

Changes in Support for Circle Institutions

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The anchor institutions which formed University Circle in the late 1800's are the same a century later. Each institution, small or large, had its own cadre of benefactors, who for a variety of emotional and/or business reasons were responsible for the vision and financial support of that particular organization. During the rise of these cultural, educational, religious and social service institutions, fund raising was not formalized. When a need arose such as closing the gap in the budget at the end of the year, a call went out to various members of the board or one benefactor would simply write a check to balance the budget. If a capital project needed funding, the primary volunteer would make a challenge to several other trustees or friends and the money was raised.

Fund raising for Circle institutions has changed as the nonprofit sector has evolved into a "business-like" entity. The days when one single benefactor could balance the budget with one sweep of the pen or a building could be paid for by two or three people are over. The convergence of wealth available in the late 1800's and early 1900's does not exist. The fortunes have dissipated, moved to other communities, and the generations that currently control the wealth may not have interests in supporting the institutions built and nurtured by their forefathers. Because of this phenomenon, development or the art of raising money has changed to keep pace of the financial needs of the various institutions. All institutions seek money from the both public and private sources. Funds are requested in every giving range and the number of donors has geometrically increased to meet the operating and capital needs. The pace has increased. Fund-raising has become a year-round activity with staff and volunteers always in "campaign mode." Volunteers no longer bear the total burden of asking for gifts. Professional fund-raiser are hired who can sell the project and close the deal.

The University Circle institutions have kept pace with the times and will continue to grow and prosper in its park-like setting for generations to come.