

Ronn Richard Remarks
Crain's Women of Note Breakfast Brainstorm
Wednesday, Feb. 18, 2015

Good morning, everyone. I am very glad to join you.

The Cleveland Foundation is happy to partner with Crain's for the 2015 Women of Note event. Crain's was an instrumental partner last year for our foundation's centennial celebration, helping us highlight our history of impact in our community.

As John mentioned, we want to expand this year's event into a half day leadership summit with new programming so that participants feel even more connected and inspired.

To do so, we are depending on some of the city's most essential voices. That's you—Cleveland's female leaders.

I urge you to look around the room this morning. You are here today because you have made a meaningful difference for Greater Cleveland.

And you are in outstanding company, a company that also includes the generations of women before you who helped to shape and grow this great city from the very start.

Much like our city, the strength and courage of female leaders has been in the Cleveland Foundation's DNA from day one.

That goes back to 1917 when Belle Sherwin was named to our board of directors. Belle was a pioneer of the women's suffrage movement and in 1924 became President of the National League of Women Voters in Washington, DC.

It's that kind of strength, passion, and purpose that continues today as the Cleveland Foundation begins our second century. The everyday work of the foundation is guided by a staff that is 91% female. Our female senior staff, board members and many generous philanthropic partners truly lead the way.

Through 101 years of grantmaking, the Cleveland Foundation has also supported a host of women's issues, from domestic abuse and women's health to microloans for female small business owners.

One quick example is our support in 1972 of the Women's Law Fund, which enabled a team of female attorneys to help women litigate cases of gender discrimination—it was the nation's very first nonprofit dedicated to this cause.

That's why we're so proud to support and expand Crain's Women of Note event.

In July, we will honor and celebrate women leaders across every business sector in Greater Cleveland. We will foster an even stronger sense of community for past, present and future Women of Note.

And, as Cleveland's women have done for centuries before us, together we will forge a path for the next generation of leaders—the young women and girls who look up to all of you as role models in our community.

We look forward to benefitting from your experience today so that this year's first-ever Summit will be engaging and inspirational for every attendant and by extension—for their communities.

Thank you for your willingness to celebrate and share your skills, knowledge and values. You are turning your passion into purpose to enhance the lives of all Greater Clevelanders.

Now, I'll turn over the podium to our moderator, Elizabeth McIntyre. Elizabeth joined Crain's as editor in April 2014, after spending two decades at The Plain Dealer, most recently as deputy managing editor for content. She was also vice president of communications and public relations at the National Association of College Stores, and a public relations officer at the Cleveland Foundation for two years, where it was my great pleasure to work closely with her.