

Margaret A. Duronio
Eugene R. Tempel

FUND RAISERS

Their Careers, Stories,
Concerns, and
Accomplishments

PUBLICATION OF THE



National Society of
Fund Raising Executives

Fund Raisers

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and Accomplishments**

Margaret A. Duronio, Eugene R. Tempel



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Foreword

Who are fund raisers? How were they educated in fund-raising practice? What are their concerns? What motivates them? These are some of the questions addressed in this study. Fund raisers today debate whether fund raising is a profession or a field. That debate cannot continue without a better understanding of the people who practice fund raising. To address these and other questions, the National Society of Fund Raising Executives and the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy collaborated on a study conducted by Margaret A. Duronio and codirected by Eugene R. Tempel.

The authors have analyzed the results of the study and provide here a valuable overview of America's fund raisers.

This research establishes a baseline of information about fund raisers, how they came into the field, how they are progressing in their careers, what their values are, the issues that affect their work, how they view themselves and other fund raisers, and many other valuable insights. These insights are extraordinarily important because fund raisers are on the front line of organizations and have within their power the ability to build or destroy the public trust in charities.

The study is based on a mail survey, with returns from more than 1,700 individuals, and 82 in-depth interviews with fund raisers on their careers, their education, and their opinions about the issues and future of fund raising as a profession. Most of the fund raisers surveyed were members of professional associations. The authors estimate that only about half of all fund raisers are members of such associations; very little is known about the other half of the population. Characterizing this group of fund raisers remains a challenge for the field and is one of the recommendations the authors make for future research.

The paid fund-raising professional is very much a product of the early twentieth century, when large national charitable organizations

were organized. Before that, fund raising was a calling among volunteers. During the twentieth century, continuous efforts to raise money for large efforts—such as the eradication of tuberculosis, heart disease, and cancer; building the endowments of colleges and universities; and supporting hospitals—have led to staffed fund-raising efforts. According to the authors, there may be as many as 50,000 paid fund raisers in this country today. Of those studied, most are well educated, have high ethical standards, and are committed to the missions of their organizations. A majority of fund raisers report that they have learned their skills from on-the-job experience, and most do not recommend formal education as the best way to learn about fund raising. Slightly more than half are women, and less than 5 percent are from minority groups. Most are paid fairly modest salaries; only a small percentage make over \$100,000 annually.

The authors conclude that fund raising may never become a “true profession” but that it might adopt professional standards. The distinctions they draw here are worthwhile. Yet, even if fund raising is a field rather than a profession, the authors are concerned about the lack of education in philanthropy and its traditions, a deficiency seen at the general as well as professional levels, even in management programs. They believe that while association-based education programs are important, such programs do not redress the lack of teaching of the philanthropic tradition in undergraduate courses or in graduate programs of education, social science, the history of science, and other areas. Moving the development of the field forward will be difficult if such education is not readily available.

The authors also address issues that should be of great interest and concern to leaders of charitable organizations. One issue is the position of fund raising within organizations. A significant percentage of fund raisers reported that their programs are not part of the organization’s planning. A high percentage of fund raisers are concerned about their public image, which they believe is low, especially as a result of recent scandals in organizations such as the United Way of America. Fund raisers understand that if public trust declines, their work becomes much more difficult. There is not enough effort to demonstrate to the public that most fund raisers are committed to their institutions and their causes. Most fund rais-

ers in this study exhibited strong values and ethical commitments to their work; however, it is not clear that such values are understood even by the institutions for which these people work. A significant portion of fund raisers revealed that they did not like to ask for money. Some feel frustrated when their colleagues do not even want to discuss this discomfort.

This book provides an illuminating analysis of these and other issues as well as a profile of fund raisers. Those who are concerned about this occupation as part of a field or a profession can begin to come to terms with the challenges that lie ahead. One of the authors' recommendations for the future is to build a similar study on a longitudinal basis. But even more important, this volume lays out the elements from which organizational leaders and fund-raising professionals can build a blueprint for the future. At a time when government funding at all levels is declining, organizational leaders should be very supportive of the education of fund raisers, of their ethics and values as professionals, of their efforts to build public trust, and of their need to become more comfortable with the very important task of asking for money.

Thanks should go to the authors for a seminal piece of work. I hope that this volume and its findings receive the attention they deserve both from fund raisers and organizational leaders. The future of the field—and the future of many organizations—will depend on how well they use such findings.

July 1996

VIRGINIA HODGKINSON
Vice President, Research
 INDEPENDENT SECTOR

To

Charles A. Johnson, retired vice president for development, Lilly Endowment, Inc., who promoted the idea that the sector would best be served by strengthening the fund-raising infrastructure of nonprofit organizations and providing fund raisers with the knowledge and training to carry out their work,

and

Henry A. Rosso, founder and director emeritus, The Fund Raising School, who taught us and so many others that ethical fund raising is a management process undergirded by a rationale that begins with organizational mission.

Preface

In 1988, Virginia Hodgkinson, vice president for research at Independent Sector, who was serving as a member of the Research Committee of the National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE) Foundation, suggested that if fund raisers wished to be taken seriously as professionals, they needed to know much more about themselves. The Research Committee decided to champion such a study and collaborated with the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy to organize the study and secure funding. Eugene Tempel, vice chancellor for external affairs at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, and chair of the NSFRE Research Council, convened an advisory group to help design the study. Jeanne Harrah-Conforth, through the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, organized the initial design and proposal for funding. The Lilly Endowment, Inc., and an anonymous donor provided the \$220,000 grant for the study to the NSFRE, which worked with the Center on Philanthropy for conduct of the study. Gene Tempel and Dwight Burlingame, director of academic programs and research at the Center on Philanthropy, asked Peg Duronio to serve as codirector of the project with them and as principal investigator of the research.

We wrote this book to share the results of this research with fund raisers, researchers, and others interested in fund raising, philanthropy, and nonprofit organizations. The overarching purpose of the research was to support the systematic development of a base of knowledge about the people in the fund-raising field. The research is purely descriptive; we make no claims that this effort proves anything. However, we are fully confident that this research provides a comprehensive picture of the most important and most challenging issues facing fund raisers. We are equally confident that this research provides a strong foundation for further development

of knowledge about fund raisers by identifying both numerous areas for additional research and by offering some direction about how that research might be framed. In addition, the research:

- Presents a comprehensive, detailed picture of contemporary fund raisers at all levels of professional achievement, working for and on behalf of the entire range of nonprofit organizations.
- Describes fund-raising practitioners, their education and other work experiences, and the issues they face in their work.
- Explores what motivates fund raisers and how they find rewards and satisfaction in their work.
- Identifies the trends and environmental conditions that currently influence fund raisers in their work.

Research Methodology and Overall Response

This research, a project conducted over a period of three years, involved two phases: a comprehensive mail survey followed by intensive personal interviews with selected survey respondents and a number of leaders in the fund-raising field. The mail survey was designed to collect information on demographic characteristics, career histories, career commitments and plans, and attitudes regarding the fund-raising field. We sent the survey to a stratified random sample of 2,501 members of the major professional organizations representing fund raisers: the Association for Healthcare Philanthropy (AHP), the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE), and the National Society of Fund Raising Executives (NSFRE). The sample was designed to reflect the proportion of fund raisers working in each nonprofit subsector.

After three mailings, we received 1,748 responses. In the first two mailings, we sent two copies (one blue, one green) of the survey and asked recipients to complete the blue copy and to give the green copy to a colleague in fund raising who was not a member of one of the professional organizations in the direct mailing. We used this approach in an attempt to reach a broader range of practitioners than the membership lists could identify. It is estimated that of the approximately fifty thousand fund raisers at work in the United States today, perhaps less than 50 percent are accessible

through membership lists of major professional organizations. It seems reasonable to assume that persons working in fund raising at smaller, less affluent organizations are less likely to be members of professional groups, because those organizations are less likely to be able either to cover membership fees for the staff or to provide salaries that allow staff to pay membership fees comfortably on their own. A thorough and accurate picture of the field would have to include fund raisers who are not members of professional associations. Unfortunately, our effort to reach this extended population was not very successful, netting only 326 returns from persons who received copies of the surveys from colleagues instead of directly from us. Additionally, responses on many of these surveys led us to believe that they were actually from people who were members of professional organizations.

For this reason, we combined all 1,748 responses and did not attempt to compare responses on blue forms (members) with responses on green forms (presumably nonmembers). The consistency of our findings with those of previous studies by professional organizations gives us confidence that our respondent sample accurately reflects fund raisers who are members of professional organizations. We are also confident that our respondents represent fund raisers working in specific kinds of nonprofit organizations in the same proportion they are estimated to occur in real life. However, since the large population of fund raisers who are not members remains unavailable for study, the major limitation of this study is that its findings can be generalized with confidence only to fund raisers who are members of professional organizations.

The interviews with eighty-two survey respondents were designed to complement survey responses, to explore career histories and career motivations in depth, and to compile information regarding interviewees' attitudes and values related to their work. The interviews covered four general areas: family background, education and career history, present position, and issues in fund raising. To stay within budget and time constraints, we selected nine areas across the country: Massachusetts and Connecticut; New York City; Western Pennsylvania; Washington, D.C. area; North and South Carolina and Georgia; Illinois; Wisconsin and Michigan; Houston area; and Southern California. Interviewees, who were

survey respondents in these geographical areas, worked in large and small cities, suburbs, and rural areas, and in organizations with national reputations and with local or regional influence.

Overview of Chapters

Chapters One through Eight open with a section called Snapshots. These sections are descriptions of some of the eighty-two people interviewed for this research. The snapshots are intended to provide examples of fund raisers whose career experiences illustrate the issues under consideration. After the Snapshots section, Chapter One presents the critical issues facing the fund-raising field and the nonprofit environment that forms the background for the work of fund raising. Chapters Two through Eight present the qualitative and quantitative data from the research. Chapter Two describes typical fund raisers and demographic characteristics of survey respondents, such as educational background and titles at work. Chapters Three and Four describe career histories in fund raising, including years in the fund-raising field, previous career experiences, and some factors involved in career decisions. Chapter Five is devoted to a discussion of compensation in fund raising. Chapter Six addresses several related issues including learning about fund raising, improving the practice of fund raising, and ethical aspects of fund raising. In Chapter Seven, we report on respondents' opinions about the personal characteristics, skills, and areas of professional knowledge of those they regard as the best fund raisers in the field. In Chapter Eight, drawing from all the data provided by the research, we return to the list of critical issues first presented in Chapter One and discuss these issues in some detail. Chapter Nine presents our conclusions and recommendations for practice for fund raisers, nonprofit organizations, and fund-raising professional organizations, as well as for further research.

Acknowledgments

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manuscript. Peg Duronio extends particularly heartfelt thanks to Sue Steele at the University of Pittsburgh, who ran interference, put in hours and hours of overtime, and took on numerous challenges so this book could be finished. We both want to acknowledge with deep appreciation our spouses, Bill Wilson and Mary Tempel, whose support made—and continues to make—all the difference.

April 1996

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Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

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The Authors

Margaret A. Duronio is director of planning and administration for the office of the vice chancellor for institutional advancement at the University of Pittsburgh. She earned a B.A. degree (1969) in English at Pennsylvania State University and a master's degree in social work (1971) and doctoral degree (1985) in education (higher education and research methodology) at the University of Pittsburgh. Before joining the staff at Pitt, she worked as an internal management consultant in a health care system and as a marital therapist in a social service agency. As project director and principal investigator of five national studies on fund raising, Duronio has published one book and numerous articles and papers.

Eugene R. Tempel is vice chancellor for external affairs at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis, where he also serves part-time as executive director of The Fund Raising School, and is associate professor of philanthropic studies at the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy. He earned a B.A. degree (1970) in English and philosophy at St. Benedict College and a master's degree (1974) in English and Ed.D. degree (1985) in higher education administration at Indiana University, Bloomington. As one of the founders of the Indiana University Center on Philanthropy, Tempel has been a proponent of the development of knowledge about fund raising and is particularly concerned about the ethics of fund raising and the relationship between fund raising and philanthropy. Tempel has authored several articles and chapters on fund raising and has served as vice chair of the National Society of Fund Raising Executives. He is a past chair of the NSFRE Foundation and of the NSFRE Research Council and serves on the boards of several nonprofit organizations.

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Chapter One

Challenges and Opportunities in Fund Raising

As we use the term, *fund raisers* refers to people whose jobs involve the acquisition of revenues from private sources for nonprofit organizations. Some of those people, as we will indicate in later chapters, object to that term and also object to use of the term *fund raising* to describe what they do. In spite of these objections and our awareness of them, we have persisted in this usage for two reasons. The first is strictly pragmatic: this is the simplest way to describe the people and the occupation we are discussing. The second reason is more complex. We like the terms. Not only are they simple and descriptive, but they have very positive connotations for us. Between us, we have a total of over thirty years in the fund-raising field; one of us (Tempel) is and has been a fund raiser for more than twenty years. We know a lot of fund raisers, and we know that the kind of fund raising we talk about in this book is a complex, multifaceted, multistep, honorable process with complex goals and objectives far beyond a bottom-line dollar figure. We use the term inclusively, to mean those whose work involves acquiring private financial support. All such people may or may not be engaged in direct solicitation of funds. We use the terms *fund raiser* and *fund raising* with pride, affection, and a great deal of respect. We wish more fund raisers had as much reason as we have to feel the same way about these terms.

A separate but related choice we have made is to refer throughout this book to the fund-raising field, rather than the fund-raising

profession. This research was born out of the desire of the Research Committee of the NSFRE Foundation to assist the field both to be seen as and to become more professionalized. According to the scholarly connotations of the term *profession*, fund raising is not likely to become a true profession like medicine or law. Fund raisers will never have the autonomy of doctors, for instance, and fund-raising work will never derive from the base of systematic knowledge that true professions have. Furthermore, when fund raisers refer to fund raising as a profession or say they want it to become a profession, they do not mean to say fund raising is or can be, strictly speaking, like medicine. Instead, what they convey is an expectation that fund raising will be both carried out and perceived as a function characterized by the public's highest expectations and standards of ethical behavior, interpersonal relationships, and excellence in performance. We sincerely hope this book will acknowledge those who already meet those expectations and encourage those who aspire to them.

Snapshots

The research presented in this book was designed to describe fund raisers and the values and knowledge they bring to their work, the things that motivate and discourage them, and the strengths and weaknesses they see in the field. Using the data collected in this research, we hope to demonstrate that fund raisers in general are well-educated, talented, committed, competent people who have a strong mission orientation and who bring strong professional and ethical values to their work. In following chapters, we present raw data from the research and observations and interpretations of the data. The verbal snapshots that follow in this chapter—like the ones in Chapters Two through Eight—describe some of the actual people interviewed for this research, providing examples of fund raisers whose career experiences illustrate the issues under consideration.

To bring our overview of the nonprofit environment to life, here we present four interviewees who have in common the general occupational title of fund raiser. They share many of the same values and personal characteristics as well as considerable knowledge about the practice of fund raising. Nonetheless, they followed