

<http://www.chicagotribune.com/features/chi-0602090005feb09,1,6246277.story>

AT RANDOM: GRANTS AND GIVING

Chicagoan Donald Campbell: 'The Natural' of fundraising

By Charles Storch
Tribune staff reporter

February 9, 2006

Donald Campbell discovered his knack for fundraising in 1958, during his junior year at what is now Cleveland State University.

With his fraternity about to be displaced from its house by a new interstate highway, he helped raise \$250,000 so the chapter could buy and move into a nearby mansion. So impressed was the school's dean that he made the young man from Espyville, Pa., executive secretary of the alumni association.

In the ensuing 48 years, Campbell, now 70, has helped to raise more than \$3 billion for philanthropic purposes. Chicago-based Campbell & Co., which he founded in 1976 with Edith Falk, is one of the larger and more influential fundraising consultancies for non-profits in the country, with 35 employees in seven sites around the country and annual revenue of \$6.5 million.

Campbell's contribution to the field was applauded last week when he received the Association of Fundraising Professionals' Founder's Medallion. The Alexandria, Va.-based organization recognized him as one of its pillars and a "giant of the fundraising profession."

"The award is truly an honor," said Campbell when reached this week in his Wilmette home.

He said he had no idea he was to be the guest of honor at the dinner that was held in a downtown hotel. Some 100 people attended.

A group of that size would have represented a good portion of the fundraising advisers -- as distinguished from the actual solicitors of dollars -- who were active in the U.S. when Campbell started in the field.

"Back in the day, there may have been 300 in the country and very little literature on the field," he said.

"Now, there may be 27,000 practitioners and libraries full of material."

Among one of Campbell's earliest efforts was helping the University of Michigan raise \$70 million in the mid-'60s, which he said was the first such campaign by a state school in the U.S. In 1972, while employed at the Chicago-based fundraising consultancy Charles R. Feldstein & Co., he worked on a \$280 million fundraising campaign for the University of Chicago.

"That was an unbelievable amount then," said Campbell of a precursor to the multibillion-dollar university campaigns common today.

In those days, Campbell said, many big institutions were shy about asking donors for large sums, settling, say, for the \$1 million gift when a \$10 million one might be mined from deep pockets.

"We taught them a lot about big fundraising," Campbell said.

Falk, Campbell & Co.'s president, said Campbell was an early proponent of "donor-centered fundraising." She said he would "shape the case for support" so it wasn't just about a college's or hospital's or orchestra's desire for a new building, but about the impact a donor's gift could have on a community. Among his more recent local clients have been the YMCA of Metropolitan Chicago, Goodman Theatre and Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He recently worked on a major campaign for Children's National Medical Center in Washington, D.C.

As chairman emeritus of his firm, Campbell now restricts his consulting to a small group of clients. He also has been trying his hand in real estate development in Wilmette.

"I don't know if I can be idle," he said.

Copyright © 2006, *Chicago Tribune*