

Gary L. Yates

A Legacy of Service

By David S. Barlow, Chair, TCWF Board of Directors



One year ago, at our fall Board of Directors' meeting, Gary Yates informed us of his desire to retire as TCWF president and CEO at the end of 2011. Since then, my colleagues and I have had the chance to reflect upon his tenure at the Foundation, his strong commitment to its mission and the high quality of its programs and operations.

Gary came to the Foundation when it was created in 1992 and his impact was immediate. In that first year, he oversaw the development and launch of the Foundation's first major grantmaking program: our landmark 10-year Violence Prevention Initiative. He was the driving force that helped the Foundation's grantees reframe violence against youth as a preventable public health epidemic.

Thanks to this understanding, the grantees' work received statewide, national and international attention. The cover story that follows is a retrospective of this effort to reduce violence through a range of statewide prevention efforts.

For nearly two decades, Gary has brought that same razor-sharp intellect and zealous commitment to the development of all of the Foundation's grantmaking programs, emphasizing the integration of public health approaches and best practices to strengthen community clinics, after-school programs, adolescent health, leadership development, and countless programs and organizations helping underserved communities today.

As a well-known and respected national leader in the field of philanthropy, Gary does not shy away from challenging conventional thinking about grantmaking. He has shown — through calculation and action — that making grants of unrestricted core operating dollars is strategic. This approach has sustained the nonprofit safety net throughout the Great Recession and the sluggish recovery, when greater numbers of underserved Californians have tapped into programs and services more frequently than ever.

On behalf of the Board of Directors and staff, I salute Gary for his passion, courage and dedication, and for a legacy that continues to give a voice — and grant dollars — to solutions promoted by nonprofit organizations themselves.

Thank you, Gary. Because of you, the lives of many Californians are truly healthier. 