

THE PEOPLE'S ENTREPRENEUR

Homer C. Wadsworth



DIRECTOR OF THE CLEVELAND FOUNDATION *1974 to 1983*

Foundations operate best when they work at the growing edge of knowledge, when they uncover and support talent interested in finding new ways of dealing with old problems, when they experiment in the grants they make and the people they support.

– HOMER C. WADSWORTH

Text Diana Tittle, with research and writing assistance by Dennis Dooley
Copyediting Lisa Semelsberger McGreal *Design* Stacy Vickroy
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The *People's* Entrepreneur



*Most of the good things that
I have seen in foundations came
out of the fact that there were
some people at a given time and a
given place who had an idea and
some guts. – HCW*

Waiting in the reception area of the Cleveland Foundation, Doris Evans prepared herself to be rejected yet again. The pediatrician had conceived of a new not-for-profit enterprise for which she was seeking charitable seed dollars. Along with several other African-American physicians, Dr. Evans wanted to start a health care clinic in Glenville, one of the poorest neighborhoods in the city. This was not to be a typical walk-in clinic, with babies screaming in a dingy reception area while their parents waited hours upon end to be seen by the first available doctor. Such practice flew in the face of the common-sense principle that health problems are more effectively diagnosed and treated by a physician familiar with the medical history of a patient, and Evans, a 31-year-old activist who had dreamed of becoming a doctor since the age of four, envisioned a medical facility that would redress the situation. Glenville Health Association was to be a privately owned, not-for-profit clinic offering cradle-to-grave care of such excellence, in an atmosphere of such professionalism and cleanliness, that it would attract the affluent as well as the indigent. Each patient, no matter what his or her financial status, would be assigned to a personal physician, seen on an appointment basis, and treated with respect and dignity.

Evans and her colleagues needed to raise \$2 million to launch, equip, and subsidize the operation of the clinic until it became self-supporting. The year was 1974, and \$2 million was a considerable sum of money – but not (as Evans had tried to persuade the representatives of numerous other foundations) in comparison with the long-term societal costs of failing to provide some of the community’s most vulnerable citizens with preventive medical care. Her arguments never seemed to penetrate the hauteur of those in a position to enable a test of her promising new concept of health care delivery for the indigent. Time after time, Evans had passionately laid out her plans, only to be quizzed about the reasons why she had failed to dot this I or cross that T. Ultimately dismissed with instructions to go back and rewrite her grant proposal, she had left each of her meetings with potential funders feeling discouraged but not defeated.

Being ushered into the presence of Homer Wadsworth, the 60-year-old director of the Cleveland Foundation, was like emerging from a cave into the spring air. Evans immediately sensed that this was a man with a joyful heart, a person who relished the possibilities of life. The director of the country’s first and oldest community foundation had a genuine smile, and the merry twinkle in his eyes lit up the room. Although he was the gatekeeper of a \$140 million charitable endowment¹ built from the gifts of Greater Clevelanders who wished their savings or wealth to be used to improve the quality of life in the community, Wadsworth did not adopt the wary attitude of a person who fears his pockets are about to be picked. He

1. The Cleveland Foundation’s assets now surpass \$1.9 billion, making it the country’s third-largest community trust.

greeted Evans warmly. His graciousness immediately set her at ease and made her feel as if he considered her a peer.

Wadsworth's unfailing sociability was at one with his genuine liking for people. Norman Krumholz, a former City of Cleveland planning director who worked as a special consultant to the Cleveland Foundation in the early 1980s, vividly remembers the time he arranged for a group of neighborhood organizers and residents to confer with the foundation's director about a grant proposal. Lacking money for babysitters, some of the women brought their children to the meeting. Taking no apparent note of the youngsters' grubby hands and faces, Wadsworth led the assembly into the foundation's conference room, where he poured coffee for the adults and dispensed pop and pastries to the children. He might have magically plucked a quarter from behind a youngster's ear (one of his many ice-breaking skills) before getting down to business. Be of good cheer – an inscription, frequently incised on ancient-world tombstones, that Wadsworth invariably quoted when taking his leave of a friend or a gathering – was advice that he himself took to heart.

During his conference with Doris Evans, Wadsworth displayed little interest in examining the minutia of her proposal. An avid conversationalist who was always on the hunt for the cutting-edge of knowledge in the field at hand, he instead set about exploring her ideas for ensuring the clinic's success in the long term. The collegial discussion served to restore Evans's shaken confidence and enlarge her thinking about the challenges ahead.

From the distance of more than 30 intervening years, Doris Evans can no longer remember whether Wadsworth folded and unfolded his glasses or lightly drummed his fingers on his desk, as was his habit, while he pondered her request for financial assistance. Nor does she recall if, at the conclusion of their meeting, he leaned back in his chair, placed his hands behind his head in trademark fashion, and said, in a folksy twang born of the previous quarter-century he had spent as the director of an association of small private foundations in Kansas City, Mo.: "I think we can do something about that." (Wadsworth's Cleveland colleagues dubbed these signature lines and down-home verities "Homerisms.") Evans does, however, remember another telling expression of the foundation director's essential decency and humanity: his statement of pleasure that she had given the Cleveland Foundation the privilege of participating in her important endeavor.

The foundation's board of directors subsequently awarded the Glenville Health Association a grant of several hundred thousand dollars. This was far from the largest or most important grant Wadsworth had ever recommended, but the resounding vote of confidence helped Evans and her colleagues raise the remaining funds needed to open the clinic's doors in 1974. As promised, the facility was able to offer Glenville residents comprehensive medical,

dental, and mental health care, regardless of their ability to pay. As hoped, the high quality of the clinic's services also attracted those who could afford to be choosy about their health care providers. Nearly 20 percent of the clientele came from outside the immediate neighborhood, a base of support that allowed the clinic to continue its charitable work in Glenville for more than 15 years.

What had Homer Wadsworth seen in this particular proposal that other grantmakers had missed? A talent scout with few equals, Wadsworth had seen the leadership potential of Doris Evans, interim associate dean of student affairs at the medical school of Case Western Reserve University in Cleveland. He had recognized her intelligence, her commitment to social justice, her entrepreneurial drive – qualities that would ultimately lead to her promotion to clinical professor of pediatrics at the medical school.

A “Renaissance man” (a description bestowed by U.S. Senator and former Cleveland Mayor George Voinovich), Wadsworth had immediately appreciated the promise of Evans's plans. His enthusiasm was all the more remarkable in light of the fact that he had recently engineered the transformation of the entire health care system in Kansas City, yet he did not let the dazzling nature of that accomplishment blind him to the merits of what by comparison was a miniscule project. The Glenville Health Association might not have been a sure bet to become the next Cleveland Clinic, but he recognized that its operation would surely teach Greater Cleveland something new about how to combat the damaging physical effects of multi-generational poverty. And, as one of the philanthropic sector's wisest practitioners, Wadsworth understood that it was his responsibility to take a chance on community entrepreneurs – “people who can be counted on to do things,” as he liked to say – and new ideas, especially those that promised to stimulate positive social change or provoke needed civic action. 🦋



After being turned away by several other philanthropies, the Glenville Health Association received a Cleveland Foundation grant to start a model clinic for the indigent (pictured here). A talent scout with few equals, Wadsworth had recognized the founding physicians' potential for leadership and innovation.



Renaissance Man



Wadsworth liked to play the role of bumblebee, using insights gained in one field to inform another.

Far earlier than most of his professional peers, Wadsworth had seen that community foundations must move beyond the passive role of responsive grantmaker if they were truly to become a force for social progress. Having served as a municipal government administrator during the 1930s, he knew that the problems besetting American cities could not be lessened, let alone overcome, by the time-honored philanthropic practice of supporting the routine activities of favored charities. Dispensing philanthropic dollars to help not-for-profits “pay the light bill” (as he once styled it) merely perpetuated the status quo. Wadsworth believed that foundations have the luxury of taking the long view – of looking beyond immediate needs to see the long-term possibilities. A man of no great wealth of his own, he was determined to ensure that the approximately hundred million charitable dollars whose spending he was to direct during his 35 years in the philanthropic sector – to say nothing of the hundreds of millions of additional investments leveraged by his grantmaking activities – went to causes that mattered most to people: improvements in health care and education and city governance; increased economic vitality; and enhanced access to nature and the arts.

“Every community is always in the midst of change,” Wadsworth once stated, “of becoming something new, of adding something to its inheritance.” Community-building was his holy grail, and the family of man was his church. Wadsworth was so single-minded – and so successful – in his pursuit of fresh opportunities for his fellow citizens that a close associate in Kansas City, Hallmark Corp. executive Nathan Stark, was once prompted to describe his lifelong friend, indelibly, as the “people’s entrepreneur.”

As president of the Kansas City Association of Trusts and Foundations from 1949 to 1974 and then as director of the Cleveland Foundation from 1974 through 1983, Homer C. Wadsworth propelled the postwar re-invention of each city. In Kansas City (to elaborate on one example of his widespread influence), he galvanized the civic consensus and secured the governmental funding needed to overhaul the community’s inequitable and underfunded public health system. The ingredients of his success were hard data and research, strategically planted suggestions, deftly timed seed grants, his personal charm, and keen instincts for negotiation.

During his decade in Cleveland, the Cleveland Foundation supported or launched many of the initiatives that underpinned what Clevelanders came to think of as the renaissance of the city in the 1990s. Under Wadsworth’s visionary and energetic direction, the foundation helped Cleveland peacefully prepare for desegregation of the public schools, return from default, revitalize Playhouse Square, reclaim its industrialized waterfront as a recreational asset,

strengthen and expand its arts institutions, and develop the capacity to analyze and act on regional and national socioeconomic trends.

In the process of enabling Kansas City and Cleveland to move boldly forward, Wadsworth enlarged the sense of mission and possibility of his peers in the foundation world. Watching the “people’s entrepreneur” at work – helping to outline the civic agenda in Kansas City, providing politically astute leadership in Cleveland, contributing in both cities to the strengthening of critical institutions and the solution of urban problems – was to be convinced of the strategic role a community foundation could play. By embracing and effectively carrying out such then-untraditional roles as convener, educator, program manager, and venture capitalist, the philanthropies led by Wadsworth helped to define a model of civic activism and establish standards of excellence for community foundations in this country and abroad.

Wadsworth also helped to shape philanthropic policy and professional standards at the national level, especially in his promotion of the then-heretical principles of accountability and full reporting. (The Kansas City Association of Trusts and Foundations had blazed the trail by voluntarily making annual reports to an appropriate court of record.) Wadsworth helped to create the Council on Foundations, the Independent Sector, and the Foundation Center’s network of regional libraries and later served either as a board member of or a trusted advisor to these influential advocacy and support organizations. Even in retirement, he

The foundation invested more than \$1 million during Wadsworth’s tenure in a grass-roots campaign to defuse the tensions arising from court-ordered desegregation of the public schools. Cleveland avoided the violence that greeted the first day of busing in other big cities.





Under Wadsworth, the foundation supported or launched many of the initiatives underpinning the renaissance of Cleveland in the 1990s – from the efforts of Mayor George Voinovich (left) to wrest city government from default to plans to revitalize Playhouse Square (right).

extended philanthropy's reach, as a consultant on the creation or development of community foundations in Puerto Rico, Hawaii, and St. Croix in the Virgin Islands.

Recognizing his pioneering contributions to the field, his peers deemed Wadsworth “the senior statesman in American philanthropy,” “one of the giants of the foundation field,” and “probably the most widely loved and respected figure in American philanthropy today.” “Ask anyone to name the top 10 most significant leaders in the field,” Brian O’Connell, the founding president of the Independent Sector, has observed. “The lists would all be different, but Homer would be on them all.” Similar sentiments were expressed, albeit in the form of a backhanded compliment, by Kansas City Mayor Illus (Ike) Davis, a highly respected official who nonetheless felt hard-pressed to respond to the many initiatives of the Association of Trusts and Foundations. He proclaimed Homer Wadsworth “the most dangerous man in Kansas City.” Warming to the subject in an interview with the *Kansas City Star*, Davis complained: “He gets these things started, creates a demand for them, and then forces somebody else, usually the city, to carry on.”

A person who was confident enough of his own self-worth to take the heat or remain uncredited in the background, Wadsworth was modest, even offhand, about his many achievements and accolades. Looking back on a distinguished career whose highlights included service as a naval officer in World War II, successful reform of the patronage-riddled Pittsburgh parks department and leadership of the New School for Social Research, postwar New York City’s intellectual hotspot – missions well accomplished before he even entered the field of philanthropy – he labeled himself a “retread.” It was precisely this combination of savvy and self-deprecation that made Homer C. Wadsworth so disarming. 



Education of a “Retread”



*The funny thing about foundation
work is that everything you have
ever done is of value to you.*

– HCW



A fierce competitor, Wadsworth lettered in four sports in high school. He is pictured here (first row, second from the left) with his YMCA team, the Black Cats.

Homer Clark Wadsworth was born in Pittsburgh, Pa., on April 3, 1913, the son of a tugboat captain. When Wadsworth was five, his father's leg was crushed in a tugboat accident, an injury which ultimately caused his father's death in 1921. This tragedy was the second to befall the family within five years. Wadsworth's older sister, Lois, died in 1916 from scarlet fever resulting from botched medical care. (His younger sister, Marjorie Jane, was born the following year.) The loss of the family's breadwinner put a severe strain on its finances. From the age of eight, Wadsworth supplemented the family's income by performing odd jobs, such as selling newspapers and magazine subscriptions. Displaying an entrepreneurial bent even then, he talked his neighborhood buddies into helping him peddle the *Saturday Evening Post*. While the members of his team kept their commissions on sales, he garnered sufficient "points" from their combined efforts to win a free bicycle.

Wadsworth later landed a job as a counselor and lifeguard at the YMCA in Homewood-Brushston, a section of Pittsburgh populated by low-income African Americans and whites. (His subsequent championship of school integration in Kansas City and Cleveland had its roots in childhood friendships with black kids from the neighborhood, including one Billy Strayhorn, who went on to become Duke Ellington's legendary lyricist. Wadsworth loved

to recall his rivalry with Strayhorn for the unofficial title of the “marble king” of Homewood-Brushston.) Recognizing Wadsworth’s native abilities, a coach at the Y encouraged him to think about going to college, in the process giving the fatherless youth his first glimpse of the importance of mentoring.

Wadsworth excelled at displays of physical agility – he lettered in four sports in high school – and he realized that his athleticism could be his ticket to a higher education. Although he could also have matriculated on the basis of grades, his Y coach had pointed out that academic scholarships generally covered only half of college tuition and expenses. A left-hander, Wadsworth decided to devote an entire summer to training himself to shoot baskets with his right hand, in the hopes that ambidexterity would make him an even more attractive candidate for a full athletic scholarship to college.

After graduating from Westinghouse High School in 1931, he was recruited by dozens of universities, including Yale, Princeton, and Duke. “Lefty” Wadsworth ultimately decided to attend the University of Pittsburgh, where he majored in social science. By staying close to home, he would be able to continue to support his mother.

The busyness of his college years offered some relief from the hardships of the Great Depression. Wadsworth played basketball while coaching four nights a week and on Saturdays at the YMCA. His fierce competitiveness made a lasting impression on one basketball opponent by the name of David Packard, against whom Wadsworth played as a college freshman in an intermural match with a prep school team. Some 50 years later Wadsworth encountered Packard at a philanthropic conference and immediately recognized the president of the David and Lucile Packard Foundation as his one-time athletic adversary. After introducing himself to Packard, Wadsworth said: “I don’t suppose you remember me.”

“Oh, yes, I do,” responded the co-founder of the Hewlett-Packard Co. with some heat. “You’re the little son of a bitch who kept playing bump-and-run against me.”

The high point of Wadsworth’s college career may have been the time he started for the University of Pittsburgh in the predecessor of the National Invitational Tournament basketball finals – a game played in Madison Square Garden, no less – but it was his memories of participating in basketball games against teams in the poor coal-mining towns of rural Pennsylvania during those Depression years, he always said, that stayed with him. He would never forget the wan faces of the players and their fans, trying hard to carve out a normal life in a world of deprivation and suffering.

Wadsworth’s progressive social views blossomed in college from seeds planted by his awareness of his mother’s daily struggle to raise two children on limited resources, the



Pittsburgh's reformist mayor, Cornelius D. Scully, hired young go-getters like Wadsworth (right), prompting one newspaper to complain that the city was being run by "schoolboys."

calamitous effects of the Depression, the woeful inadequacies of the public health care system to which his father had fallen victim, and the existence of racial and class prejudices against African Americans and whites from poor neighborhoods such as his. Joining a protest against the plight of workers forced to live in company towns, he was arrested and spent the night in jail. As student body president, he mobilized student opposition to the University of Pittsburgh's dismissal of a professor for teaching "subversive" ideas (such as the need for Social Security). His activism cost him a Rhodes scholarship. The president of the university declined to recommend his participation, he would learn many years later when he served on a panel with a former member of the scholarship selection committee.

Wadsworth's relationship with a Pitt professor of history and political science named Bryn Hovde also played a role in shaping his values and life's work. A member of the Pennsylvania Welfare League, an organization whose advocacy of the rights of the downtrodden placed it to the left of the Roosevelt administration, Hovde advised Wadsworth to go to graduate school after he earned his bachelor's degree. Graduating from college in 1935, Wadsworth pursued doctoral studies in philosophy and history at the University of Chicago and the University of Minnesota, respectively. When Hovde was hired to run the city's welfare department in 1937, he persuaded Wadsworth to take a summer job as an administrative assistant to the reform-minded mayor, Cornelius D. Scully. Wadsworth's

political education was about to begin, and the experience proved so exciting he decided not to return to graduate school.

With strikes and worker protests ripping the fabric of municipal government already weakened by the Depression, the mayor's nerves became so strained that he had difficulty functioning. For a time, Wadsworth and another administrative assistant, John P. (Jack) Robin, took over responsibility for the daily operation of city hall, snatching a few moments of sleep whenever they could on cots installed in their offices. Although a local paper complained that Pittsburgh was being run by "schoolboys," the surrogates pulled off at least one significant accomplishment, writing the original draft of what eventually became the Pittsburgh steelworker's first union contract. Robin went on to lead the city's Urban Redevelopment Authority and later directed Ford Foundation programs in India and east Africa.

On November 11, 1939, Homer Wadsworth married Alice Crutchfield of Sewickley, Pa., whom he had avidly courted for three years at the University of Pittsburgh. The couple had seven children.

The large and lively J. S. Crutchfield family was a prominent Pittsburgh clan. Mr. Crutchfield was a highly successful produce magnate who had served on national commissions under several U.S. presidents. Alice had enjoyed a privileged upbringing, but her deep interest in civic affairs and education and her sense of commitment paralleled her husband's. She was a tireless crusader for many important community causes during their years together, even after paralysis struck her without warning in 1960 just as their first son was leaving for college. Her intelligence, high moral standards, and unyielding commitment to improving community life set an inspiring example for her family and friends.

After the United States entered World War II, Homer joined the navy and served as a lieutenant, junior grade, in the North Atlantic Command in Portland, Maine, for 24 months. Before his career in public service was interrupted by the war, Wadsworth had completed a stint as executive secretary to the city's planning commission. Upon his and Alice's return to Pittsburgh in 1945, the city's new mayor, Democratic Party powerhouse David L. Lawrence, asked him to spearhead the transformation of the municipal parks division into a full-fledged department of parks and recreation. Wadsworth negotiated an understanding that allowed him to replace political hacks in key positions with professionals and to expect a full day's work from idlers holding down patronage jobs at lower levels. Recruiting nationally, Wadsworth assembled a management team of great competence and dedication. Although he served as the department's director for only two years, in that brief time he and his team transformed the bureau into one of the most highly regarded parks and



Wadsworth served as the activist head of the municipal parks bureau in Pittsburgh. The experience shaped his lifelong dedication to ensuring the excellence and availability of public recreational facilities. Wadsworth and his wife Alice encouraged their seven children to acquire skills in what he termed the “constructive arts of leisure.”

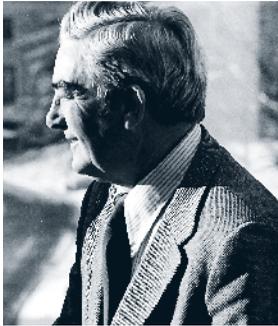
recreation departments in the country. Some of his top recruits remained on the job for 30 or more years.

Wadsworth’s leadership abilities and integrity greatly impressed Mayor Lawrence, who went on to win election as governor of Pennsylvania. Lawrence offered to “send” Wadsworth to the U.S. Congress from one of Pittsburgh’s safely Democratic districts, an offer the director of parks respectfully declined. He had a family to support and Congressional representatives were not well paid. More importantly, Wadsworth had witnessed firsthand the inevitable compromises that a politician must make to stay in office, as well as the fact that there were decided limits to the things political power could accomplish, and he envisioned a different path for himself. The good is the enemy of the best, his decade in public service had taught him. It was a lesson of such deep significance that he kept a plaque inscribed with that phrase on a sideboard in his office at the Cleveland Foundation – near his practice golf club.

A love-hate affair with the game of golf provided an outlet for his athleticism in middle age and beyond. Wadsworth was only half joking when he said, as he approached his 80s, that he intended to title his autobiography, *Putts I Have Missed*. Competitive to the end, he stunned three golfing companions by vaulting over a split-rail fence on a golf course when he was well into his 70s. He then turned around and invited, with a nod of his head toward the fence, his younger friends to mimic the feat. They demurred, which pleased him greatly. 🦟



Re-envisioning Kansas City



There is no question that foundations can play a lively and important role in the reshaping of the urban environment in America. It will take courage to follow the road of study and experimentation when many agencies of all kinds are finding it difficult to survive. But survive they will . . . if they can find new and better ways of serving public needs. And this is where foundations can be the most helpful. – HCW

In 1945, Bryn Hovde became the second president of the New School for Social Research, a bastion of intellectual and artistic freedom founded in the early years of the 20th century by such leading thinkers as economist Thorstein Veblen and philosopher John Dewey. At Hovde's invitation, Wadsworth took a position as vice president and dean of the New School in 1946. There can be no doubt that he sympathized with the institution's view of higher education as a tool to produce positive changes in society and enjoyed the lively exchange of ideas with faculty members and students. The school's best-known program, the Dramatic Workshop, counted Lee Strasberg and Stella Adler among its instructors and attracted young, socially conscious talents like Marlon Brando, Harry Belafonte and Eva Le Gallienne.

One day an FBI agent appeared in Wadsworth's office, seeking to question him about the political leanings of some of the Dramatic Workshop's students. The agent produced a photograph of Marlon Brando marching in a parade on May Day, an international labor holiday. The Federal Bureau of Investigation had placed Brando under surveillance because they suspected the aspiring actor of being a Communist and intended to arrest him at an upcoming protest that Brando had helped to organize. Wadsworth, as agile a thinker as he was a ball handler, offered an astute observation that defused the FBI's fears about the objectives of Brando's upcoming protest. "He's just an actor," Wadsworth pointed out. "He's looking for an audience." The future Academy Award winner was not arrested.

Marlon Brando was neither the first nor the last beneficiary of Wadsworth's gifts as a good listener and skillful mediator. Patricia J. Doyle, whom Wadsworth recruited as the Cleveland Foundation's cultural affairs program officer, remembers how he would often "hold back during chaotic or confusing debates, giving everybody fair chance to be heard. Then he found the right moment to offer a constructive course of action."

Before he was lured into public service by Hovde, Wadsworth had aspired to be a college professor. His involvement with the New School gave him a taste of that life. Having also experienced the challenges and satisfactions of real-world engagement, Wadsworth found that "academia held no comparison," his son, Robert, observes. After only two years in New York City, he was on the move again, this time to a place not particularly known for its progressivism: Kansas City, Mo., a segregated city in a former slave state.

While at the New School, Wadsworth had been engaged to advise the attorneys associated with four trust funds held at Kansas City's First National Bank on ways to maximize the impact of the income the trusts devoted to philanthropic purposes. Wadsworth had recommended that the funds be combined into a single entity, the Kansas City Association of

Trusts and Foundations, to give a united thrust to their separate giving programs. When the attorneys subsequently asked Wadsworth to head the new conglomeration, which held assets of nearly \$10 million, he accepted the offer. “The country is crying out for leadership at all levels of society, and especially in public affairs,” he later wrote, shedding light on the motivation for his career change. “And, yet, our largest and wealthiest cities often find themselves hung up in important areas for lack of a few dollars.”

In the process of familiarizing himself with the operation of charitable trusts, Wadsworth assembled the pieces of a bigger picture. He realized that the income from the endowment of even a small philanthropy could be used to break up civic gridlock. When thoughtfully applied, even modest sums could leverage far greater investments from others in support of action-research projects capable of moving a community in new and positive directions. This dynamic, it would later occur to Wadsworth, was similar to the action of the tugboats he had watched as a boy from docks alongside the confluence of rivers in downtown Pittsburgh. The image of a tiny craft guiding a ponderous ore barge through heavy river traffic with a series of well-placed nudges would become Wadsworth’s favorite metaphor for the power of the philanthropic sector he had now entered.

Wadsworth’s first order of business at the association, where for many years he, staffer Charles Curran and secretary Helen Rickerson would work as a team, was to establish the Institute for Community Studies, an independent social research agency. Before anything of importance could be accomplished in Kansas City, he recognized, it was necessary to build the community’s capacity to obtain and analyze hard data on which sound public policy could be formulated and pursued. Functioning as a think tank for the association, as well as for the community at large, the institute proved to be invaluable in shaping Wadsworth’s assessment of areas of civic well-being or weakness. The association board deemed it prudent to devote most of the 1950s to a comprehensive community diagnosis, awarding grants in support of studies that sought to identify gaps or inefficiencies in existing health, welfare, and educational services. However, Wadsworth almost immediately endeavored to do something about the fact that Kansas City was a “desert in psychiatry.”

The dearth of trained mental health professionals was felt most deeply among the indigent. Mentally ill patients who could not afford to go out of town for psychiatric care were simply warehoused in the basements of either General Hospital No. 1, which served whites, or General Hospital No. 2, which served African Americans. The whole situation was intolerable, and in 1951, the association undertook to correct it, committing most of its available income to the creation of the Greater Kansas City Mental Health Foundation. The not-for-profit

corporation (a concept that Wadsworth may have borrowed from Pittsburgh Mayor David Lawrence, convener of the Allegheny Conference that helped to rebuild downtown Pittsburgh after WWII) succeeded in negotiating a contract with Kansas City's municipal government to provide quality psychiatric care for the indigent at a new receiving center to be built with funds raised from a public bond issue. The new center, which also trained psychiatrists and conducted mental health research, modeled the concept of integration at both the patient and staff levels, with top administrative leadership shared by two nationally recruited psychiatrists – one white, one African-American.

Just as important, the initiative provided the testing ground for an innovative new leadership mechanism. “. . . The Mental Health Foundation experience made it clear for all to see,” Wadsworth stated in an essay on the Association of Trusts and Foundations contributed to a 1972 book, *Centers for Innovation in the Cities and States*, “that a group of private citizens . . . could carry out an important piece of public business, and on a basis considerably beyond the capability of the city government acting on its own.” Wadsworth was to take advantage of the vehicle of a not-for-profit corporation again and again to advance the civic agenda in Kansas City, most notably in guiding the transformation of the city's entire health care system, but he realized that first he must locate additional sources of leverage.

With an endowment of approximately \$12 million in 1961, the association had less than \$500,000 to distribute each year. Wadsworth sought assistance from Paul L. Ylvisaker, who was then director of the public affairs program at the Ford Foundation. The association had previously won a grant from the Ford Foundation to support a metropolitan-government feasibility study by the Institute for Community Studies, and Ylvisaker was receptive to Wadsworth's new request: that Ford undertake to assess what a local philanthropy could accomplish through action-research by subsidizing the work of the association and two other community foundations with multimillion-dollar grants. “Homer is a person who could control everything subliminally,” Ylvisaker was later to observe, only partially in jest. “He would come to our offices and we would wonder what he was programming us to do for the next year.”

Ford's grant of \$1.25 million to the association² represented a 50 percent annual increase in the association's income over a five-year term. “It unbuttoned me,” Wadsworth later allowed.

In August 1961, the association presented a proposal to government officials suggesting that the city create a not-for-profit corporation, modeled after the Mental Health Foundation, to take over administration of General Hospitals No. 1 and 2. Nurtured by a steady flow of grants from the association, which were used to leverage additional state and federal funds, the new corporation over a 10-year period transformed the city's decrepit and

2. A similar award to address urban issues in Cleveland served to revitalize the Cleveland Foundation.

segregated health care system into the renowned Truman Medical Center, dedicated both to excellence and a continuing mission of public service. The Kansas City General Hospital and Medical Center board, which Wadsworth helped to guide as an ex officio member, persuaded the State of Missouri to establish a new medical school as part of Kansas City's burgeoning Hospital Hill complex, then went on to attract Children's Mercy Hospital and the well-established dental school of the University of Kansas City to the grouping. It also spurred the extensive construction of new facilities and programs that a modern health care system required.

There were to be other impressive demonstrations of Wadsworth's persuasiveness and patience. He fostered the takeover of the University of Kansas City, a languishing private college, by Missouri's state university system, making possible the evolution of the new University of Missouri-Kansas City into a dynamic institution of higher education with a full-fledged graduate program (and subsequently the aforementioned medical school). He engineered the transformation of a small junior college operated by the Kansas City Board of Education into a new three-campus community college district. He also persuaded the board of education to transfer its low-powered educational television station to a new, independent community board, which subsequently purchased the headquarters building and transmission tower of a bankrupt commercial broadcasting company at auction and launched KCPT-TV as a full-fledged public television station. Wadsworth encouraged other important developments on the cultural front through board service to such organizations as Missouri Repertory Theater and Kansas City Lyric Opera and hands-on involvement with the Missouri Arts Council. And, in collaboration with the president of the University of Nebraska, he helped to launch the Mid-America Arts Alliance, which brought professional artists and performers to cities and campuses throughout Missouri, Nebraska, Iowa, and Kansas.

Wadsworth also became involved with the governance of Kansas City public schools in the aftermath of the historic *Brown v. Board of Education* desegregation decision.³ During his 13 years as a school board member (most of them spent as board president), Wadsworth helped the public school system steer a course around the shoals of controversy and conflict toward the landfall of integration. Patricia Doyle, education editor for the *Kansas City Star* at the time, attributed Wadsworth's success as the schools' lay leader to his ability to "forge progressive decisions within the constraints of the possible." Characteristically, Wadsworth downplayed his own role in ensuring the school system's peaceful if protracted process of integration, later observing that the key to desegregation had been "to buy two-pants suits – because you have to out-sit people." Whichever interpretation one favored, the upshot was indisputable. Wadsworth's faith in the ability of intelligent men and women to come around

3. The association's president quietly lent a hand to one of the civil rights leaders who had pushed for the suit. Her husband had been fired from his job by his own father, who feared that his son might be the target of business repercussions or violence because of his daughter-in-law's activism. Wadsworth made a couple of phone calls and secured the man new employment.



During his tenure as director of an association of philanthropic trusts in Kansas City, Mo., Wadsworth engineered the transformation of the city's decrepit and segregated health care system. A modern medical center arose on what is known today as Hospital Hill, thanks to his strategically placed grants and promotion of public-private partnerships.

to the side of good sense once they had examined all the facts and the alternatives had again been confirmed.

Not surprisingly, the Association of Trusts and Foundations played a critical part in strengthening the operation of the Kansas City public schools, as well. Association grants enabled the board of education to retain national consultants to recommend locations for new neighborhood schools that would advance the cause of integration. The association supported an experimental program that identified potential delinquents and intervened before they got into trouble. It also made possible an imaginative scholarship program for disadvantaged students that departed from the norm in focusing on early identification of talent, careful matching of scholarship recipients with colleges, and sustained contact with the matriculants throughout their college careers and beyond. Wadsworth himself took a personal interest in the career development of an African-American high school counselor named Robert Wheeler. Wheeler became the first director of the new Kansas City Scholarship Program and later a deputy commissioner of the bureau of school systems of the U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare.

“From the day Homer arrived,” remembers E. Grey Dimond, M.D., the retired provost of health sciences at the University of Missouri-Kansas City, “he was everything the association could have hoped for. By getting deep into every aspect of life in Kansas City, Homer became the most effective instrument for good social change in the city. He guided his board into planting seed money, and then with his phenomenal skills of persuasion and Talleyrand-like ability to find progress through compromise, he shook up the status quo, raised their social consciousness to a level some found painful, and facilitated the right thing to happen.” 



Catalyst for *Cleveland's* Comeback



There comes a point in a foundation's development where a bureaucracy is necessary to cope with the demands that are made upon the agency. But ways must be found to retain our sensitivity to the infinite variety of interests and views likely to be screened out by logical arrangements and orderly procedures. – HCW

At the age of 60, Wadsworth left Kansas City to accept an appointment to become director of the Cleveland Foundation. Often persons of similar maturity have begun to consider retirement, but Wadsworth relished the idea of applying his considerable experience with socioeconomic research, public-private ventures, and national-local partnerships to a new set of urban problems. “Daddy liked to play the role of bumblebee,” his daughter, Alice, once observed, “using insights gained in one field to inform another.” With an endowment that would grow to \$260 million during his tenure, the Cleveland Foundation provided Wadsworth with some tools he had previously lacked: millions in income to award annually and a mandate to professionalize operations.

Now-standard community foundation practices grew out of Wadsworth’s inspired decision to administrate the Cleveland Foundation along the lines of a graduate school of which he was the dean. Collegiality was the hallmark of Wadsworth’s management style. Recognizing that the foundation’s small program staff must be enlarged to meet the demands of wisely disbursing what then amounted to more than \$8 million annually, Wadsworth recruited to his team seasoned men and women with impressive credentials in their program areas – the equivalent of full professors. Typical of these hires was his new social services program officer Steven A. Minter, a former Clevelander who had served as welfare commissioner of Massachusetts. Minter was to succeed Wadsworth as the foundation’s director, providing more proof, if any were needed, of his recruiter’s unparalleled skills at identifying and grooming future leaders.

Prior to Wadsworth’s arrival, the Distribution Committee (as the foundation’s board of directors was then called) conferred solely with the director and associate director about the awarding of grants. Wadsworth instituted a new structure that he believed would result in more thoughtful decision-making. Henceforth, program officers joined in the grant deliberations. To help officers and board members think in new ways about old problems that were, in Wadsworth’s view, “pressing on the community’s nervous system,” the new director inaugurated annual retreats to allow the Distribution Committee and staff to discuss national trends and innovative practices with respected authorities from around the country. Finally, recalls Minter, in a bit of an understatement, Wadsworth gave his program officers “the room to go out and make things happen.” And the time, Minter might well have added. Casting aside the old philanthropic axiom, “three years and out,” the foundation began to undertake long-term planning efforts and make enduring commitments.

Wadsworth’s recommendation that the arts be elevated to a full-fledged program area (presented at the foundation’s first annual retreat in September 1974) is a case in point.

Winning approval of this new grantmaking priority, Wadsworth recruited Patricia Doyle, program manager of the public television station in Kansas City, to become cultural affairs program officer. These moves – the dedication of resources and staffing in support of the arts – made possible the foundation’s sustained commitment to the redevelopment of four architecturally splendid but long-neglected vaudevillian and movie theaters clustered in Cleveland’s Playhouse Square district as state-of-the-art performance facilities for new ballet, opera and classical theater companies. Doyle spearheaded the foundation’s nationally unprecedented purchase of the Bulkley office-retail complex and garage at Playhouse Square – a pioneering program-related investment that secured a reliable source of management income for the struggling not-for-profit agency that was attempting to bring back the theaters. She also helped to transform Playhouse Square’s embryonic resident companies into nationally acclaimed arts organizations through hands-on assistance with their strategic planning and fundraising efforts. The organizational development work, which culminated in a National Endowment for the Arts-supported fundraising campaign that secured \$13 million for six Cleveland arts organizations, took the better part of a decade. By instituting the practice of guiding an important venture through to its fulfillment, Wadsworth made perhaps his most important contribution to the Cleveland Foundation’s evolution.

Its internal capacities having been enhanced and expanded, the foundation seemed to be everywhere during the mid-1970s and early ’80s, stirring up a whirlwind of community building. The range of notable people and projects backed by the foundation, often in their formative stages, was astounding. Wadsworth himself never tired of the hunt for exceptional talent and ideas. He was, for example, a champion of the late Robert Wolf, the director of the Famicos Foundation, which set about to rehabilitate substandard housing in Hough in the 1970s. The Cleveland Foundation backed Wolf’s plans to train other neighborhood groups in his organization’s production methods and helped Famicos put together the expertise and financing needed to construct Lexington Village, the first market-rate rental housing to be built in 50 years in Hough. Wolf’s success at his seemingly Sisyphean labors paved the way for the much celebrated rebirth of that devastated central city neighborhood in the 1990s.

Understanding that people need more than a hearth to warm their souls, Wadsworth can also be credited with introducing the leaderless Great Lakes Shakespeare Festival (now the Great Lakes Theater Festival) to Vincent Dowling of Dublin’s famed Abbey Theatre. (Wadsworth had met Dowling when the latter was a visiting director at Missouri Rep.) After Dowling became the festival’s artistic director, the foundation awarded a major grant that allowed him to pursue the outsized dream of mounting the first American production outside New York City of the



Collegiality defined Wadsworth's management style. He recruited seasoned men and women to serve as the foundation's program staff, such as Patricia J. Doyle and Richard F. Tompkins (seated at right), gave them "the room to go out and make things happen," and asked them to participate in grant deliberations with the foundation's Distribution Committee (left).

seven-hour-long theatrical adaptation of Dickens's *Nicholas Nickleby*. The resulting extravaganza, which debuted in 1982, set a new standard for live theater in Cleveland.

Wadsworth embraced the ambitions of the new dean of the medical school at Case Western Reserve University (CWRU), who asked the Cleveland Foundation for \$3 million in 1980 to rebuild the school's basic science faculty. The amount of the request was three times larger than the foundation's largest previous grant, but Wadsworth immediately grasped the economic benefits to be derived from helping Dean Richard Behrman bring a new generation of world-class scientists to Cleveland. In addition to making a long-term commitment to fund the five-year initiative, the foundation's director helped the medical school assemble top-notch external review committees to offer advice on strategic hires in molecular biology, genetics, basic immunology, and cell physiology. Almost as soon as the rebuilding effort was completed, CWRU's school of medicine jumped from a ranking in the mid-20s to 10th place nationally in total National Institutes of Health research dollars awarded to its faculty annually. According to Robert E. Eckardt, who was the foundation's program officer for health at the time, this kind of leapfrogging growth is unprecedented.

"Homer was always on the lookout for lively people, for brains, for extra dedication and drive," observes Steve Minter. "He felt that if you combined those persons with the right projects and grant dollars, good things were likely to happen."



Casting aside the old philanthropic axiom, “three years and out,” Wadsworth encouraged the foundation to support long-term planning efforts. Lexington Village, the first market-rate housing to be built in the Cleveland neighborhood of Hough in 50 years, could not have been developed without the foundation’s sustained commitment.

Yet, when the requisite brainpower and drive needed to resolve urgent problems were nowhere in evidence, Wadsworth deemed it imperative to step forward and fill the leadership vacuum. When the NAACP brought a federal lawsuit against the Cleveland public schools in 1973, charging that the system had deliberately fostered segregation, the Cleveland Foundation accepted responsibility for defusing this highly volatile situation at Wadsworth’s urging. The foundation funded an effort to help key civic leaders assess the lawsuit’s ramifications. After the “study group” determined the inevitability of court-ordered integration of the public schools, the Distribution Committee allocated more than \$1 million for a grass-roots public education program about desegregation whose tactics included hosting neighborhood workshops and blitzing the media with public service announcements urging calm during the period immediately before the buses rolled. As a result of these decisive and timely interventions, Cleveland survived the initiation of federally mandated busing of school children without enduring the violence that had attended court-ordered desegregation in Boston and Cincinnati, and the foundation demonstrated to itself and the community that it had the ability to provide ethical leadership.

Wadsworth also proved willing to wait until the right elements were in place. During his tenure, the Cleveland Foundation distanced itself from Cleveland’s city government and its public schools, systems so intellectually bankrupt, in the director’s view, that they boasted few programs worthy of support. However, when Cleveland’s new mayor, George Voinovich, approached the foundation in 1979 for help following the city’s catastrophic plunge into default, Wadsworth leapt at this rare opportunity to help improve the performance of municipal government. As he knew all too well, leaders of the public sector were often interested only “in the grubbiest kinds of things – jobs, contracts, money.” By contrast, Voinovich wanted funding for Operations Improvement Task Force, a team of loaned business executives that the mayor had assembled to help him dig Cleveland out from default.



Wadsworth established cultural affairs as a full-fledged program area, an innovation that proved especially beneficial to Playhouse Square's new resident companies, such as Cleveland Ballet and Great Lakes Theater Festival. Foundation support for strategic planning and fundraising allowed both organizations to dramatically enhance their artistic offerings. Great Lakes, for example, went on to mount the first production outside New York City of Dickens's Nicholas Nickleby. The cast of the seven-hour-long theatrical adaptation is pictured at right.

Calling upon his familiarity with benchmark studies and his past experiences with public administration, Wadsworth brought discipline to the volunteer restructuring effort. When the Distribution Committee, transcending its initial queasiness about getting involved in “politics,” made a \$150,000 grant in support of the task force’s massive assessment of the city’s governmental problems, Wadsworth saw to it that the grant stipulated that half of the monies be set aside to implement the study’s recommendations. The task force ultimately articulated some 800 action-steps, more than three-quarters of which were put into effect. Other foundation-supported studies documented the precariousness of federal support for local government services, the disintegration of Cleveland’s physical infrastructure, and the city’s disproportionately low income tax. Action plans built around this quantitative research, including voter approval of a .5 percent increase in the city’s income tax rate, contributed as well to Cleveland’s financial recovery. Within two years of falling into default in 1978, the city had reestablished its bond rating.

Hoping to encourage growth in other sectors of the regional economy, whose strength had been sapped by the steady loss of manufacturing jobs over the previous two decades, Wadsworth persuaded the Distribution Committee to bring in the Rand Corp., a California-based think tank, to conduct a comprehensive analysis of regional economic conditions and trends on an industry-by-industry basis. The study findings proved so illuminating they led

to the foundation-supported creation of the Center for Regional Economic Issues to track and analyze economic data on an ongoing basis. As always, Wadsworth appreciated that public and private leaders would be hard-pressed to formulate sound strategies for economic redevelopment in the absence of hard data.

There is no better testament to the foundation's newfound willingness to patiently sow and tend the seeds for developments that might be years in the blossoming than Cleveland's now-reclaimed waterfront. Wadsworth carefully nurtured this initiative for more than 10 years and considered it the proudest accomplishment of his tenure.

"There is no person who comes to Cleveland – myself included – who does not find it baffling that the greatest natural resource in this city is totally neglected," Wadsworth recalled in an address he gave at the Intown Club a couple months before his retirement in December 1983. During the 1970s, 3,000 acres of municipal parklands along the shores of Lake Erie had fallen victim to massive cutbacks in maintenance funds and unchecked vandalism and dumping, while the rest of the lake front had long been ceded to the claims of industry and commerce. A priceless asset that should have been available for the citizenry's recreation and spiritual renewal had become a disreputable eyesore.

A modest \$25,000 grant that the Cleveland Foundation awarded in 1974 to a suburban garden club became the unlikely instrument of change. The grant permitted landscape architect William A. Behnke to undertake a landmark study entitled "Project Pride: Restoring and Revitalizing Our City Parks." Behnke made no secret of his outrage over the sadly neglected condition of the municipal parks, and his passion and vision struck a responsive chord in old parks-and-rec hand Wadsworth, who subsequently used the study findings to orchestrate the transfer of management responsibility for Cleveland's lake front parks from the financially strapped city to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources (ODNR).

Recognizing that the state park system was unfamiliar with the complexities of managing urban waterfront parks, Wadsworth obtained a grant from the German Marshall Fund to send ODNR's director, a state representative from Cleveland who sat on the budget committee of the Ohio House, and Cleveland's planning director Norm Krumholz, along with Bill Behnke and Pat Doyle, to tour mixed-use waterfronts throughout Europe. The contingent learned that parks, restaurants, shops, and housing contribute color and excitement to shipping and industrial zones. Once ambivalent about ODNR's new responsibility, state government officials returned from the trip brimming with enthusiasm and determined to realize the recreational potential of the new state parks. Over the next decade, the Ohio General Assembly approved a total of \$40 million in capital appropriations for Cleveland Lakefront State Park.



Gordon Park, before and after Wadsworth's intervention. During the 1970s, municipal parklands along the shores of Lake Erie fell victim to massive cutbacks in maintenance funds. Wadsworth spearheaded a move to transfer stewardship of the city's lake front parks to the Ohio Department of Natural Resources. The state subsequently invested \$40 million in the parks' restoration.

Once safe and completely overhauled with new marinas, boat launches, fishing piers, hike and bike paths, and picnic areas that were kept in tiptop shape, ODNR saw attendance figures at the lake front parks climb to 10 million.

With the continued support of the Cleveland Foundation, Behnke prepared a master plan for the redevelopment of the entire downtown lake front that resulted in the creation of the Inner Harbor, an inlet on Lake Erie that was envisioned as a waterfront park and focal point for mixed-use development. Following his retirement as the foundation's director at the end of 1983, Wadsworth continued to use his influence and considerable powers of persuasion to bring about the establishment of the North Coast Development Corp., a not-for-profit authority charged with managing the harbor's development. As a member of North Coast's executive committee from its creation in 1985 until 1990, he vigorously represented the point of view that the lake front should be redeveloped in a manner "that makes possible for people of moderate means a lifestyle that otherwise is not within their reach." 



New *Vineyards*



One of my jobs when I came to Cleveland was to put together a team – so that when and if I managed to escape to other vineyards, the people here could go on picking the grapes. – HCW

Homer Wadsworth retired from the Cleveland Foundation on December 31, 1983. His masterful work as the “people’s entrepreneur” earned the Council on Foundation’s Distinguished Grantmaker Award in 1986. Yet Wadsworth’s contributions to the field of philanthropy can not be captured in a single accolade. Taken as a whole, reflections on his extraordinary life and career, offered by his colleagues at various points after his retirement, acknowledge that Wadsworth was a “man of parts.”

“Homer Wadsworth knows American communities as few of us ever will,” marveled John W. Gardner, the founder of Common Cause and a former U.S. Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare.

“[Homer’s] influence is felt far beyond Cleveland,” observed Dr. Richard W. Lyman, president of the Rockefeller Foundation from 1980 to 1988. “No meeting where Homer is expected really gets under way until he arrives. And then it is always the livelier – and the better informed and advised – by reason of his presence.”

“He imparted courage,” said Margaret Mahoney, who served as president of the Commonwealth Fund from 1980 to 1994.

“He is a genius at bringing disparate groups together and getting them to think sensibly and imaginatively toward solving social problems,” summarized Dr. David E. Rogers, then president of the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation.

“Homer set a high standard for us all in expanding the professionalism and scope of foundation work. We and the communities we assist owe a great debt to him,” concluded Susan V. Berresford, the now-retired president of the Ford Foundation.

But Wadsworth was not one to rest on his laurels. In retirement, he “practiced the idea of the elder serving as the wise adviser to society,” the *Kansas City Star* reported. “He was always interested in the future,” son Robert adds. Thus, he worked to advance Kansas City’s dream of becoming a world center for basic research in aging. He continued to assist with planning for a “Great Waters” aquarium for Cleveland’s lake front, a project that was never to be realized. Characteristically, Wadsworth accepted failure with grace, recognizing it to be one possible outcome of taking risks. “The game of philanthropy,” he was fond of pointing out, “is a lot like the oil well business. You’ve got to expect to hit a few dry holes before you strike oil.”

As a consultant to the Ford Foundation, he spread the community foundation gospel far and wide, helping to start a community foundation in Puerto Rico, strengthening one in Hawaii, and laying the groundwork for another in the Virgin Islands. Wadsworth especially cherished his many trips to San Juan, the starting point for his travels around

Puerto Rico in the company of a Ford Foundation official. Wadsworth's job was to help persuade civic and corporate leaders of the wisdom of creating a \$50 million endowment for the island. He steadfastly refused to cave in to disbelief that a community foundation could take root in a locale in which there was no tradition of charitable giving, and his enthusiasm for the enterprise carried the day. The U.S. companies that had profited handsomely from their tax-free status on the island joined with Ford in creating the Puerto Rico Community Foundation in 1985.

Wadsworth clearly delighted, says Ethel Rios de Betancourt, the new philanthropy's first president, "in collaborating with others in the creation of new ways to help people help themselves – new ways through which many, many other people could make better lives for themselves and their dear ones. He taught us to think big." She adds: "We shall miss his warm smile, his stories, the twinkle in his eye, his interest in our art and music, his affectionate concern for all of his friends and associates, and his wise counsel."

Homer Wadsworth moved on to "other vineyards" in 1994, after losing a heroic battle with lung cancer at the age of 81. (His wife Alice died nine months later, in 1995.) Wadsworth had continued actively consulting during the last several years of his life, and, even when travel became impracticable, he continued to marshal his creativity in support of the projects and beloved colleagues that inspired him in his final days.

Wadsworth used to tell his children that he had the good fortune to get paid for doing what he loved. Having early on embraced the vision of creating the "city upon a hill" that animated the first English settlers on these shores, for nearly 60 years the "people's entrepreneur" helped his fellow citizens dream big dreams, often with the end result of turning straw to gold. Wadsworth's instructive life, career, and far-reaching legacy encourages us to step forward to improve life in our own communities, to be undaunted by the thought of navigating uncharted territory, to use our imaginations to find solutions to even the thorniest of social issues. His ground-breaking work in the last century shines a light on a world of possibility in the new millennium and beckons us toward a better tomorrow. "Homer never preached," says Michael J. Hoffman, a close friend and former Cleveland Foundation colleague. "He *illuminated*." 

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Photographs on pages 10, 11, 13, and 15 courtesy of the children of Homer and Alice Wadsworth

Photograph on page 22 courtesy of Patricia J. Doyle

Photograph on page 27 (right) courtesy of Great Lakes Theater Festival

The Homer C. Wadsworth Award, presented annually by the Cleveland Foundation, recognizes Greater Clevelanders of extraordinary accomplishment and service in the public or not-for-profit sector. Honorees are “community entrepreneurs” who have demonstrated uncommon talent, imagination, insight, and integrity – qualities that characterized Homer Wadsworth’s leadership of the Cleveland Foundation from 1974 to 1983.

The award was established in 1998 by Richard F. Tompkins, a former health and education program officer of the Cleveland Foundation, as a memorial to his colleague and friend and endowed with additional gifts from Wadsworth’s family and friends.

