

Tar Heel Footprints in Health Care

A periodic feature that recognizes individuals whose efforts—often unsung—enhance the health of North Carolinians

Gene Cochrane



Gene Cochrane, president of The Duke Endowment and copublisher of the NCMJ, is retiring in June. Under his leadership, The Duke Endowment has increasingly shifted its focus towards supporting and guiding timely programmatic efforts that cut across

4 program areas: health care, higher education, child care, and rural churches. For example, The Duke Endowment recently funded efforts across the Carolinas to improve pediatric access to behavioral health services, increase the educational preparation and diversity of the nursing workforce, expand successful programs such as the Nurse Family Partnership, and reduce teen pregnancy. The Duke Endowment often helps to build public/private partnerships in order to facilitate important policy discussions and improve the services available to vulnerable populations. Since its inception in 1924, The Duke Endowment has distributed more than \$3.3 billion in total grants. In addition, Cochrane oversaw the organization's move in 2014 into its first stand-alone headquarters in a new LEED Gold-certified building on East Morehead Street in Charlotte.

Cochrane is a graduate of Erskine College and Appalachian State University, and he got his start in hospital administration at Charlotte Memorial Hospital (now Carolinas Medical Center) before joining The Duke Endowment in 1980. In May 2009, he received an honorary doctorate from the Medical University of South Carolina. Prior to his tenure as president of The Duke Endowment, Cochrane directed the endowment's health care and higher education program areas and served as its executive vice president. Describing his years at The Duke Endowment, Cochrane noted a historical shift in the role of philanthropy in health promotion—from building infrastructure to leveraging that infrastructure to play a more innovative and responsive role in health initiatives. Cochrane also noted that philanthropic foundations

such as The Duke Endowment are well positioned to stick with difficult problems in the health care system over the duration of time it takes to address them. Over the course of his career, Cochrane has made a lasting impact on the health and well-being of the people and communities of the Carolinas via philanthropy. He has repeatedly demonstrated his commitment to the endowment, its grantees, and his passion for philanthropic work.

In honor of his leadership and The Duke Endowment's significant support to South Carolina's nonprofit organizations, Cochrane was awarded the Order of the Palmetto, South Carolina's highest civilian honor, in March 2016. In addition to his role with The Duke Endowment, Cochrane has participated in a number of local community and philanthropic organizations including the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust Advisory Committee, the Board of Trustees of the Council on Foundations, the Advisory Board of the McColl School of Business at Queens University, and the Cannon Foundation. Minor Shaw, The Duke Endowment's Board Chair, said of Cochrane, "Throughout his 36 years at the Endowment, [he] has made a significant and lasting impact on our work in the Carolinas and nationally in the field of philanthropy. Although he will be greatly missed, his extraordinary leadership put us in a strong position for the future."

Cochrane's dedication and leadership in the field of health administration and philanthropy has helped to strengthen the *North Carolina Medical Journal*, as well, and the NCMJ would like to thank him for his service to the state. NCMJ

Electronically published May 6, 2016.

Address correspondence to Ms. Anne Foglia, North Carolina Institute of Medicine, 630 Davis Dr, Ste 100, Morrisville, NC 27560 (anne.foglia@nciom.org).

N C Med J. 2016;77(3):159. ©2016 by the North Carolina Institute of Medicine and The Duke Endowment. All rights reserved.

0029-2559/2016/77318