

# Considering Philanthropy

**BRAKELEY  
BRISCOE**

FUNDRAISING & MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

Spring, 2005

New Canaan, CT and San Mateo, CA. Offices in New York, Florida, Washington DC and California

## *In this Issue*

- Mid-Campaign progress evaluations
- St. Anthony Foundation
- National Public Radio
- Hole in the Wall Gang
- Mega Giving
- BBI celebrates 85 years
- BBI conferences & speeches

## *BBI Services*

- Capital campaigns
- Campaign planning/feasibility
- Campaign management
- Development audit
- Pre-campaign readiness
- Mid-campaign progress study
- Development planning
- Planned giving
- Annual fund
- Fundraising databases
- Prospect research
- Alumni/constituent relations
- Board governance
- Retreat facilitation
- Board and staff training
- Communications/marketing
- Strategic planning

## Stalking the Elusive Mega Gift

# Is the Capital Campaign History?

Is the capital campaign a dinosaur? Or is it the only way to raise significant sums for buildings, endowment and special programs? Harvard University, which raised more than \$2 billion in its

recently ended campaign, is asking just that question. At a time when colleges and universities seem to be in perpetual campaigns, the biggest institutions are asking whether mega donors really need a campaign to make

their major charitable investments.

*We define mega gift here as a minimum of \$10 million. Hyperventilating? Remember, a mega gift is just a very large gift for your organization. For some, it may be useful to think about \$1 million as the mega gift range—it's an easy conversion, just drop one of the zeros.*

Brakeley John Price Jones, our predecessor company, is said to have "invented" the capital campaign at the time of our founding in 1919 when we counseled Harvard's first endowment campaign. We raised \$14 million, the largest sum ever raised by an educational institution up to that time.

So we take a keen interest in the possible extinction of our invention. We do think close examination of the assumptions and strategies that under gird capital **campaigning**

*(Continued on page 3)*

---

## BBI Celebrates 85 Years Serving Nonprofits

Brakeley Briscoe Inc celebrates its 85<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. Its roots go back to the founding of the John Price Jones Co. in 1919 and G. A. Brakeley & Co. Ltd in Montreal in the late 1940s. After a number of name changes, Brakeley Inc. merged in 2003 with The Briscoe Group, which was founded in 1994, to become BBI.

Brakeley was one of the first fundraising consulting firms and, over the years, has served the nation's leading institutions and organizations. Brakeley was also one of the first to provide fundraising consulting ser-

vices in Europe. Today our sister company, Brakeley Limited, serves organizations in Europe, Africa and Asia from headquarters in London and offices in Germany, Sweden and Japan. Brakeley's archives are an important part of the history of the nonprofit sector and they are preserved at Indiana University's Center on Philanthropy.

BBI Chair and Managing Director George A. Brakeley, III, is the third of his name to head the firm. Briscoe Group founder Marianne Briscoe is President and Managing Director.

## About Our Clients

# Feeding the Hungry; Nourishing the Mind; Helping Kids

*BBI serves clients in a wide range of mission areas including health, human services, education, arts and museums, environment and civic groups.*



**At St. Anthony Foundation** BBI just completed a campaign plan and is now providing campaign strategic counsel. St. Anthony is a beloved San Francisco institution and a provider of meals to those in need. Right now most services are housed in a converted auto repair shop whose design requires people to line up outside, around the block, for meals. St. Anthony will renovate this structure and one across the street, in order to feed more people, heal more people, and provide additional services including senior housing and respite care to San Francisco's neediest.

The challenge: for decades St. Anthony has never actually asked for money. Their reputation and the power of the Franciscan charisma leads many to re-

member St. Anthony in their wills and at the year-end holidays. In this way the Lord has provided for their mission to the city's hungry and troubled. But St. Anthony's leaders concluded that fundraising for the facility is something they have to take into their own hands. This is a big culture change for St. Anthony and we take pride in their growth in major gift fundraising.

One client every one has heard (of) is **National Public Radio**. After Joan Kroc willed \$200+ million to NPR, the executive staff had two major tasks ahead: To make good on their commitment to Mrs. Kroc that the organization would continue to grow its resources through fundraising and, second, to prepare a strategic vision and plan that made the best possible use of the significant new endowment. NPR retained BBI to review the major gifts program and recommend ways in which NPR could expand the reach and effectiveness of its fundraising.



NPR is now implementing the member station pilot programs we recommended. **Hole in the Wall Gang Camp:** About eighteen months ago we did an audit for The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp Fund, founded by Paul Newman, to provide a summer camp for kids with life-threatening diseases. HITW is now a year-round organization and has spawned similar camps around the world. Because of Newman's celebrity, their development program has been events-oriented. Our charge was to evaluate their advancement program from stem to stern and to offer appropriate strategic and operational recommendations, which we did. We then provided counsel in implementing those recommendations, including serving in a counseling role in an executive search to recruit a Director of Development. Four months ago HITWG invited us back to assess their progress and we are now counseling them on improved management of their fundraising data base system.



**Mega Gifts—Continued from p. 3**

effort to craft that transformative future vision. Your case for support should show how the campaign gifts will change you into something better able to serve your mission. So a good campaign needs list can provide points of entry for donors who want to be part of a transformation. But campaigns do one more thing. Within the strategic plan and vision, they create a timetable and a deadline for raising the funds and addressing the needs and the future vision. Without the time structure or urgency a campaign gives, it would be very hard indeed to start a mega donor in training on the path of making those small and then ever larger gifts that build engagement with your organization and clear the way for eventual mega gift discussions.

So mega donors probably don't need capital campaigns to move forward on their mega gifts. At that point in their philanthropic relationship with you they are probably beyond caring who else is giving. They are confident they are not the only major donors, and they can see how to make a difference in your organization in a way that is highly meaningful to them. But that mega gift moment is ten years and in most cases one or two or more campaigns in the making.

The capital campaign may not be the motivation a mega donor needs, but the campaigns of the past may very well have been the way that together you and the donor reached the mega gift threshold.

At Brakeley Briscoe we're not ready to give up on the campaign but we know it is changing and adapting year over year and client by client.

—Marianne G. Briscoe, Ph.D., ACFRE

# Stalking the elusive mega gift . . .

**mega Gifts**—Continued from p. 1

is a healthy thing. And we believe that some aspects of capital campaign “doctrine” are less effective than they once were. In newsletters to come, we look forward to exploring some of the enduring and, conversely, tattered and worn campaign conventions. But here let us think about mega donors . . .

Most mega gifts are the product of long, multi-part cultivation interactions between the prospect/s on one hand and, on the other, faculty and scientists, development executives, and senior academic management, including the President. By “long” we mean as long a time frame as ten years. We speak here of an academic setting because most mega gifts have been made to higher education, though recently there have been some noteworthy ones directed elsewhere, such as Joan Kroc’s significant bequests to Salvation Army and National Public Radio. And we believe that as other nonprofits become more adept at truly major gift strategies, mega donors will begin to invest in many more parts of the sector.

While campaigns are taking longer than they once did—there was a time when 12-24 months was the norm—few institutions can build a 3-5 year campaign around a mega donor’s typical cultivation timetable. So, as Harvard is exploring, if you want to focus on mega gifts, maybe you aren’t well served by a capital campaign.

But very few organizations have the luxury to focus their fundraising on mega gifts and those who might focus here are, in our view, ill advised to do so. Here’s why:

## **Mega donors start small**

Mega donors rarely start out with mega gifts. We do a lot of our work in Silicon Valley where venture capitalists showed

us how they structure their investing: find a company you think will be a winner and make an initial round investment. Watch how the company uses your money and if you like what you see, make a second round investment, and so on.

In a similar fashion, your biggest donors most probably got there by starting out with fairly small gifts and then making ever larger commitments when they liked what you did with their last gift. In capital campaigns we are seeing lead donors make their gifts incrementally as well. These prospects know the critical role their pledges play in campaign success, but they don’t want the entire campaign to rest on their commitments. So they will pledge a fraction of your lead gift “ask” and watch how the rest of the campaign progresses. If it moves forward they may respond positively to re-solicitation at critical points in the campaign.

This can be hard on a campaign director. Campaign doctrine teaches that we must get the lead gifts first and we must ask lead gift prospects for pledges at the top of the campaign gift table. If the lead donor is targeted for \$20 million and pledges just \$1 million, has everything turned to ashes, is the campaign in dire trouble? Or is this an incremental giver who first wants to see others step up? And how can we know? Most probably we can’t know for sure. But in today’s campaign world, our best strategy is to keep up the cultivation and stewardship of this prospect, to report regularly on campaign progress (as a good campaign would do in any case) and then to ask at a suitable interval, probably one year later, for a second commitment—even if the first one was a multi-year pledge.

Since mega donors start with small gifts, this means that there are future mega donors throughout your donor base. They are of varying ages and have been associated with your organization for

varied periods of time. If you focus on prospects for \$10 million gifts, you will of course be overlooking future mega donors who are only at the \$50,000 level in their relationship with you. A good reason to continue using the capital campaign.

## **Transformative giving**

We encourage clients to think about their big gift prospects as potential active *investors* in their organizations. They give to make something happen that could not occur otherwise. They expect to be treated as partners in that transformation. They may or may not want board seats, but they certainly want frequent opportunities to learn what is being done with their money, to get to know the people who are using it and, perhaps as well, those who are benefiting from it.

Transformational giving does not mean one more computer on the desks, another scholarship or fellowship, or a name on a room or even a building. Transformation means changing the way your organization addresses its mission. It may take computers or a building to effect a transformation, but that is not what we are offering to the mega donor.

It is a challenge for any organization to stay its course and diligently pursue its multi-year strategic plan while at the same time espousing an adventurous, transformative vision—or maybe even several of them. And it is harder still to do this in a way that has consistency and coherence, that doesn’t turn the organization into a simple pursuer of money for any plan that a prospect may espouse. Our British partner, Brakeley Ltd, calls this complicated, disciplined strategy “raising your game.”

## **Coherence and urgency**

The planning work that supports your campaign should include considerable

# BRAKELEY BRISCOE

FUNDRAISING & MANAGEMENT CONSULTANTS

*Powerful thinking,  
Creative counseling*

51 Locust Avenue, Suite 204  
New Canaan, CT 06840  
203 972-0282

322 W. Bellevue Avenue  
San Mateo, CA 94402  
650 344-8883

www.BrakeleyBriscoe.com  
Info@BrakeleyBriscoe.com

**Serving the Americas  
from Connecticut,  
California, New York,  
Florida, and  
Washington DC**

## Let's Meet

### Conferences & Speeches

- **AFP 42nd International Conference**  
Baltimore, MD—April 3 - 6, 2005, BBI exhibiting at Booth 709  
**Abbie von Schlegell**—"If You Are in the Minor Leagues, You CAN Raise Major Gifts" - April 5th 1:30-2:45 P.M.
- **Anne Arundel Community College Nonprofit Institute**  
Arnold, MD—April 29, 2005  
**Abbie von Schlegell**—will speak on "How Does Your Garden Grow?"
- **AAM Museum Expo**  
Indianapolis, IN— May 1 - 5, 2005, BBI exhibiting
- **AFP San Diego Fundraising Day**—May 24, 2005  
**Marianne Briscoe** will give the keynote address "High Impact Philanthropy and How It Transforms Communities"
- **AFP MD Annual Conference**—Towson, MD—June 14, 2005,  
BBI exhibiting
- **AFP Fundraising Day New York, NY**—June 24, 2005  
**Melanie Brandston** will speak on "Donors are People Too: Building Relationships That Raise Money"

## BBI's Consultants

## Consulting Services

### Mid-Campaign Progress Evaluations

As the nonprofit sector emerges from the most difficult fundraising climate in memory, some organizations are looking at stalled capital campaigns. Fundraising progress has slowed. Campaign volunteer leadership is worn out or perhaps even departed. The needs list may have changed significantly. While fundraising all but stopped, the organization and the world continued to change apace. What to do?

For several clients BBI has recently conducted mid campaign progress evaluations. These short projects audit the internal campaign operation and consider the profile of campaign progress to date. They also involve a small number of confidential insider/donor interviews. The evaluations take about 90 days to complete and the result is a report much like the feasibility/

campaign planning study report done at the start of a campaign.

These evaluations can identify new or additional gifts; capture leadership's real, often unspoken, views about campaign outlook and generally re-set the campaign strategy for the new environment. Or, alternatively, the report can advise you how to "declare victory" with what has been raised and set the steps for addressing the next campaign phase, a new major gift effort or a follow-on capital campaign.

BBI has recently provided these services to Bellarmine College Preparatory, Kinship Center, Dominican University of San Rafael, and The Long Center for the Performing Arts.

George A. Brakeley, III  
*Chair & Managing Director*  
Marianne G. Briscoe  
*President & Managing Director*  
Alden F. Briscoe  
*Executive VP & Managing Director*

*Managing Directors:* Henry E. Bessire,  
John M. Carter, Jr., Abbie J. von Schlegell

*Associate Managing Director:*  
Shauna A.S. Chabot

*Senior Vice Presidents:* Melanie M.  
Brandston, Juliana Ver Steeg, Vaughn  
Oliver Welty, Stephen Wertheimer

*Vice Presidents:* Christine R.L. Jeffers,  
David Lewis, Michael Seymour

*Writer:* Eileen Reynolds

*Manager of Operations:* Mary M. Mattoni

*Consulting Associates:*  
Marjorie Hoblitzell Baldwin,  
Andrea M. Capozzoli, Lynne M. Davidson,  
Pirie M. Gall, Myra Peabody Gossens,  
Malcolm D. Kelly, Brigid D. Kernan,  
Stacey Mednick, June Thames Poust,  
Susan F. Rice

**Brakeley Briscoe Inc.**