

The Collins Foundation  
2013 Annual Report

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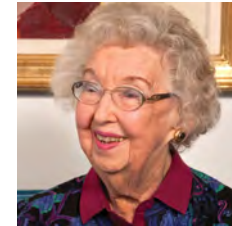
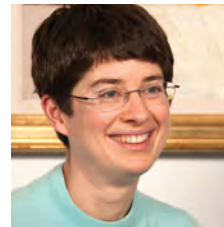
LEGACY  
SERVICE  
RESPECT

# LEGACY SERVICE RESPECT

**H**ow does a foundation started by a family stay true to the philanthropic spirit of its founders, but still remain relevant in a changing world? Since 1947, the Collins family's quest to remain responsive and meaningful has infused the work of The Collins Foundation through transitions, both internal and external.

Fifty years ago Maribeth Collins stepped in quietly to continue her husband's work as President of The Collins Foundation after his unexpected death. Through half a century of service, she has influenced the character of the Foundation, keeping alive the legacy of her husband, Truman Collins Sr., while building her own.

In April, Maribeth transitioned to Trustee Emeritus status. At the same time, her granddaughter, Alayna Luria, joined the Foundation Board, the fourth generation to serve. The two women sat down recently, along with Cynthia Addams, Executive Vice President, to discuss how the Foundation has evolved to meet the changing needs of Oregon, and how the Founders' mission continues.



Alayna Luria, Maribeth Collins, and Cynthia Addams

*“I have such admiration for everybody on the board and staff. We’re individuals and have different opinions, but we can always come to a consensus. We have the most wonderful spirit.”*

—Maribeth Collins

It’s a beautiful winter day. Grandmother and granddaughter sit next to each other in Maribeth’s living room, Cynthia close by. A stand of tall trees is visible through the window, a surprise bit of forest this close in to Portland, but a fitting reminder of the family’s roots.

They start at the beginning.

“I have always been astounded by the story of how my grandfather died so suddenly, and you had to pick up, raise your teenagers, and run the Foundation. And on top of that, you were pregnant! It taught me so much about how to carry on after something tragic happens,” says Alayna.



Maribeth recalls her invitation to join the Board. “I’d never even been to a meeting. I was completely surprised. But then I thought, if I can learn, I’ll be carrying on something that Truman really cared about, something he started. So I plunged in.”

The Foundation was small then. There was no staff, and meetings were held as needed. During 1964, Maribeth’s first year, the Foundation made 34 grants totaling \$181,425. But the Foundation slowly began to grow.

“Through the years we’ve always had the right person appear at the right time,” says Maribeth. Each person brought skills and experience to help shape the Foundation. Over time, each generation made its own contributions to the Foundation, carefully building on its predecessor’s strengths. The respect for the generations — of family, staff, and Board members — who came before is a hallmark of the Foundation.

“Each time someone new would join, I would wonder if they would fit in. Somehow, they always did,” says Maribeth. “I have such admiration for everybody on the board and staff. We’re individuals and have different opinions, but we can always come to a consensus. We have the most wonderful spirit.”

#### Grant Distribution 50 Years Ago and Today

1964		2013
1%	Arts	17%
6%	Children – Youth	14%
3%	Community – Welfare	28%
65%	Education	18%
0%	Environment	1%
9%	Health and Science	11%
9%	Humanities	8%
7%	Religion	3%

## A RESPECT FOR PERSPECTIVE

“Debates can be lively, but they are approached with an attitude of respect, learning, and appreciation for different perspectives,” says Cynthia. The Board brings a wide range of experience and interests to the meetings. “But still, it’s a family foundation, with a specific approach to decision making: detailed, heart-centered, compassionate, and respectful of those doing the work.”

“There seems to be an ethos of communication, collaboration, and respect that has carried on through the generations,” says Alayna. “From the start I’ve felt like I could say what was on my mind.”

Alayna comes to the Board with a background in grantwriting and a master’s in social work, along with some experience in making grants. Still, like Maribeth, her invitation was relatively unexpected. Shortly after Alayna and her wife moved to Portland in 2004, Alayna’s uncle, Truman Collins Jr., invited her to become a Member of the Foundation. At first she was slow to get involved, busy caring for her own young children.

“Then I had a moment where I decided, because I have small children, I really want to be more involved in the family and the Foundation,” says Alayna. “For me, that meant finding someone to watch the children so I could be present at all-day

Foundation meetings and convenings.” She began to prepare for and attend all the meetings and, in April 2013, became a Trustee.

“Since becoming a Trustee, I feel like I have more of an ‘official’ place at the table. Still, I’m humbled by the amount of experience in the other Trustees. I can see that I have a lot to learn and look forward to that,” she says.



Smooth transitions are a trademark of the Foundation’s board. Maribeth’s niece, Lee

Diane Collins Vest, was the last newcomer to the Board before Alayna. She, too, participated and learned before becoming a Trustee eight years ago. The average tenure for Trustees is over 20 years: Founding Trustee Grace Goudy’s term was just a few months shorter than Maribeth’s 49 years.

*“There seems to be an ethos of communication, collaboration, and respect that has carried on through the generations.”*

—Alayna Luria

**\$13.7** million

Founders’ contributions to the Foundation

**\$214** million

Assets at the end of 2013

**20.9** years

Average tenure of Foundation Trustees

**49** years

Tenure of longest serving Trustee, Maribeth Collins

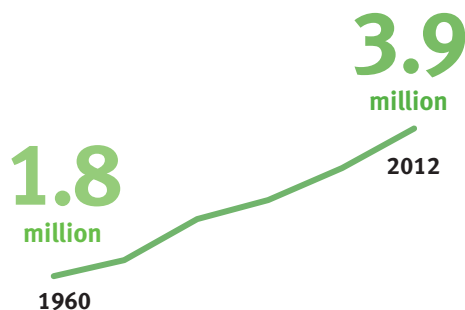
**\$207.6** million

Grants awarded since inception

*“The Foundation continues to learn from its environment and adapt its practices accordingly – both are essential to effective grantmaking.”*

—Cynthia Addams

#### Oregon’s Population Growth



#### Growing Diversity in Young Oregonians

**22%**  
People of color in the overall population

**33%**  
People of color under age 18 in the overall population

## AN EVOLVING LEGACY

This stability has helped the Board weather volatility in the economy and respond to trends impacting communities around the state. Today there are twice as many people living in Oregon as there were 50 years ago, and they come from a wider variety of backgrounds than ever before. Foundations working to address the needs and opportunities of an increasingly diverse state are called to serve in new ways.

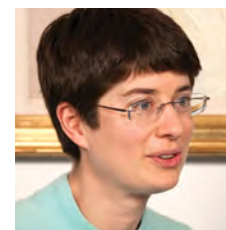
“The Foundation has always focused on underserved communities,” says Alayna. “But today there is even more interest in culturally specific organizations and organizations that are working to become more culturally responsive and inclusive in their work.”

“The Foundation continues to learn from its environment and adapt its practices accordingly — both are essential to effective grantmaking,” says Cynthia.

Increased knowledge has resulted in the Foundation bringing the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion to the forefront of Board and staff discussions in recent years. Since 2011 the

Foundation has been increasingly more intentional about making grants to underrepresented communities.

Understanding new issues and learning to see the world from a new perspective is key to the Foundation’s evolution. Alayna credits her grandmother with a lot of this spirit.



“She is just very committed to learning, and that has been a leading force for us. The Foundation has given a lot of first grants to places.” She turns to her grandmother. “You’re always taking new things in

and incorporating them into your worldview. I think that’s rare.”

Understanding and learning are also important to the grantmaking process. Alayna was struck by the due diligence and detail given to each organization.

“Whether it’s a really small, new organization or a nonprofit with a lot of history, where it would be easy to rubberstamp it, the staff works effectively to make sure we have a full understanding,” she says.

The due diligence process is meticulous and respectful. Each Trustee reads the full proposal. At the meetings, staff members provide additional information from research, community conversations, and site visits.

“Being able to see firsthand the good work that organizations are doing, instead of just the expression on paper, is important in understanding the people being served and the issues being addressed,” says Cynthia.



It’s also time consuming for the Foundation’s staff, which visits close to half of the agencies in each grant cycle. This involves traveling to several different communities and regions across Oregon — including Southern, Central, and Eastern Oregon and the Coast.

“I think my grant-writing background probably gives me some sympathy for what people go through to prepare these grant requests, knowing that there are people with very different skill levels who are asked to step up and do this for one reason or another,” says Alayna. “What I didn’t fully realize when I was writing grants was just how important things other than the grant proposal are. As Trustees, it is critical that we get to the heart of the work being done, even beyond what may be included in a proposal.”

The philanthropic community in which Alayna begins her service is much more complex than the world where Maribeth first worked with the Foundation. In 1964 The Collins Foundation was

one of only 55 foundations in Oregon; there were only a few hundred nonprofits. Today there are more than 18,000 nonprofits. The number of foundations has increased twentyfold.

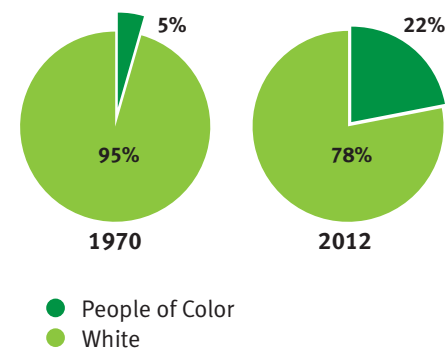
With thousands of nonprofits and foundations doing good work, it takes far more commitment and research to understand the roles of individual organizations, how they fill a vital community need, and whether they are collaborating with other organizations or overlapping.

“It takes time to be a good community member and partner, as opposed to simply being a funder,” says Cynthia. “Our outreach really is done on a personal basis, as we focus on building relationships.”

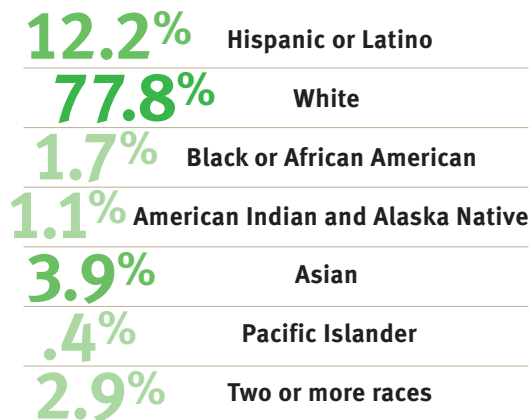
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—Cynthia Addams

### Oregon’s Growing Diversity



### The State’s Ethnic/Racial Diversity in 2012



*“How you’ve led your life, the things you’ve been involved in, how devoted you’ve been to your family and to the Foundation – I couldn’t think of a better example to follow.”*

—Alayna Luria

**Oregon’s Growth in Nonprofits and Private Foundations**

**Nonprofits**

**18,362**

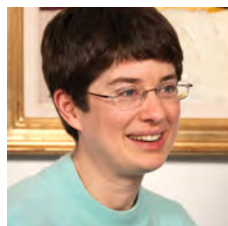
Nonprofits registered in Oregon in 2013

**300**

Nonprofits registered in Oregon in 1964\*

\* The first year nonprofits were required to register with the State

\*\* Estimated



The relationships have brought new opportunities to partner with other foundations. The Chalkboard Project is one such endeavor that is

sponsored by a consortium of independent Oregon foundations. Spearheaded by Foundations for a Better Oregon, Chalkboard is the organization’s primary education transformation

initiative. Its new program, TeachOregon, launched in 2013. TeachOregon works with several school districts and universities to prepare Oregon’s next generation of teachers. An important component of this initiative is building a diverse pool of teachers to better reflect today’s student population, a community currently made up of around 35% students of color.

Even with the changing landscape, one thing that remains constant is the Foundation’s remarkably

**Foundations**

**1,095**

Private foundations in Oregon in 2013

**55**

Private foundations in Oregon in 1964\*\*

resilient mission to improve the quality of life in Oregon. Grants have spanned the state, moving from the metropolitan Portland base outward to communities large and small. As a general-purpose foundation, it makes grants that touch a wide range of charitable areas: arts and humanities; children and youth; community welfare; education; environment; health and science; and religion.

Responding to community needs and opportunities reflected outside the Metro area has long been of interest. “I’ve always responded to the small grants in remote areas,” says Maribeth. “Small grants in rural areas can have a huge impact. They may have an art center and want to bring in an artist or artists for residencies. I just love projects like these — so often they involve the entire community.” Supporting the arts in communities, the work of artists, and the work of nonprofits to better their communities through art have been particular interests for Maribeth.

Alayna gestures toward the abstract art in her grandmother’s living room. “Look at your house. I’ve probably learned more about art from you than anyone else. I remember your taking me to the Contemporary Crafts Gallery. It’s one of my first memories of seeing creative work in Portland. I always knew that was a special place.” The Contemporary Crafts Gallery, now the Museum of Contemporary Craft, was an early grantee of the Foundation.



## A NEW GENERATION OF SERVICE

Each generation comes to the Foundation in its own way. In Maribeth's case, her husband's unexpected death thrust her into the work.

"Looking back after all these 50 years, I don't know of anything I could have been involved in that I would have found more satisfying," says Maribeth. "It was the last thing I ever thought I'd spend my life doing, but I can't imagine not being involved now."

For Alayna, it was a gradual process. Her mother, Cheri Collins Smith, was diligent in educating her children about how the Foundation — and she, as a Trustee — contributed to the community. "Still, I don't think it was until I was a teenager that I started noticing all the places in Portland that had some link to the Foundation — like OMSI or the library," says Alayna. "Then I began asking my mother more about the Foundation. It was just one part of learning about our family."

With three young children, Alayna has her own example to set. "For now, I just want them to know how lucky we are to be able to help other people. I've tried to frame it like it's a cool thing to do."

Alayna shares the same sense of responsibility and duty that created the Foundation so many decades ago. And she is looking toward the future. "I'm the oldest member of my generation, and I've spent a considerable amount of time thinking about how it's all going to look in 25 years."

She credits her grandmother with being a good model. "How you've led your life, the things you've been involved in, how devoted you've been to your family and to the Foundation — I couldn't think of a better example to follow," she tells Maribeth.



"You always knew our grandfather's values and you passed them down to your children. But because he created the Foundation, we

have a structure, an organization that is the embodiment of what his values were in the beginning. That can't help but guide the family as the generations go on," she says.

"I think it's wonderful that we share this family spirit and want to be part of the Foundation. I'm just delighted that you're a Trustee," says Maribeth. "I sometimes feel sad that Truman isn't here. Without him, we wouldn't be doing any of this. We've grown into quite a family."

Alayna responds, "I can't think that he would be anything less than amazed and thrilled with how things have turned out."

*"Looking back after all these 50 years, I don't know of anything I could have been involved in that I would have found more satisfying."*

—Maribeth Collins

### Fifty Years of Growth in Grants

