

## ROGERS

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and solutions to poverty in our area. The result of that collaboration, I believe, has been an 11 percent drop in poverty in Buncombe County as reported in the 1990 census over 1980.

I recently was frustrated when I read that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development was offering \$25 million (within a very short time frame) for innovative grants to serve the homeless.

The funding program was announced on the heels of the freezing death of a homeless person across from the main HUD office in Washington.

While it is noble to want to protect everyone from this kind of tragedy, the language and time frame of the federal grants raises questions about funding solutions to cover up embarrassment rather than funding solutions to address root causes of homelessness.

While a case can be made for the creative spark of spontaneity over such an injustice, my organization and I find ourselves at times overwhelmed at the number of "opportunities" for networking, coalition building, and/or needs assessment that take away from basic services. We must stay focused on our mission and maintain quality controls to ensure adequate responses to immediate needs.

However, I fear that in the future

many nonprofits may have to employ a person who does nothing but act as a professional "meeter."

Real innovations, with models and solutions that work long-term, come from a combination of paying close attention to the nuts and bolts of organizations, being focused on needs, honest about agency limitations, committed to quality services and inspired by like-minded leaders.

This has been true for our organization's coalition of churches as they expanded emergency assistance services. It has been true in our community, which seven years ago produced the Buncombe-Emergency Assistance Co-ordinating Network (BEACON), the first coalition of its kind in the state.

BEACON has a long-term track

record now of being able to quickly identify comprehensive needs, avoid duplication and greatly improve collaborative efforts, thereby extending the limited amount of resources to the greatest number of needs.

Both of these examples were made possible not through a flurry of spontaneous creative effort, but through careful planning and long-term commitments to quality services.

This coalition and successful model grew slowly over time, giving the highest respect and honor to the autonomy of agencies while focusing their combined attention on meaningful solutions to common needs.

I want to encourage nonprofits and chief executive officers to maintain their focus on what is important

in the life and service of their organization — even when it's boring. Sometimes we must resist the temptation to be spectacular in order to maintain the status quo and live within our limits and, more importantly, not neglect the communities' needs.

I encourage potential funders to consider identifying gaps in the continuum of services and find ways to help agencies expand existing services to fill those gaps and fund ongoing operations.

Perhaps the challenge in the future is to find creative ways to reward those who are in the trenches, have clearly defined their mission and needs, evaluated the options and developed practical solutions to everyday problems.

## McGUIRE

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opportunities to work together can be subverted into turf battles by a number of factors.

One such factor is an organization's need for total control over an issue. Such "control needs" can lead to an unwillingness to concede that others may have different, though equally effective, ways of approaching an issue.

A second factor, related to the organizational need to control, can be the strong individual personality. And how important those personalities are in the creation and development of our most progressive and effective nonprofits!

But how many organizations have been split apart by the opposition of willful personalities in both board and administrative functions? How many "rival" organizations have begun because individuals could no longer agree on a common vision?

A third, potent factor in the battle for turf is the fear that somehow funding will be missed or lost unless every organization circles the wagons and protects its own. Actually, the opposite is true more often than not. Most corporate and foundation funders are more interested in the

best ways of addressing community needs than in the personal differences between individual organizations.

And that is precisely the concept that can be overlooked when worries over turf arise: Community needs drive the relationship between nonprofit agencies and funders. Although funders obviously direct their support to organizations, their goal is to find solutions to the community's problems. The best solutions — employing the most creative ideas and the most efficient use of resources — often can be found through open discussions and the shared efforts of all individuals and organizations interested in the problem.

Once the true, damaging effects of turf battles are recognized, eliminating them can be relatively easy. Numerous publications, organizations and resources exist for the sole purpose of improving communication — and thus the success rate — among all of us in the nonprofit sector:

- Associations of similar agencies. Virtually every issue of vital interest is represented by some type of association of the agencies that deal with that issue. Some are regional, some are statewide, in larger communities, there are even local

associations. In all cases, they provide excellent opportunities for the kind of communication that reduces duplicated efforts and leads to creative solutions.

- Resource organizations and publications. Recognizing the growth in the number of nonprofits, as well as the expanding role of the sector as a whole, several regional and statewide resources have emerged within the past few years. Most notably, the N.C. Center for Nonprofits and the *Philanthropy Journal of North Carolina* offer a wide range of services for nonprofits, in addition to providing a forum for the exchange of ideas.

- Local and statewide funders. Ironically, an outside entity — a corporate or foundation funder — can sometimes help an agency broaden its perspective on an issue or a community. Because they are continuously in touch with a range of service providers, funders can spot duplications, facilitate communication among agencies and encourage cooperative ventures. The Greater Triangle Community Foundation has taken a lead in this area with its regional community grants, awarded to organizations in a three-county area that are willing to work together on an on-going basis.

- High tech communications. Just

recently, I joined the 1990's and became an e-mail subscriber. For someone who grew up with a manual Smith-Corona, the electronic highway was a revelation for me. After just a few weeks "on the highway", I am convinced that these technical innovations will give all of us opportunities for communication and partnership that we couldn't imagine several years ago. For nonprofits, the combination of convenience and low-cost service will make technology an ever larger part of their operation.

It goes without saying that any organization — as well as any individual — may set its own course, seek funding and implement its programs in any way it feels appropriate. No funder should attempt to set policy for an agency or dictate programming. The ideal relationship between agency and funder should be a partnership in which each side brings its own unique resources "to the table" to solve a problem.

But as the representative of a funder, as well as a former nonprofit manager and a current nonprofit board member, I am concerned that fear of one's colleagues and emphasis on protecting one's turf can hurt us. The job for most nonprofits is difficult enough; to worry about turf simply drains all of us of time, energy, resources and creative ideas.

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# Ideas

Changing the score

## Retiring symphony director reflects on fundraising, outreach

*Banks Talley Jr., long-time executive director of the North Carolina Symphony, will retire in June and assume the role of fundraising consultant for the 65-member orchestra. Talley, who is credited with preventing the symphony's slide into bankruptcy in the mid-1980s, spoke with the Philanthropy Journal about fundraising, board relations and other issues related to running a \$5-million-a-year arts organization.*

**JOURNAL:** What should we call your new position with the orchestra? Are you retiring or being promoted?

**TALLEY:** As of November 1994, I will have been here 10 years. I'm 67 now. While I still can operate, I think it's good to get someone else to take over. What the trustees and I decided to do is for me to say I will retire at the end of June if the search committee can find a new director. I'll continue on as a consultant so I can first of all concentrate on raising money for a permanent endowment and secondly, work with the new executive director and the [state] secretary of

cultural resources to do lobbying with the General Assembly.

**JOURNAL:** Raising money for cultural organizations is getting harder and harder. How do you feel about the current mix of support for the symphony?

**TALLEY:** A lot of things are going on in the symphony world and one of the biggest we're wrestling with is that for years, most orchestras had subscription drives once a year. What's happened is those are beginning to decline and single-ticket sales are becoming more important. We think we understand what we need to do...We've got to not only have that annual subscription campaign, but to advertise and promote our concerts all year long in a variety of ways. We've done a lot more telemarketing than ever before and that's beginning to work.

**JOURNAL:** At a time when corporate giving to nonprofits is static, you have emphasized the need to seek more corporate support for the symphony. Why?

**TALLEY:** This orchestra wouldn't be what it is today if we hadn't had corporate support. Companies like American Airlines, Glaxo, IBM, the banks, have given us an amount between \$200,000 and


\$300,000 for several years. Northern Telecom was the first to make a \$25,000 commitment. And what that meant was that we could have some internationally recognized artists coming in. Those guest artists have a tremendous positive effect on the musical director and the orchestra. The corporate money really made a difference.

**JOURNAL:** How did your experience as a college administrator help you in your job at the symphony?

**TALLEY:** My first amateurish efforts at raising money were when I was with the university. I was head of the division of student affairs [at N.C. State University] and we began to seek grants for special kinds of programs. So I got a good feel for fundraising.

**JOURNAL:** What are your plans for future fundraising?

**TALLEY:** Our endowment is now about \$11 million to 12 million in different categories of funds. In the size orchestra we are, we ought to have an endowment that's twice that. I try hard to find ways that potential donors want to go - endowed chairs, endowed programs, purchases for the musical library. I'm talking to a lady right now about setting up a fund for flower arrangements for the



**BANKS TALLEY JR.**

- Executive Director of N.C. Symphony since 1984.
- Spent 33 years as an administrator at N.C. State University and one year as an adviser to Gov. James Hunt during Hunt's first term.
- A native of Bennettsville, S.C., Talley served as vice president of the National Trust for Historic Preservation in Washington D.C.
- Raised \$1.7 million in endowment funds during his first seven months with the orchestra to secure matching money from the General Assembly.
- Negotiated unusual contract with musicians' union giving orchestra members a say in policy in exchange for flexible wages, work rules.

auditorium. I'm cultivating that idea, so to speak.

**JOURNAL:** How do you feel about the identity of the symphony as a statewide organization?

**TALLEY:** Historywise, the North Carolina Symphony was the only symphony in the state before World War II. After the war, other communities decided they'd form their own. As these other orchestras emerged, some of our orchestra members got concerned that people would think we are the Raleigh symphony, when we're the state symphony. My answer to our musicians is, "Look, we're the N.C. Symphony. You know that and I know that. It would be nice if every citizen knew it, but they don't. You have to be realistic."

**JOURNAL:** What advice will you give the new symphony director?

**TALLEY:** You've got to have an executive director who has an understanding of the musicians' contract and how that operates. I've tried to move us toward being more of a partnership than adversarial. You have to be a person who likes to raise money. And you've obviously got to have a sensitivity toward state government.

This orchestra would maybe be a chamber orchestra if it weren't for the state of North Carolina. The state had uninterrupted support of the orchestra for 50 years. There isn't any other state that has that kind of record. We're part of the fabric of the history of the state and that helps us a lot with the General Assembly. I think it's important to have someone in this position who understands that.