



Gayle Ober, president of George Family Foundation, to retire at year-end

Ober oversaw Foundation growth, creation of new programs advancing integrative health and healing and authentic leadership; Foundation to seek new president

MINNEAPOLIS (Jan. 26, 2021) — After overseeing 11 years of growth and impact at the George Family Foundation, President Gayle Ober plans to retire at the end of 2021, it was announced today.

“We are grateful for Gayle’s leadership and celebrate her many accomplishments,” said Penny George, board chair and co-founder of the Foundation, which she established with her husband, Bill, in 1994. “Gayle leveraged her unique talents to become not only a trusted partner to us, but to non-profit leaders who are making important changes happen. Her service and contributions are a beautiful legacy to our Foundation and to the community.”

During her tenure, Ober oversaw the distribution of nearly \$40 million in grants to non-profit organizations nationwide, from innovative integrative health and healing initiatives to groundbreaking leadership programs reflecting the Foundation’s interests. Under her leadership, the Foundation’s assets increased from \$52 million to nearly \$63 million, and giving grew by 42%, George noted.

Highlights of Ober’s tenure include the creation of the Penny George Institute Foundation at Allina Health, where she serves as chair; the leadership pillar at 1440 Multiversity, where she teaches; the George Wellbeing Center at the YMCA of the North; the Penny Pilgram George Women’s Leadership Initiative at Duke University; and the Catalyst Initiative, now part of the Minneapolis Foundation.

George said the Foundation plans to embark on an extensive search for a new president. “We will be looking for our next generation leader who will work closely with our family members as they engage more deeply with the work that Bill and I began some two decades ago,” she said.

“I will be sad to leave the Foundation at the end of year, but I believe I will leave it in excellent shape for my successor,” Ober commented. “It has been an honor to work with Penny and Bill and the entire George family these past 11 years. Together we have made a difference for those the Foundation has supported and, in turn, our grantee partners have helped us fulfill our mission.”

In addition to her work at the George Family Foundation, Ober chaired the board of Chorus America for three years. She has taught in the master's program in arts and cultural leadership at the University of Minnesota and teaches leadership at 1440 Multiversity. Recently Ober completed 25 years of service (six as board chair) with the Mardag Foundation in St. Paul.

Ober says she plans to continue teaching authentic leadership at 1440 Multiversity, as well as volunteering and consulting on a range of topics. She also said she plans to pursue some interests that she has had to set aside during her all-consuming time at the Foundation, such as studying the piano and skiing in the mountains of Colorado.

For more information about the executive search for the next president of the George Family Foundation, visit 8bridgesworkshop.com/george-family-foundation.

About George Family Foundation

Founded by Penny and Bill George in 1994, the George Family Foundation is a private family foundation with nearly \$63 million in assets that supports integrative health and healing, authentic leadership, spirituality and mindfulness, youth development, the environment and community. Learn more about the Foundation at georgefamilyfoundation.org.

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