism was one of the Foundation’s main attractions. Given the ongoing campaign of assault in the United States on the production and dissemination of scholarly-based and unbiased knowledge about race, the impact of Frank’s leadership embrace of support for Black Studies in its ascendancy cannot be overstated.

On leadership

By the time I joined the Foundation in 1985, Frank was firmly established at the helm. As a newly minted program officer, I felt overawed by his role as a black man in charge of a powerful white institution, appreciative of his reserved but approachable demeanor and an affinity with his Caribbean heritage, which I shared.

One distinctive memory from those years is an incident that occurred during a meticulously planned Trustees’ visit to the Mississippi Delta. I was tasked with organizing a panel, including the National Conference of Black Mayors, a group formed following the

historic enactment of the Civil Rights and Voting Rights Acts of 1964 and 1965.

I felt the weight of responsibility for the Foundation’s grantmaking to strengthen the governance capacities of these newly elected and overburdened black officials. I prepared as though the program’s fate, and voting rights, hung in the balance.

During the Q & A, one of the mayors rose to aggressively denounce the Foundation or my remarks. I vividly recall having to muster the composure to conceal my panic and chagrin, and offer a measured response. Happily, whatever I said was well received. Urita Blackwell, Mississippi’s first black female mayor, and the only woman among the group of mayors present, diplomatically rose to my defense and diffused the tension.

I remember looking over at Frank (I didn’t want to let him down) and my relief at seeing his beaming smile. Afterwards he made a point of complimenting my handling of the situation, and we even laughed about it.

That experience was a lesson in how to lead by motivating people with confidence, trust and kindness. Later on, I would encounter a far more serious challenge, and Frank gave me some of the most impactful advice I’ve ever received on my own life’s journey to make a lasting contribution.

On “institution building”

Darren Walker, Ford’s current president, has observed that Frank saved the Ford Foundation from spending itself out of existence. The same might justifiably be said of the Africa-America Institute (AAI).

I left the Foundation to head AAI in 1996, the same year that Frank retired from Ford. I was drawn to AAI because of its education mission and founding during the convergence of African decolonization, the modern U.S. Civil Rights Movement and the Cold War, three momentous eras in United States and global history.

Taking on the leadership of AAI during the waning days of official apartheid in South Africa was a heady prospect. But before accepting the position, I sought Frank’s advice. I was especially keen to get his informed view based on his experience of chairing the Study Commission on United States Policy Toward Southern Africa.

In his understated way, Frank made clear to me that, from day one, my priority should be to get a firm grasp on the status of AAI’s financial health. Seeing the look on

my face (think “deer in headlights”), Frank didn’t skip a beat. He urged me to secure independent financial advice from the late **John Koprowski**, then also recently retired from the Foundation.

Thankfully, I had the good sense to follow Frank’s sage advice. John’s incisive financial analysis enabled me, with the invaluable support of AAI staff and board (then chaired by Foundation alumnus **Roger Wilkins**), to steer AAI through an intensely difficult period. Without this input it would not have been possible to conceive of and implement a plan for diversifying AAI’s revenue base. I’ve no doubt that AAI skirted obsolescence, and is now approaching its 70th anniversary largely due to Frank’s intervention.

Coda: on “making history”

The last time I saw Frank was at the Foundation board’s send-off for **Kofi Appenteng** (who succeeded Roger as AAI’s board chair and is its current president). He was in great spirits and pleased to learn about my ongoing efforts to recover buried portions of AAI’s founding history. He was intrigued by my account of William Leo Hansberry, the black scholar of African antiquity who pioneered African area studies in the United States in the 1920s and was one of AAI’s principal co-founders. I described how Nnamdi Azikiwe, Nigeria’s first president, whom Hansberry had taught at Howard University, inaugurated the Hansberry School of African Studies at the University of Nigeria at Nsukka in 1962.

Frank marveled at this, and we bemoaned the fact that so much of black history remains obscured or is forever lost. I opined that he should write a memoir, and was delighted when he shared that he was in the process of doing just that.

To have known Frank and benefited from his mentoring is a gift of great fortune that I strive to pay forward. I hope he was able to make headway on his memoir before joining the ancestors.

Regardless, Franklin Thomas’s “unplanned” legacy will doubtless be studied by historians committed to deepening our understanding of the triumphs and travails of the human family, in its entirety. ■

Mora McLean worked at the Ford Foundation from 1985 to 1996 in the Human Rights and Social Justice and the Africa and Middle East programs.

“THE TALLEST TREE IN OUR FOREST”

By Akwasi Aidoo

The passing of Frank Thomas is such a sad loss. As the saying goes, “He was the tallest tree in our forest.”

The metaphor of him as a tree captures the memories I have of him as a composite of grounded roots of rights, firm stem of distinction, supported branches and all the fruitful philanthropic bearings.

He was a trailblazer who stood up against apartheid in South Africa, championed equity across the Ford Foundation, promoted philanthropic social investments in poor communities, and more.

When I joined the Ford Foundation in February 1993 and soon headed the Dakar Office, he was my father-figure, always willing and able to serve as a sounding board on how to partner strategically with grantees and leaders in the conflict countries of Francophone West Africa, even though he was not my direct supervisor.



When I heard of his joining the ancestors and ancestresses, the news brought to mind this perspective on dealing with the loss of loved ones among the Akan people of Ghana and Cote d’Ivoire. According to the Akan people, humans have three elements:

Honam, or body, our physical being, given to us by our parents, Sunsum, or soul, given to us by the Creator, who is Onyankopong, and Nkrabea, or purpose (pronounced “Nkra-bi-ya”), which emerges from a “negotiation” with the Creator. When we are ready to

come, to be born, the Creator holds a meeting with us, during which we say what we intend to do on this earth. A deal is struck and Onyankopong gives us the go-ahead with our Nkrabea, which shows in our passion and all the things we dedicate our life to. It’s the purpose or meaning of our life.

Hence, the Nkrabea is more like “destination”, and the journey to that “destination” is entirely in

our hands. There is a lot of room for human agency and responsibility for our actions and how we navigate the ways to our greater calling.

When a person dies, the Honam “comes to an end”, although for some it continues to flow through progeny. The Sunsum never dies, and the Nkrabea, if fully realized, is enthusiastically celebrated on end. Akans, therefore, give more significance to the Sunsum and Nkrabea than to the Honam.

One of the ways the Nkrabea is celebrated during the funeral is embodied in the coffin. A shoemaker, for example, will be buried in an artfully designed shoe-coffin. (This link provides some examples: <https://www.theguardian.com/world/gallery/2013/feb/07/ghana-coffins-in-pictures>)

All of this is to say that Frank’s Sunsum and Nkrabea have left a trailblazing legacy for an endless period. Though he is physically gone, his wondrous and unalloyed gifts of Sunsum and Nkrabea are still alive. ■

Akwasi Aidoo worked at the Foundation from 1993 to 2006 in the Dakar and Lagos offices and in the Peace and Social Justice program in the New York office.

“PIVOTAL” SUPPORT FOR PROGRAMS IN CHINA

By Mark Sidel

Unlike some of the other contributors to this special newsletter on the life, work and legacy of Franklin Thomas, I did not know him at all well. Others will be able to speak considerably more personally about him, and in considerably more detail.

In my time at the Foundation when he was president, I was far down the organization chart and far away geographically, first as a program officer in China in the late 1980s and early 1990s and then developing and managing the Foundation’s programs in Vietnam in the early and mid-1990s.

And yet, of course, I directly felt Frank’s influence and impact on our work. In the early 1980s, when **Peter Geithner** initiated the Foundation’s efforts in China from New York in the first significant United States foundation engagement with post-Cultural Revolution China, Frank was a strong supporter of those intensive efforts and the programs that resulted.

Five years later, he was a strong supporter of the efforts that culminated in the opening

of the Foundation’s office in Beijing in late 1987 and our rapid expansion of programming in China.

And, more personally, in a decision that has had lifelong ramifications for me, he endorsed Peter Geithner’s recommendation that a young lawyer with many years of background in China be hired to work on that opening team in Beijing and to expand programming in law and governance. Frank’s decision enabled me to join Ford and eventually work with the Foundation in Vietnam, Thailand and India as well as China.

Eighteen months after the Beijing office opened, the Foundation and all other U. S. organizations then working in China were faced with the questions of what to do after the 1989 spring and June 4 events in Beijing.

I was far away from those New York discussions, but I was well aware that Frank and his senior colleagues upheld continued engagement with China after Tiananmen. He stood with his Chinese and American program staff in Beijing in supporting continued work in China while listening

carefully and respectfully to those who advocated for a reduction or an end to programming and engagement.

That decision in 1989 to remain engaged with and in China was the pivotal moment in the history of Ford’s China programs. The decision to remain enabled the Foundation’s work with Chinese civil society, women’s rights, reproductive health and other areas that were only a glimmer in programmers’ eyes in 1989 and to become possible in the 1990s and after. That forty-year engagement with China, which continues to this day, has had significant impact in China and well beyond.

I join other colleagues in remembering Franklin Thomas and mourning his passing. ■

Mark Sidel worked variously at the Foundation from 1988 to 2000 on the program staffs in Beijing, Hanoi, Bangkok and New Delhi, and now is Doyle-Bascom Professor of Law and Public Affairs at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

FROM THE CLASS OF '92: "WE WORKED FOR FRANK"

By Radhika Balakrishnan, Mahnaz Ispahani Bartos, Natalia Kanem, Anthony Romero and Marcia Smith

We were part of an especially large and diverse class of new program officers starting at the Foundation in 1992. We met on the first day of orientation and remain lifelong friends. We write now to pay joint tribute to the man who helmed the Foundation during the early part of our tenures, a man who mentored us, inspired us, taught us and made us proud to be a part of the collective endeavor called the Ford Foundation.

None of us had met Frank Thomas when we showed up for work on our first day. We were hired across five programs, with various hiring managers involved and with **Susan V. Berresford**, Frank's right hand and remarkable successor, serving as the final sign-off on our joining Ford's ranks.

We knew him first as Mr. Thomas. Most often and most importantly, we knew him as "FAT", as we directed our RGAs (recommendations for grant authorization) to him, via "SVB" and our respective directors. It was clear, in this and so many other unspoken ways, that he was in charge. He was our audience of one.

Each of us was drawn to Ford's mission and history, its commitment to causes, issues and institutions that had animated our early careers. But in all candor, we also came to work for Frank Thomas. By reputation, he led the Foundation courageously and with such distinction across a wide range of disciplines.

As young professionals of color, we felt especially proud that the largest and most impactful foundation at the time was led by a brilliant, dignified and visionary Black man with a wide breadth of experience and expertise. We showed up in the fall of 1992 to play on Mr. Thomas' team and we were proud of our jerseys. Over time, we would come to love our teammates.

As our confidence grew and we all received promotions at different times, we got to know him better. We got to spend more one-on-one time with him, and even ascended to new-found status in being able to call him "Frank". The days after successful board meetings, the holiday parties and lunches at the big table in the 11th floor cafeteria that Frank normally occupied were moments to relish in the casual Frank.

Every bit as distinguished, insightful and visionary as Mr. Thomas, the Frank we came



Thomas, right, became an indispensable ally of the anti-apartheid movement and forged a partnership with Nelson Mandela, left, before establishing the Foundation's first office in South Africa.

to know was also warm, nurturing, mentoring and funny. He had the best smile. In program officers' meetings, when one of us was presenting an especially significant grant, and when others in our class would jump in with words of support, Frank would crack a grin and signal that he knew precisely what we were up to.

Radhika Balakrishnan, as part of the Asia Regional and the Reproductive Health Programs, notes that Frank supported the program's global focus of reproductive health and rights that had a major impact on the outcome of the 1994 International Conference on Population and Development at the United Nations.

Radhika had the privilege of working with **Peter Geithner**, one of the few Republicans at the Foundation, and **José Barzelatto**, a Chilean exile from the Allende government. With Frank's encouragement, Peter and José worked together to hire some of the strongest feminist program officers in the Asia program.

Even after leaving the Foundation, Radhika consulted Frank on her early work on human rights and economic policy, demonstrating that his mentorship went beyond employment at Ford. Frank truly wanted us all to succeed wherever we landed. He was interested in who we were. While Frank knew the most important people in the world, Radhika remembers that he made his younger staff members feel as equally

important to him as the heads of state, dignitaries or world leaders he knew.

Mahnaz Ispahani Bartos developed a very meaningful rapport with Frank as she developed her New York-based program. She was a Pakistani-American immigrant set to replace the traditional foreign policy experts who had long managed Ford's United States foreign policy portfolio. **Shep Forman**, her director, became her program's most valued compass. Mahnaz was charged with and committed to bringing greater racial and gender diversity to the influential institutions of the foreign policy establishment and broadening their research and studies agenda after the end of the Cold War.

Under Frank's leadership, the Foundation had made enormous inroads in diversifying the boards and staffs of its domestic policy grantees, while the foreign policy institutions, many of which also had powerful memberships, lagged significantly behind.

Mahnaz had Frank's essential support as she negotiated challenging grants to diversify both research and personnel at these foreign policy institutions, and broadened the playing field by growing new institutions and nurturing pipelines for racially inclusive and women scholars in international foreign and security policy.

Frank well understood the delicate dynamics of trying to create change in independently powerful institutions and it

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TAKING RISKS “IS WHAT WE DO”

By Steven Lawry

I joined the Ford Foundation in 1992 and feel fortunate to have served under Franklin Thomas until his retirement in 1996.

As Assistant Representative for Southern Africa, I made grants in support of land rights and rural development in South Africa and Namibia during a time when both countries were undergoing transitions from apartheid to multi-racial constitutional democracies.

I was fortunate to be at the Ford board of trustees meeting in Cape Town in April 1996 when the presidency was passed from Franklin Thomas to Susan Berresford, and when **M.S. Swaminathan**, a board member, read a tribute to Mr. Thomas on behalf of the entire board. I remember one line in particular: “Franklin Thomas transformed the Ford Foundation from a technical assistance organization to a humanistic organization.”

That was a lesson I had come to absorb intuitively, but only then was it given a name: a humanistic organization. Like many of us then, I’d come to the Foundation from a “technical assistance” tradition. Some re-learning was required!

Deference to grantee leadership was perhaps the most important tenet of “humanistic” programming, and for a multitude of good reasons. Grantee leaders, living and working close to the problems, have the intimate understanding of context,

work the long hours, know what levers to push and pull to make social change happen, and in many cases bear great risks in advancing their organizations’ work.

Another tenet of Mr. Thomas’ humanistic programming saw the Foundation as the “Research and Development arm of society”. Now, R and D can have a corporate, meritocratic ring to it, but Mr. Thomas, I believe, was aiming to foster an appetite among program officers for risk-taking as a strategic value, believing that private funders have greater degrees of freedom to get behind innovative ideas and take on more risk than public agencies could normally tolerate. Philanthropy, he believed, should take greater advantage of that freedom.

An example of this vision of R and D’s humanistic approach is early Ford support of the Grameen Bank in Bangladesh. In 1981, Mohammad Yunus pitched a proposal to Ford’s Dhaka office to test uncollateralized lending to women’s groups. He was convinced, he said, that mutual support and social pressure occurring naturally in such groups would ensure that each member repaid her loan. Ford agreed, and provided Grameen an \$800,000 recoverable loan to be used as security against actual lending by commercial banks.

Yunus told the Ford team he’d put the money in a London bank and never touch

a nickel. “The fact that it is there will do the magic,” he said.

He was right and Ford’s risk was validated. Repayment approached 100 percent and microfinance was born, with far-reaching impacts on poor people’s lives then and now.

I interviewed Mr. Thomas in 2008 for a study on early Ford support for Grameen. I asked him what he would have told the board if the project had failed. First, he said, he would have described the rigorous project design process, recalling meetings in his office with Yunus and program staff, poring over plans spread across his conference table. Then, he said, he’d remind the board that taking risks in support of possible breakthrough solutions “is what we do”.

During my study, while digging into Grameen grant files in Ford’s archives, I came across a 1985 evaluation commissioned by the Dhaka office. Its last sentence read, “The Foundation’s own contribution [to Grameen’s success] has been its flexible and timely support that proved critical in enabling Grameen Bank to keep up momentum and to maintain the supportive environment in which creative individuals like Dr. Yunus best flourish.” ■

Steven Lawry worked at the Ford Foundation from 1992 to 2006 in the Namibia and Cairo offices and in Management Services in New York City.

We Worked for Frank

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was Mahnaz’s job to properly represent the Foundation in this mandate. When Mahnaz developed the worldwide Varieties of Muslim Experience meeting in 1994, which explored novel themes of work for the Foundation, Frank was also a stalwart supporter, encouraging open minds at the Foundation.

Natalia Kanem was hired into an office that was very near and dear to Frank’s heart, the Lagos field office. First as program officer for reproductive health and rights, and then as Representative for West Africa, Natalia remembers Frank’s interest in and commitment to that country’s efforts to chart a new course for its people. She recalls Frank’s charge to her: steady the Nigeria program. Her mandate was “to stay and deliver” during the dictatorship period in the 1990s when almost every donor group except Ford fled the country.

The Foundation, through the frequent

visits of Ambassador Donald McHenry, helped to ensure the safety of General **Olusegun Obasanjo**, a Foundation Trustee who eventually became President of Nigeria, during his imprisonment. Even in times of crisis and challenge, Frank was big on structure and accountability, and he insisted on essential safeguards against corruption and misconduct to ensure the integrity of the Foundation’s work.

Of course, Natalia notes that Frank’s commitment to Nigeria built on his earlier work to support human rights and a democratic transition in South Africa. Through the weight of his intellect and towering reputation, Frank positioned the Foundation as the leading external force to support the end of apartheid. Frank’s book on South Africa, *Time Running Out*, was hugely influential. It is still on Natalia’s bookshelf as a reminder to her, now as head of UNFPA, the UN sexual and reproductive health agency, to use whatever creativity she can muster to innovate and improvise in the push

for sexual and reproductive rights.

Frank’s personal relationship with Nelson Mandela is legendary, but he was also close with Mamphela Ramphele, Albie Sachs and Archbishop Desmond Tutu among many other visionary South African leaders.

Through some of the most important years of the Foundation’s engagement with South Africa, Frank’s leadership bolstered the anti-apartheid movement and provided the scaffolding for dialogue between figures in the Afrikaner government and the African National Congress. Later he did the same to assist in resolving differences among other groups within South Africa.

Anthony Romero was also hired into a post that Frank Thomas kept a close eye on: the civil rights portfolio. Anthony was 27 years old when he was hired to manage a portfolio that was mission critical to the Foundation’s persona. Ford had helped create many of the nation’s leading civil rights organizations: the Lawyers’ Committee
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The LAFF Society
c/o Nellie Toma
PO Box 701107
East Elmhurst, NY 11370

We Worked for Frank

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for Civil Rights Under Law, the Mexican American Legal Defense and Educational Fund, the National Council of La Raza.

Frank's dear friend and Ford Trustee, **Vernon Jordan**, had headed the National Urban League. Civil rights issues were top-of-mind for Frank, Vernon and the Foundation.

Frank had engaged and promoted a remarkable civil rights attorney, **Lynn Walker Huntley**, to direct his Rights and Social Justice Program. With Lynn at his side, Frank oversaw the creation of a Black Church Program to assist with the secular service delivery of African American churches. They deepened the Foundation's engagement with the Native American and Latinx communities. They also expanded this work to include Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders (AAPI), exploding the myth that the AAPI community was a "model minority" that should go it alone.

And when the NAACP came under duress and neared collapse, Frank and Lynn together intervened to provide financial and technical assistance that would ultimately put the

organization on a course for greater strength. The fact that the NAACP now celebrates its 111-year anniversary under the remarkable leadership of Derrick Johnson has everything to do with Frank's willingness to deploy his team and his Foundation's resources and reputation to help buttress one of America's greatest treasures.

Marcia Smith was Lynn Walker Huntley's choice to anchor the Foundation's efforts to support the professional development

Perhaps Frank's greatest legacy is his influence upon the people he touched and the leaders he supported and mentored.

of minority elected and appointed officials. Marcia came to the Foundation after serving as New York City Mayor David Dinkins' Chief of Staff. Under Frank's leadership, Marcia expanded the Foundation's national work in voter engagement and voter education, as well as its work to strengthen democracy through media policy reform.

Frank and Lynn's groundbreaking work to provide philanthropic support for seminal

films, such as the documentary series "Eyes on the Prize", inspired Marcia's award-winning career in documentary film over the two decades since she left the Foundation. And when she stepped back into philanthropy at another foundation, Frank once again provided steady advice and counsel.

The sweep of Frank's leadership across geographies, issues and institutions over his 17-year tenure as President of the Ford Foundation had a profound impact on the trajectory of peace, justice and human dignity in the United States and around the world. Yet as these personal anecdotes and reflections demonstrate, perhaps Frank's greatest legacy is his influence upon the people he touched and the leaders he supported and mentored.

It's been decades since any one of us worked at the Foundation. We have gone on to start and lead nonprofits, businesses and inter-governmental agencies. In all these efforts, while making our share of mistakes, whenever we have succeeded it has been because we channeled the best that Franklin A. Thomas taught us.

Whatever our future accomplishments, we still consider it one of our greatest honors to be able to say that "we worked for Frank." ■