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## Terry L. Fairfield: A Portraiture of Nonprofit Leadership in Educational Fundraising

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TERRY L. FAIRFIELD: A PORTRAITURE OF NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP  
IN EDUCATIONAL FUNDRAISING

by

Stephanie R. Davis

A DISSERTATION

Presented to the Faculty of  
The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska  
In Partial Fulfillment of Requirements  
For the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Major: Educational Studies

Under the Supervision of Professor Marilyn L. Grady

Lincoln, Nebraska

May, 2013

TERRY L. FAIRFIELD: A PORTRAITURE OF NONPROFIT LEADERSHIP IN  
EDUCATIONAL FUNDRAISING

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University of Nebraska, 2013

Advisor: Marilyn L. Grady

The purpose of this qualitative study was to create a narrative of Terry L. Fairfield's leadership legacy at the University of Nebraska Foundation. Using the educational research methodology of Portraiture, this biographical sketch analyzed personal and professional events in Fairfield's life and chronicled notable achievements, as well as the strife involved in securing financial support for the University of Nebraska system through means of philanthropy and private gifts. Exploring these experiences share and extend knowledge on his personal and professional history. As the financial health of colleges and universities continue to dwindle, both leadership in fundraising and the reliance on revenue from private donors demonstrate the indispensable part development plays in sustaining and progressing the landscape of higher education. The documentation of Fairfield's successes and challenges creates a necessary profile of impactful fundraising from a historical perspective.

The qualitative results generate a rich description that advances the field of educational fundraising and development for higher education, expands knowledge on executive level leadership for nonprofit organizations, deepens an understanding of the complex fundraising role in sustaining colleges and universities, and provides a first-hand look at Fairfield's life from primary and secondary sources by highlighting key conversation pieces.

Fairfield's efforts, while serving as president and chief executive officer (CEO) to the University of Nebraska Foundation, played a central role in advancing the University of Nebraska system into becoming a premiere institution. From the data collected, five emergent themes were found, which comprise the Fairfield Leadership Model. These included lead by example, passion, mentorship, vision, and modesty. Analysis of the results suggests two propositions. The first proposition insinuates that best practices in educational fundraising leadership are nonlinear and circular; the second suggests that fundraisers play a supplementary and necessary leadership role in institutional advancement in higher education.

## Dedication

To Terry, a resounding symbol of inspiration in nonprofits and higher education. May your leadership light the way for others and touch the lives of people and places, always. Cheers.

## **Acknowledgements**

To my parents, Dan and Marian Davis—Nebraskans, farmers, and educators. Truly, all my life successes can be attributed to you. You have imparted on me the value of hard work, education, kindness, and faith, which have been my guiding principles.

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**Terry L. Fairfield: Exploring a Portraiture of Nonprofit Leadership  
in Educational Fundraising**

**CHAPTER 1**

**Introduction**

Fundraising entails more than public relations, media spotlight, and convincing individuals to donate financial resources (Ryan & Palmer, 2005). Fundraising in higher education is complex, unknown, and is driven by leadership submerged in a resilient philanthropic spirit. The principal fundraiser of a college or university foundation is bestowed with the responsibility to craft a culture of philanthropy and create a message of charity for an indefinite impact that transcends across time to advance the mission of higher education. The ideal mission of higher education is the pursuit of knowledge and dissemination of truth to advance excellence in academia (Cohen & Kisker, 2010). Success in educational fundraising rests on acting as a process, not a structure, and continually building relationships throughout the organization (Jackson & Keener, 2002; Ryan & Palmer, 2005). Few scholars have focused on the leadership experience and successful traits of CEOs in educational fundraising.

Leadership “how to” texts fill the shelves of bookstores and libraries, and has become a profitable market over the years. Often, leadership is misunderstood, ambiguous, and a remains a mystery, despite the continuous attempts to understand leadership behavior, attitudes, and action through a host of avenues, theories, and styles. James MacGregor Burns (1978) described leadership as “one of the most observed and least understood phenomena on earth” (p. 2).

Similarly, Kets de Vries, Doyle, and Loper (1994) said,

When we plunge into the organizational literature on leadership we quickly become lost in a labyrinth: there are endless definitions, countless articles and never-ending polemics. As far as leadership studies go, it seems that more and more has been studied about less

and less, to end up ironically with a group of researchers studying everything about nothing (p. 73).

The purpose of Fairfield's narrative is not to serve as a "how to" guide, but as a historical account and asset for others to learn from.

Narratives of successful leaders in the field should be shared in order to chronicle historical events in educational fundraising, recognize best practices, and systematically document important experiences of leaders in the fundraising profession. Portraiture is one method of capturing experience to seek goodness of the central story; it is also stated that imperfections cannot be disjointed from the goodness of the portraiture. As the dynamics of public colleges and universities continue to evolve, sharing the leadership stories of philanthropy in higher education increases in significance. The act of portraiture itself pursues a purpose of intervention and community building across a wide audience (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997). The portraiture of Terry Fairfield will bring to light the authentic reflection of the philanthropic leadership projected at the University of Nebraska Foundation (NUF). Terry Fairfield, who served as chief executive officer from 1987 to 2008, is the longest serving CEO in foundation history. On July 1, 2008, Fairfield stepped down from his chief executive role and filled the capacity of consultancy for the University of Nebraska Foundation by providing a wealth of knowledge on investing, major gifts, and acting as the liaison to the 2015 Vision—a cohort of civic, community leaders in Lincoln, Nebraska.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Suggestions have been made to identify general, successful nonprofit leadership traits, but characteristics of educational fundraisers leaders in the realm of higher education have yet to be

defined. A gap in the literature exists in examining higher levels of leadership for college and university foundations. Fundraising leadership is multifaceted, with expectations of ability to:

- Fulfill duties as chief fundraiser
- Lead organizations with strategic plans, policies, and objectives
- Maintain relationships with board of directors, trustees, and executive managers
- Participate at federal, state, and community levels of activity as the organization spokesperson
- Measure key objectives qualitatively and quantitatively, in regards to employee performance, organizational progress, and operating budgets
- Synchronize efforts between the foundation and campus leadership

Beyond the demands of providing leadership to the organization, campus, and other areas as it relates to the support of the university, smaller details of the position must also be filled. These may include: sustaining organizational culture, displaying altruistic intentions or motivations, and believing in the mission of higher education, among many other factors. Financial support creates a marriage between the mission of higher education, compassionate donors, and university advancement. Educational fundraising leaders ensure these elements are enveloped in the highest philanthropic spirit. Without this leadership, the sustainable future of the academy comes into jeopardy.

The contemporary era of higher education is in the crux of debate on state funding for public institutions. According to Weerts and Ronca (2006), state appropriations have decreased by 40% since 1948 for the funding of higher education. An inverse relationship exists between state support and private funding—as state appropriations are cut, philanthropic donations and tuition expense has significantly risen (Newfield, 2010). Decreased funding from state

legislatures creates a heavy dependence on private funds and amplifies the need for exceptional leadership in educational fundraising.

### **Purpose Statement**

The purpose of this research is to explore the leadership challenges, victories, and life events of former University of Nebraska Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer, Terry Fairfield. This biographical study uses a qualitative approach with portraiture as a method of inquiry to identify the leadership philosophies of Fairfield and capture his impact on the University of Nebraska Foundation, the University of Nebraska system (NU), and the state of Nebraska. The study involves conducting semi-structured interviews with primary and secondary informants to explore and document fundraising leadership aspects of Terry Fairfield. The collection of qualitative data will determine the unknown leadership variables and capture a rich narrative of personal and professional experiences.

As federal funding for public colleges and universities continues to decline and students are facing increased tuition costs, the significance of private fundraising and nonprofit leadership will serve as a vital component of sustainability in higher education. The objectives of this portraiture are to:

1. Develop a biographical sketch and historically analyze the life events of Terry Fairfield as the former University of Nebraska Foundation President and CEO.
2. Identify successes, challenges, and key stories of the University Foundation that are a direct result of Fairfield's leadership role.



## **Research Questions**

This historical study approaches the research problem by using interpretive questions that aim to illustrate key events in Fairfield's life and leadership performance. Rich, descriptive, data is to be collected from the questions outlined below:

1. What life experiences have impacted the leadership essence and legacy of Terry Fairfield in the field of educational fundraising?
2. What is the perspective of subordinates to confirm or reject the themes found in Terry Fairfield's leadership?
3. What leadership traits identified in Terry Fairfield's leadership legacy can be applied to practitioners in nonprofit management and educational fundraising for higher education?

## **Significance of the Study**

A number of benefits exist from conducting this research. Primarily, it will expand on the literature of nonprofit leadership and development officers in higher education and explore the essential role of educational fundraising leaders as state support for institutions diminish. Scholars and practitioners in higher education and nonprofit leadership who are interested in understanding the effective components of fundraising strategy will be provided with a deeper and meaningful perspective on the dichotomy between fundraising leadership and the issue of declining financial support in public colleges and universities. Selecting Terry Fairfield as the central phenomenon of the study demonstrates an example of effective educational fundraising leadership. Portraiture provides the opportunity for Fairfield and his constituents to use reflexive thinking in their own field of work and contemplate the impact of personal experience and professional life. The quintessential object of this study is to document the legacy of Terry

Fairfield's 25 years of leadership at the University of Nebraska Foundation and identify how his efforts have positively impacted the University of Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Foundation, and the state of Nebraska.

Interviewing Fairfield's subordinates and other working relationships will enrich the data collected by confirming or supporting the qualitative findings to reach a broader population. The design of the study will help to confirm existing frameworks of nonprofit leadership and previously defined fundraising characteristics.

### **Definition of Terms**

*Ask:* Personal inquiry towards gift solicitation to a prospective donor

*Capital Campaign:* Fundraising efforts for a major project, whether physical building infrastructure or endowment, typically over a specific period of time (Horton Smith, Stebbins, & Dover, 2006).

*Chief Development Officer (Chief Advancement Officer):* Functional leader of institutional fundraising; oversees other development and support staff; may report to the university president (Satterwhite, 2004).

*Chief Executive Officer:* Chief manager or executive director; In a nonprofit, this person is often appointed by and adheres to the board of directors to help develop policy, manage daily business, and provide leadership to subordinates (Horton Smith et al., 2006).

*Development Officer (Fundraiser; gift officer; solicitor):* The profession of raising money for a philanthropic nonprofit organization (Holmes, 2010).

*Educational Fundraising:* The activity of gaining financial support for the higher education sector from private donations (Proper, 2009).

*Endowment in nonprofit*: Monies given to nonprofit organization from donors who intend for the principal to exist indefinitely, while investment earnings of the principal be used to finance operations (Horton et al., 2006).

*Philanthropy*: “Altruistic concern for human welfare and advancement, usually manifested by donations of money, property, or work to needy persons, by endowment of institutions of learning and hospitals, and by generosity to other socially useful purposes” (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/philanthropy>).

*Portraiture*: Qualitative research methodology that bridges science and art, that merges the systematic and careful description of good ethnography with the evocative resonance of fine literature (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 4).

*Research I University*: Public or private college or university that offers a full range of baccalaureate programs, are committed to graduate education through doctoral degrees, gives high priority to research, and receives \$40 million in support from federal government (Texas Senate Research Center, 2008).

*Social Capital*: Set of resources that involves relationships, trust, and values (King, 2004).

*State Appropriation*: In higher education, “State dollars received by the institution through acts of a legislative body, except gifts and contracts...funds are provided to an institution with no limitations or stipulations...and used for current operating expenses” (Weerts & Ronca, 2006, p. 993-994).

*Volunteer*: Member of nonprofit group that serves others (Horton et al., 2006); Volunteer roles can encompass givers, askers, and motivators (Lysakowski, 2002); Often, they serve as a board of directors member, trustee, or capital campaign leader.

## **Philosophical Perspectives**

This study was created and approached from a constructivist worldview. As a paradigm, constructivism focuses on seeking an understanding of the world by developing multiple subjective meanings from experience with others (Creswell, 2007). In this sense, researchers construct realities; they do not find it (Merriam, 2009). In qualitative research, the focus is on quality, not quantity. Philosophical assumptions surround symbolic interaction and aim to describe or discover theory with multiple context-bound realities (Merriam, 2009). Creswell (2007) also states that constructivism is used interchangeably with interpretivism.

## **Delimitations**

This portraiture study confines data collection to the primary informant and research focus, Terry Fairfield, as well as secondary informants who are selected constituents of the University of Nebraska Foundation. The purposeful sampling of secondary informants includes donors, colleagues, volunteers, and others who have a significant relationship to Fairfield's leadership. Other observations and interpretations come from the collection of data from secondary sources, such as print media, books, and foundation or university-related publications. The views in this study reflect the philosophies of Terry Fairfield and individuals who have a connection to or knowledge of his leadership.

## **Limitations**

The qualitative aspect of portraiture presents limitations to greater populations outside of the primary informant and respective organization. Subjectivity in data collection may cause different interpretations by the audience. Researcher bias may impact the analysis and interpretations of the study findings. Selected interviews stemming from purposeful sampling may also add bias to the interpretation of data. Linguistic data will not allow for simple

replication nor will the findings necessarily be predictive for future successes or leadership behaviors of the primary informant's successors and other educational fundraisers.

Comprehending researcher bias includes understanding the researcher role in portraiture methodology. Inevitably, the voice of the portraitist, or primary investigator, dwells within the rendered biographical story. Portraitists listen for and to a story, but are cautioned from developing an overbearing voice within the portrait. The portraitist has the ability to influence what knowledge is portrayed and how the informant's story is told (English, 2007). The responsibility of the researcher is to capture the essence and experience as perceived by the informant. This essence is embodied in truth and approached holistically to portray the phenomena as the story is developed (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997). This truth is interpreted by the revolving cycle of "it is true because it is true because it is true" as theorized by Bertrand Russell's vicious circle principle (English, 2007).

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE**

The purpose of this study was to explore the educational fundraising leadership of Terry Fairfield at the University of Nebraska Foundation. Chapter 2 summarizes the literature regarding fundraising leadership in postsecondary institutions and college or university foundations, arranged by category. First, leadership in nonprofit organizations is reviewed. Following, an outline of educational fundraising in its entirety is explored. Lastly, the financial climate of higher education is reviewed to demonstrate the essential role of private fundraising as a source of revenue. A gap in the literature exists regarding the role of chief executive officer in educational fundraising. Few studies have aimed to identify successful leadership traits of CEOs in fundraising for higher education. Each component of this literature base provides a summation of leadership traits that have been identified as successful in nonprofit organizations and fundraising for higher education in general. The literature helps to explain the nature and context of fundraising leadership and provide a historical background on the issue of financing in public postsecondary institutions. Contextualization is a habitual issue for setting up historical elements to demonstrate significance and gain a deeper understanding by synthesizing existing knowledge (Burnett, 2009).

#### **Nonprofit Leadership**

One weakness of research in the nonprofit sector is building on the description of terms and broad theory. In its most basic definition, nonprofit organizations exist to impart a public benefit. Their attributes involve being governed by a board of directors, having authentic missions and goals, and exude a voluntary spirit (Horton Smith et al., 2006). An additional component for nonprofits is the acquisition of public trust. The purpose of trust in nonprofits is

twofold. First, it becomes necessary to effectively provide intended services to recipients; and second, trust is critical to engage in fundraising activity that enables the organizations to operate and attain objectives (Rosen, 2005).

In 2004, King asserted that social capital must be present in nonprofits organizations and leaders in order to carry out business functions, such as establishing governance and administration, raising financial support, forging partnerships, developing a relationship with the community and properly managing employees by using a shared mission as a guide. Relationships are a critical part in executing nonprofit functions that are demanding of time, effort, and strategic planning. Social capital is defined as, “the sum of the resources, actual or virtual, that accrue to an individual or group by virtue of possessing mutual acquaintance and recognition” (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 1992, p. 119). Leaders in the nonprofit sector must use social capital in exercising interpersonal skills when faced with financial or legal issues, regulations, or issues specific to industry. Social capital is thought to be a key resource to nonprofit leaders, leadership development, and an investment for the organization (Day, 2001). Nonprofit leaders are to exude trustworthiness and transparency in order to stimulate community involvement, a climate of safety, values of diversity, and social connections (Cohen & Prusak, 2001). Social capital is the driver of leadership success in the nonprofit sector and a catalyst for altruistic action (King, 2004).

One of the primary elements of nonprofit management is for leaders to understand the culture of their organization by developing beliefs and processes that will foster innovation. Organizational culture depends upon the leader and his or her values to direct the culture and employee behavior. Forcing or “fixing” a cultural change can become a disastrous task, unless the subordinates are ready to accept a changed mind set (Jaskyte, 2004). Cultural changes can be

executed by means of developing new mission statements and empowering others to help implement the required changes (Cummings & Huse, 1989). Organizational culture has been linked to the leader's personal beliefs and values, and can generate employee commitment via coaching, role modeling, reward, etc. (Schein, 1985).

## **Fundraising**

The fundraising subsection of the literature in chapter 2 is further divided to encompass a complete view on the role of fundraisers in nonprofit organizations in the higher education sector. These categories include general fundraising roles and demographics, organizational identity of fundraising organizations, and the role of the chief executive officer in educational fundraising foundations. Responsibility for nonprofit leaders often comes in the form of fundraising. Carbone (1986) suggests that fundraisers use general knowledge, which can be honed by anyone. In this instance, knowledge and training is learned on the job, informally, as opposed to informal educational programs.

### **Roles & Demographics.**

Until recently, literature on fundraising theory has been virtually nonexistent, and much of the existing research is poor in quality and limited in scope (Andreoni, 2006; Caboni, 2010). Research on fundraising has been on the upswing for the past 20 years, but the profession is still in a dire position for literature building in order to progress the field (Lindahl & Conley, 2002). Experimental research on fundraising has been posited around the assumption of increasing returns, seed grants, donor motivations, altruism, identifying traits of nonprofit leaders, and best practices for increasing financial support (List & Lucking-Riley, 2002; Vesterlund, 2003; Andreoni, 2006). The literature aims to increase the legitimacy of fundraising as a profession and examine behaviors and characteristics of the job. Fundraisers' primary responsibility is to protect



the welfare of their clients and the organization, while acquiring capital for funds and resources to operate. In the case of educational fundraising, an organization's endowment is the source of support for capital projects, academic programs, student scholarships, and faculty support (Worth, 2002). As the definition of fundraising roles evolve and becomes refined, it is suggested they have no part in the post-gift activity, as they are not to delve into the development of academic policy. Crafting policy in academia is the right and responsibility of administration in higher education, such as "provosts, deans, department chairs" (Caboni, 2010). Fundraisers serve as the organization's spokesperson to interact with the community and defend the privacy of constituents from the general public. Constituents include donors, potential donors, college and university officials, internal staff, and all stakeholders who are at risk of having personal and financial information exposed (Worth, 2002). Donors may request anonymity or other levels of confidentiality in their gift, which the development officers must honor.

According to the Council for Aid to Education (2001), the total dollars raised for educational fundraising in higher education reached \$24.3 billion, with many efforts of development officers in institutions across the nation. In 1989, Carbone outlined the characteristics of fundraisers by surveying fundraising professionals (n=206). A study by Duronio and Tempel (1997) also profiled the demographic characteristics of fundraisers in education by distributing a survey to 966 women and 793 men in the profession, which confirmed and built on previous findings from Panas (1988) and Billa (1991). Overall, authors have identified an equal gender population in the field, but a majority of fundraisers in the profession are relatively young in age, white, and highly educated. Collectively, these studies found that 80% of fundraisers have worked in another career field prior to fundraising.

Aggregate findings included:

- Most common prior careers were education, advertising and public relations, or business in general
- 70% have been in their current position for 3 years or less.
- The average female participant in the study was of Caucasian descent with an average age of 42, had earned a bachelor's degree in education, and earned an average salary of \$40,000 or less.
- The average male participant in the study was of Caucasian descent with an average age of 45, had earned a graduate degree in education or business, and earned an average salary of \$40,000 to \$60,000.
- Over the past thirty years, the profession has experience a decrease in turnover rates, increased job stability, increased organizational commitment, and increased identification of fundraising as a profession.
- Self-reporting personal characteristics included a belief or commitment to the participant's respective organization; integrity; and honesty.
- Self-reporting skills listed by participants included organization, communication, writing, listening, and ability to make an ask.
- Self-reporting knowledge listed by participants included all general aspects of fundraising, planned giving, tax or legal information.
- Participants recognize people as the key to fundraising capacity.

Understanding the role of fundraising to postsecondary institutions will amplify the importance of the fundraising profession in higher education development organizations.

Fundraising is considered to be a product of public relations, as opposed to sales (Kelly, 1998).

This philosophy suggests four models of fundraising. These include press agency using emotional appeal, public information model using a one-way presentation of facts, two-way asymmetrical model using scientific research, and a two-way symmetrical model using mutual understanding between organization and clientele (Kelly, 1998). Similarly, Kay-Williams (2000) presented a three-part cycle of fundraising, which entails appeal, fundraising, and marketing. In the appeal phase, fundraising is conducted through volunteer roles in seeking support. Next, the fundraising phase involves roles such as trustees, CEO, or other development officers to solicit gifts using teams and staff, rather than volunteers. Lastly, the marketing stage focuses on the donor relations and stewardship activity of staff members to maintain and engage relationships during the post-gift phase.

Debate exists over the legitimacy of fundraising as a profession. According to Lindahl and Conley (2002, p. 105), legitimacy for fundraising would increase if “philosophers, historians, and sociologists engaged in the study of philanthropy and examined its prevalence in our society.” Continuing to expand on the literature in defining roles of educational fundraising and nonprofit leadership will increase the acceptance of the profession by academics and practitioners.

### **Organizational Identity.**

The category of organizational identity was selected for review, as it is a recurring theme in the literature, as well as a key product of nonprofit organizations and fundraising leaders. The identity of an organization rests on the principle traits, as understood by members, to represent values and beliefs (Corley, Harquail, Pratt, Glyn, Fiol, & Hatch, 2006). These guiding principles become visible in practices and procedures by the organization and stimulate organizational commitment and loyalty, as well as creating a distinction between other agencies (Dutton &

Dukerich, 1991). Identity of an organization determines how it is perceived externally, and how members should conduct their behavior internally (Ravaski & Schultz, 2006). In a study by Balser and Carmin (2009), leadership succession was pinpointed as a threat to organizational identity in nonprofit organizations. The transition of leaders can magnify the differences and disagreements among leaders, in terms of what the organization stands for. Nonprofit organizations must value the sensitivity of all member perspectives on organizational identity and understand how it is interpreted or shared with others, in order to create change. Without regard to member values of organizational identity, any proposed change is viewed as a threat to identity (Balser & Carmin, 2009). Many organizations have failed because they did not invest in assessing culture or nurture talent to project organizational success and reach lofty goals (Smith, 2010).

Specifically, leadership succession refers to the replacement of leadership and transfer of power in a formal position within an organization, which can cause a decline in member performance and negatively impact the organization (Haveman & Khaire, 2004). In the succession process, complexity is created when leaders desire to impart their own ideas or beliefs in the organization and are likely to employ individuals who have similar values and beliefs, whether in governing or member roles. These practices begin to reshape organizational identity through evolving hierarchies, standards, and principles (Balser & Carmin, 2009).

Undoubtedly, successful leadership is the essence of modern fundraising (Nehls, 2012). In educational fundraising, capital campaigns are an essential part of raising financial support for higher education institutions. Campaigns cannot progress or reign triumphant without a leader to advocate the cause or spark donor buy-in (Nehls, 2012). Much like Balser and Carmin (2009), Nehls (2012) suggested that a successful nonprofit capital campaign is probable if a leadership

change is avoided. These types of campaigns account for the bulk of endowment funds, with most colleges and universities aiming for \$1 billion or greater (CASE, 2009).

In the hiring process, educational fundraisers are expected to attain certain levels of competence in order to perform duties, but must also condone organizational behaviors and values (Smith, 2010). First, person-organization fit theory aids to understand the compatibility between individuals and organization (Kristof, 1996). Second, supplementary fit is based on the individual traits and culture compatibility within organizational values (Kristof, 1996). Both frameworks are useful in determining employee fit to organizational identity for productive outcomes in the fundraising and nonprofit goals. Smith (2011) suggested that competence and work behaviors cannot be taught. Instead, they are considered to be innate traits possessed by the individual. From this perspective, in the realm of educational fundraising, development officers fit and success in an organization may be dependent upon their natural-born qualities. This greatly de-emphasizes the importance of years of prior experience (Smith, 2010).

In addition to higher leadership roles, fundraisers at all levels must utilize a myriad of knowledge and skills to accomplish assigned tasks and develop an effective fit with the organizational identity. Tasks are compared to responsibilities of for-profit business and include the cultivation of prospective donors (similar to sales), writing proposals and communicating (similar to marketing and advertising), stewarding donors following the gift process (similar to customer service), all of which are often undervalued as skills and abilities in educational development (Smith, 2010). These skills can be considered “hard” or “soft.” Hard skills denote the technical and factual knowledge to complete the job, while soft skills describe personal traits such as patience, ambition, motivation and adaptability to better implement hard skills (Klaus, 2007). Because the fundraising profession and nonprofits are people-oriented, hard technical

skills and knowledge are useless, without the use of soft traits and interpersonal skills (Smith, 2010).

Intelligence tests may be administered to better understand general attributes and behaviors required for high job performance and pinpoint necessary knowledge, skills, and abilities during the recruitment process. Creating a competency model is common practice for CEOs, executives, and human resource managers in educational fundraising during the hiring process (Smith, 2010). Competency models create objective frameworks that specify required proficiencies to fill the job. Models should always be flexible to expand or incorporate new knowledge, but they can be comprehensive or restricted in defining its purpose. Once a competency model is created, it can be used to assess potential employees for organizational fit, work behaviors, and aid in identifying prospective candidates for the position (Alldredge & Nilan, 2002; Morrison, 2000; Moilanen, 2002; Rodriguez, Patel, Bright, Gregory, & Gowing, 2002; Chung-Herrera, Enz, & Lankau, 2003; Lin, Wu, & White, 2005).

On the contrary, McClelland (1973) stressed that formal competency assessments are not valid indicators of job success. Likewise, Anders Ericcson, a leading scholar on experience and expert performance, contends that experience is a poor indicator of job performance. Essentially, while experience is valuable, employee job performance is more dependent on innate talents and abilities (Ericcson, 2006). “The intent here is not to discredit experience entirely, but rather to hold competence and soft skills in greater esteem. Fundraising success requires unique behaviors that cannot be measured solely by years of experience” (Smith, 2010, p. 92). Exceptional fundraising not only requires innate and instinctive talents for success, but the ability to recognize weaknesses, accept mistakes, and work towards improvement following failure (Ericcson, 2006).

### **Chief Executive Officer Roles in Educational Fundraising.**

An inadequate amount of research on the chief executive officer role in educational fundraising is conflicting with existing studies that champion executive leadership as the most paramount factor in nonprofit foundation success (Froehlich, McKee, & Rathge, 2011). Lysakowski (2002, p. 325) stated, “Leadership in itself, let it never be forgotten, is always the key factor in successful fundraising, whatever the case, whatever the goal, and whatever the scope of the campaign.” CEO behavior and fundraising has been studied, but rarely from the development perspective of fundraising in higher education. Existing research focuses on corporate CEOs as it relates to charitable cause (Hall, 2005; Werbel; Werbel & Carter, 2002) or university presidents as fundraisers (Barrett, 2006; Jackson, 20120; Nicholson, 2007). CEOs and executive directors in nonprofit organizations are typically appointed and answer to the board of directors. He or she works in the capacity to manage everyday operations, oversee staff, develop policies, and execute board approved tasks (Horton Smith et al., 2006).

In spite of the economic hardship felt through the ‘Great Recession’ in recent years, executive level non-profit jobs have continued to grow, as does the education sector (Joslyn, 2009). Because of this trend, CEOs and executive level leaders in educational fundraising must exercise innovative strategies to meet funding demands (Smith, 2010). Carter (2001) suggested that a nonprofit’s success or failure relies on how well the chief executive officer, chief administrative officer, and the board of directors chair work together and collectively use their skills to support each other and the organization. The executive level leadership roles coalesce to form the “power team” and directly influence organizational outcomes (Carter, 2001).

A competent staff is indispensable to the CEO to compensate for his or her areas of weakness. According to Carter, (2001) CEOs are likely to come from academia and may lag in skills to manage or motivate subordinates. This causes the CEO to be in a position of disadvantage to the power team, but enables the knowledge, skills, and abilities of co-workers to develop and make contributions to organizational success (Carter, 2001). CEOs are more inclined to be hindered by the feeling they do not deserve the position, tend to shy away from asking colleagues for advice, and are less likely to come from the fundraising profession. Successful CEOs need to demonstrate multiple leadership characteristics in their leadership, as show in Table 1, as suggested by Carter (2001).

Table 1

*Traits of Successful CEOs in Nonprofit Organizations*

<i>Trait</i>	<i>Description</i>
Confidence	Feeling capable of performing job assignments; Self-assured
Humility	Recognize the value of asking for help and trusting others
Risk Taking	Permit experimentation; avoid fear of personal scrutiny
Insight	Understand his or her role and recognize the board of directors as acting authority
Vision	Articulate mission and future of organization or program to staff, colleagues, board, and other constituents
Compassion	Recognize humanity of relationships and support individuals who believe in organizational goals and missions; be considerate of the people factor to the success of nonprofits
Responsibility	Ability to acknowledge when mistakes are made and be accountable in all aspects through an ethical well-being
Judgment	Be cognizant of timing and when it is best to speak or to listen



Ethics is a nonnegotiable element of fundraising and executive leadership. Ethical behavior will increase funding and enhance organizational perception by external audiences (Rosen, 2005). In fundraising, trust is commonly established when donors believe their donation is positively impacting intended recipients and development officers effectively communicate and apply ethical standards. Moral fiber is inextricably bound to nonprofit foundations and should remain a featured component of gift solicitation (Bowden, 2004). With trust you are likely to receive larger and more frequent gifts. Ethical decisions and trust create a meaningful relationship between the donor, organization, and development officer (Rosen, 2005).

### **Financial Decline of Higher Education**

Higher education has never experienced a time of overly abundant prosperity and financial health. Colleges and universities have long relied on a range of funding sources, whether tuition, philanthropy, religious groups, or legislative support. From the first inception of higher education in America, the government exercised a heavy hand in acting as a financier. From a historical standpoint, in the colonial era, Harvard University received half of its funding from the government by means of tax levies (Cohen and Kisker, 2010). In studying the growth of the contemporary system of higher education in the United States, Cohen and Kisker (2010, p. 51) stated,

None of the colonial colleges were well endowed; the pattern of trying to raise money continually, of spending all that could be raised, and of living in genteel poverty continued well into the future of practically all the colleges in the nation.

During the past decades, public universities have experienced a dramatic decline in state funding, despite their critical role in serving their states. Public colleges and universities have an interdependent relationship with state governments to educate citizens, progress the states' economic health, and in return, receive institutional funding by the state (Weerts & Ronca,

2006). State appropriations have declined 40% since 1978, adjusting for inflation rates (Mortenson, 2004). As of July 2011, student debt accumulated to \$1 trillion, and surpassed the national amount of credit card debt in the U.S. (Avery & Turner, 2012). Additional funding for institutional revenue stems from three areas: tuition, grants, and private funding (Dewey, 2006). Supporting the mission of higher education in teaching and research is founded on financial stability. Economic and demographic variables, political factors, higher education governance, and state culture have been identified by Weerts and Ronca (2006) as the influential determinants of state support for higher education.

Dewey (2006) identified two periods in history, regarding public university development and financing, which are “old boy” and “professional.” The “old boy” phase of development is rooted in a time where campus administration sought funding through the legitimacy of their formal roles on campus. Their characteristics were comprised of alumnus status, white ethnicity, male gender, Greek life affiliate, and formal or informal ties to the athletic department (Dewey, 2006). From their administrative role, they forged relationships, cultivated alumni into donors, and possessed a deep-seeded knowledge of the donor population due to overlapping connections in business, social, or other networking cohorts. The “professional” phase of educational fundraising involves an emergent profession. Formal development officers have an equal gender make-up and are considered highly educated in legal matters, business, humanities, and non-profit management (Dewey, 2006). They are often recruited from other nonprofit agencies and use technological tools for research, prospecting, cultivation, and stewarding donors. They are likely to prioritize projects in conjunction with existing campus goals to benefit the university.

Declines in state funding can be attributed to economic recessions over the span of the last three decades. Major recessions occurring in 1980-1983, 1990-1994, and 2001-2004

impacted the higher education sector with state budget cuts (Weerts & Ronca, 2006). The impact from economic and political factors changed Research I institutions to model after quasi-private institutions (Weerts & Ronca, 2006). Private funding and increased tuition expenses have compensated for the decline in state support. The University of Wisconsin-Madison reported a decrease of state funding from 35% to 21% from 1988 to 2004 (University of Wisconsin-Madison Office of Budget, Planning, and Analysis, 2004). In 2002, President Mark Yudof of the University of Texas system described the issue of declined state support as, “leaving public research universities in a purgatory of insufficient resources and declining competitiveness” (Yudof, 2002, p. B24).

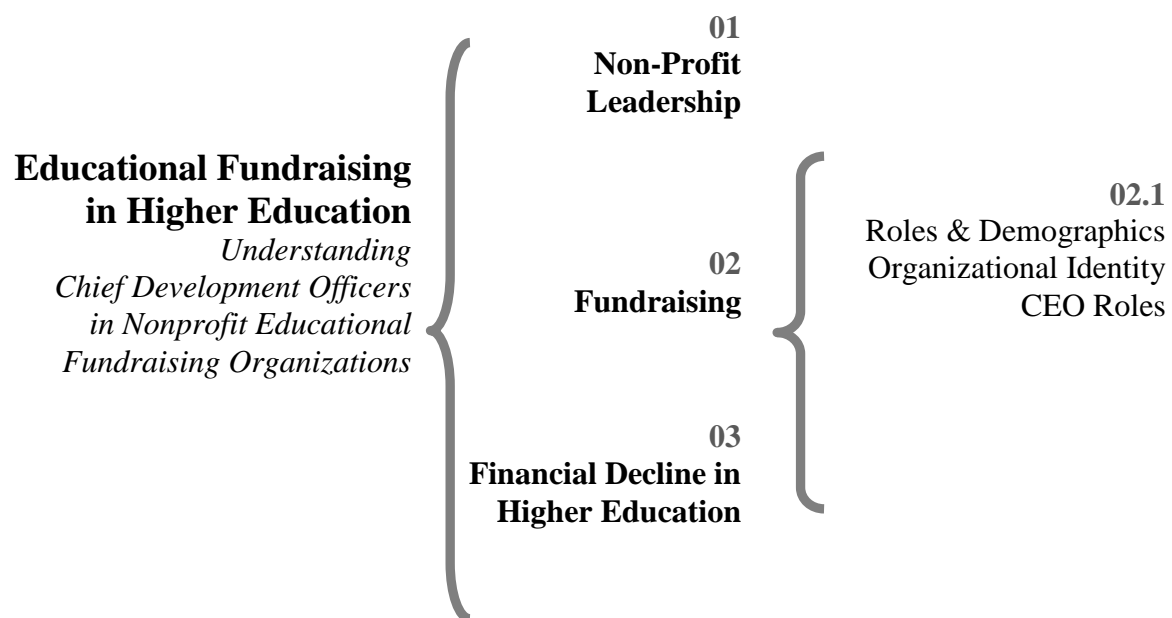
A lack of financial support from state governments creates hardships from a budgetary perspective, as well as radically changing the dynamics of public colleges and universities. The question is raised on whether the knowledge output by public postsecondary institutions is a private good financed by tuition and private donations, or a public good sustained by state government (Selingo, 2003). Dependence emerges on supporting institutions via capital campaigns, to improve or expand infrastructure and fund research and teaching goals (Nehls, 2012). An average campaign goal for 2008 was \$373 million, more than twice the average in 2001 (CASE, 2009). Six years was the average life for a campaign of this magnitude, but campaign goals of \$1 billion or more had an average time span of 10 years or more (CASE, 2009).

Newfield (2010) analyzed the American Funding Model (AFM) and identified private funding as the main source of revenue in the contemporary era of higher education, as well as blaming decreasing financial support as a direct cause of a decline in educational improvement for the masses. State governments are no longer considered to be a reliable source of funding.

AFM is built on expensive tuition and high enrollments in public universities (Newfield, 2010). Tuition increased four times the rate of inflation during the past three decades in the U.S. and revenue depends on student and family income more than other higher education systems worldwide (Newfield, 2010). Enrollments at public institutions account for 80% of all enrollments in higher education, which creates a concern for the difference in philosophy and scope between public and private institutions in America (Newfield, 2010). Private colleges and universities or exclusive liberal arts colleges are critical in advancing research, but these institutions are unable to cater to mass enrollments and have traditionally depended on students and private funding for support. Tuition at public institutions pale in comparison to the elite private institutions, but still heavily rely on state legislature to sustain and advance their mission. Funding for higher education in America has been stagnant at best. As a result, educational attainment has declined, knowledge and research is often considered a private good, public and private funding evolved into adversaries, and the dynamic of public colleges and universities shifted to model elite private institutions (Newfield, 2010).

In summary, the literature demonstrates a succinct view of current trends in leadership for the field of educational fundraising and the nonprofit sector. It depicts the complexities of chief development officer roles for public university foundations and the associated challenges that stem from the decreasing funding from government sources. It also provides a historical context of the financial hardships facing higher education since the inception of American colleges and universities. The literature assists in creating the context for understanding the value of the Fairfield leadership legacy and success that transcended through the University of Nebraska Foundation and the University of Nebraska system. Below, figure 1 demonstrates the path of topics covered in the literature review.

Figure 1



*Literature Map*

## **CHAPTER 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

Qualitative research aims to “understand situations in their uniqueness as part of a particular context and the interactions there” (Patton, 1985, p.1). The overall objective of qualitative methods is to understand how people make their realities—how they interpret their lives and draw meaning from experience, with the researcher or portraitist acting as the primary instrument for data collection and analysis (Merriam, 2009). Merriam (1998) described qualitative approaches to research as “an umbrella concept covering several forms of inquiry that help us understand and explain the meaning of social phenomena with as little disruption of the natural setting as possible” (p. 5). As described by Creswell (2007), there are five qualitative traditions, which include: narrative, grounded theory, case study, ethnography, and phenomenology. Narrative biographical study was chosen as the approach for this study, which reports on the life of a single individual (Creswell, 2007). More specifically, portraiture was utilized as the narrative approach.

#### **Portraiture**

Truly, the methodology of portraiture is invoked with a literal element of art and aesthetics that coalesce with the science of research, where the two cannot be separated. Understanding the background of an individual creates a deeper insight into the life of the subject. More specifically, portraiture, the qualitative methodology, was selected as the type of narrative research approach. The foundation of portraiture rests of the blending between science and art to capture human experience and organizational life, by documenting and interpreting the subject or person and their perspectives, as described by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot and Jessica Hoffman Davis (1997). The goal of portraiture is to discover universal truths and stories that

develop from the complexity of everyday life (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008). By nature it is creative and aggressive. Sarah Lawrence-Lightfoot, a sociologist and professor of education at Harvard University, in 1983, developed portraiture as a methodology for educational research in her popular book, *The Good High School* (Gaztambide-Fernandez, Cairns, Kawashima, Menna, & VanderDussen, 2011). Lawrence-Lightfoot desired to have the subjects feel seen, heard, understood, and appreciated, by mixing empirical description with artistic expression.

The “portrait” becomes a narrative that is complex, holistic, and a dynamic revelation of a particular story and human voice (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997). Portraiture, as a research method, brings light to the importance of the central phenomenon while seeking goodness. In the book, *The Art and Science of Portraiture*, goodness represents human qualities. Focus is not only on good, but all other attached encounters as well, such as “vulnerability, weakness, prejudice, and anxiety...” (p. 141). It is important to determine how the subject defines goodness. Portraiture raises the question, what is happening and why, while trying to capture the essence of the subject. Portraiture was selected to assist in identifying key themes and areas for future research and inform continuous dialogue on the importance of private funding in higher education. Barone and Eisner (2006, p. 102) stated that portraiture seeks “to make vivid the subtle but significant so that awareness of the educational world that the research addresses in increased.” The goal is not to develop a romanticized story, but to unearth the authentic and intricate truths of the account and record the support or challenges of the subject’s strengths.

Portraits are shaped through the dialogue between portraitists and participant and are directed towards an audience beyond academics only (Lawrence-Lightfoot and Hoffman Davis, 1997). The task of a portraitist is to listen for and to a story, and use qualitative research tools to “paint a picture on the verbal canvas” (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997). Voice

becomes a main theme in portraiture, by acting as witness, interpretation, preoccupation, autobiography, discerning other voices, and dialogue (English, 2000). Voice is built on three orientations—epistemology, ideology, and method (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997).

### **Research Design**

This narrative qualitative study using portraiture was conducted through a series of face-to-face interviews with both the primary informant and secondary informants.

**Sampling method.** Data for the study was collected in Summer 2012, using purposeful sampling. This allowed me to select the sample of participants who best demonstrated the central phenomenon and stimulated information-rich descriptions for a thorough understanding.

Initially, Terry Fairfield, the primary informant was sent a recruitment email (found in Appendix A) to inquire about acceptance of participation in the study as the main focus for the narrative. The primary information is known to me professionally, since 2007, when I began working for the University of Nebraska Foundation as an intern in the Donor Relations and Stewardship department. Secondary informants, selected by Fairfield, are known to him by personal or professional acquaintance. Secondary informants were sent a recruitment email asking for study participation, which is found in Appendix B.

**Data collection procedures.** Prior to data collection with human subjects, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Institutional Review Board provided approval on July 18, 2012 (Appendix C). Informed consent forms were obtained from all study participants preceding interview data collection, which indicated their status of voluntary participation, right to refusal of participation, and detailed information about the study procedures, risks, confidentiality, and benefits



(Appendix D and E). Data collection was obtained during a seven week time frame between the months of August and September of 2012.

For the primary informant, two hour-long interviews were conducted, in order to document participant experiences, using the IRB approved interview protocol (Appendix F). The interviews were based on an open-ended, semi-structured interview format, regarding the nonprofit leadership of Terry Fairfield at the University of Nebraska Foundation and in the educational fundraising profession. Secondary informant interviews were conducted via face-to-face using the IRB approved interview protocol (Appendix G). A digital voice recorder was used to record audio for each interview. I transcribed all interview recordings. Upon completion of transcriptions, digital recordings were deleted from the recorder.

**Selected Interview Participants.** The selection of secondary informants was based on the discretion of the primary informant and the primary investigator. Six individuals were selected to interview on the topic of Terry Fairfield's leadership. Secondary informants were given the choice to conduct interviews by telecommunications or face-to-face. All interviewees chose to meet face-to-face.

University of Nebraska Foundation employee Connie Pejsar, the Director of Development for the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Architecture, and John Niemann, Ed.D., Senior Vice President of the University of Nebraska Foundation located in the Omaha office, were selected for interviews based on their collegial relationship, experience, and length of tenure at the foundation. Pejsar and Niemann had the ability to recount the legacy of Fairfield at the foundation since he began as president and CEO of the foundation, with Connie as an employee of the foundation since September 1983, John since June 1987, and Fairfield joining a month later in July 1987.

Clarey Castner, former University of Nebraska Foundation president and CEO, was selected to provide insight on working in close proximity with Fairfield as a mentee, successor, and to share insight into the various demands of the position of leading the University of Nebraska Foundation.

Former Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska and attorney, Kim Robak, was selected to discuss the working relationship shared between herself and Fairfield in regards to the University of Nebraska system projects. Prior to her current role at Mueller Robak LLC, the premier lobbying and government relations firm in Lincoln, Nebraska, Robak served as the University of Nebraska vice president for external affairs and corporation secretary to the Board of Regents from January 1999 to December 2004.

Thomas Henning, president and CEO for Assurity Life Insurance Company in Lincoln, Nebraska was selected based on his former role as the University of Nebraska Foundation Board of Directors Chairman from 2005-2007.

Kent Seacrest, attorney and partner at Seacrest & Kalkowski, PC, LLO, was selected as an interviewee based on his working relationship with Fairfield as a client for the University of Nebraska Foundation and to discuss his knowledge of Fairfield's community involvement and service to Lincoln, Nebraska and surrounding areas.

Below, Table 2 demonstrates the interview and observation data collected. Details of the interviews included the informant name, type of interview activity, date of interview, setting and location of interview, and length to complete the interview.

Table 2

*Interview and Observation Data Collection Chart*

<i>Interviewee</i>	<i>Activity</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Setting</i>	<i>Time</i>
Terry Fairfield	Face-to-Face Interview	8/8/2012	Fairfield's Office University of Nebraska Foundation Lincoln, NE	41:54
Terry Fairfield	Face-to-Face Interview	8/21/12	Fairfield's Office University of Nebraska Foundation Lincoln, NE	1:03:23
Connie Pejsar	Face-to-Face Interview	8/22/12	Pejsar's Office University of Nebraska Foundation Lincoln, NE	11:09
Kim Robak	Face-to-Face Interview	8/27/12	Robak's Office Mueller Robak LLC Lincoln, NE	19:06
John Niemann	Face-to-Face Interview	8/28/12	Niemann's Office University of Nebraska Foundation Omaha, NE	21:19
Tom Henning	Face-to-Face Interview	8/29/12	Henning's Office Assurity Insurance Company Lincoln, NE	8:49
Clarey Castner	Face-to-Face Interview	9/5/12	The Grapevine Lincoln, NE	28:11
Kent Seacrest	Face-to-Face Interview	9/26/12	Seacrest & Kalkowski PC, LLO Conference Room Lincoln, NE	9:09

**Data Analysis.** Analyzing the data is an inductive process involving category construction, or coding. The process of coding involves examining the interview transcripts and searching for recurring words or themes. Categories are created through the use of assigning codes, which can be a word or phrase to describe concepts from the data (Merriam, 2009). Open coding is broad and encompasses many descriptions that *may* become useful. Analytical coding involves more interpretation from the researcher on the meaning of data collected (Corbin & Strauss, 2007). A large number of categories can be created and should then be revised or

refined. Coding of the data was completed through the use of Dedoose, an online computer assisted qualitative data analysis software. Transcripts and field notes were input into the program verbatim, to easily identify and organize data. Descriptive quotes were converted into excerpts that can be tagged with multiple codes, memos, and descriptors.

According to Ryan and Bernard (2003), there are a number of ways to approach the coding process. The most common ways researchers discover emerging themes is to look for:

- Repetition in topics, expressions, and words
- Indigenous typologies or unfamiliarly used terms
- Metaphors and analogies, which represent a person's thoughts and behaviors
- Transitions or shifts in the text, which may include speech, pauses, or change in voice intonation
- Comparing similarities and differences throughout the data
- Linguistic connectors and phrases such as "as a result," "if," "instead of," and "since"
- Missing data or subject matter that interviewees may avoid in relationship to the topic
- Theory-related material

Coding online helps to streamline and electronically approach the data processing such as cutting and sorting excerpts from the text and sorting by individual or topic; using word lists to highlight unique sentences or number of occurrences for specific words spoken; and word co-occurrence to connect concepts to the linguistics (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). By use of the Dedoose software, a computer generated processing technique was used to electronically combine these processing techniques to create a large code co-occurrence grid, which lists all the codes

identified through the text and compares numerically how many times it overlapped with all other codes throughout the excerpts. A condensed version of this matrix can be found in Table 5.

### **Credibility & Dependability**

Internal validity or credibility deals with congruency between findings and reality (Merriam, 2009). Triangulation is a strategy implemented to increase internal validity by using multiple sources of methods, data, investigators, or theories to confirm results. This study used multiple data sources by relying on the primary informant, six secondary level informants, public documents, and observations. Secondly respondent validation, or member checking, was used to gather feedback on interview data, by reviewing transcriptions for accuracy to ensure participant perspectives were truly represented from the interview (Appendix H). Minor changes were made by the primary informant for purposes of clarification and protection of privacy to others. Eisner (1981) discussed qualitative research and the difference between scientific and artistic approaches by discussing the concern of scientists who rely on evidence and worry about the bias that may ensue, while artists rely on persuasion. He said, “Validity in the arts, on the other hand, is the product of the persuasiveness of personal vision...What one seeks is illumination and penetration” (p. 6).

Reliability, or dependability, measures the ability for findings to be replicated (Merriam, 2009). Reliability in areas of social science is difficult to gauge, since human interaction is never static. Dependability, first coined by Lincoln and Guba (1985), focuses on ensuring results are congruent with data collection, for qualitative studies. “Achieving reliability in the traditional sense is not only fanciful, but impossible,” stated Merriam (2009). A traditional view on validity of research rests on the notion that replications of a study will produce similar results. “Similarity of responses is taken to be the same as accuracy of responses” (Wolcott, 2005, p. 159). However,

this assumption cannot hold true for the social sciences, since replicating a qualitative study will not necessarily create similar results. Strategies used in this study to increase dependability include peer examination, understanding researcher bias (discussed in chapter 1), triangulation, and logging an audit trail, as suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985). The audit trail demonstrates ideas, decisions, and memos throughout the research process to account for the best results and provide in-depth details of how the study was carried out.

### **Ethical Considerations**

By providing a consent form, approved by the Institutional Review Board, study participants were well-informed about the purpose of the study, procedures of collecting data, their participant rights, and informed that no known risks or discomfort were involved. Interviews took place each participant's office and approval was obtained to audio record the interviews. Due to the nature of the biographical study, the primary informant's identity was required to be included. Secondary informants were given the choice to remain anonymous or reveal their identity and relationship to the primary informant. All secondary informants chose to reveal their identities through the interview. These precautions were made for the protection of participants. Data was stored on my password-protected personal computer hard drive.

### **Researcher Role**

The primary investigator must disclose personal biases, values, and disposition on the research matter to make clear how data is collected and analyzed. The "human as instrument" conveys the necessity of the qualitative researcher to critically reflect on his or her position and outlook (Lincoln & Guba, 2000).

I have worked at the University of Nebraska Foundation since 2007, beginning as the Donor Relations and Stewardship Department intern. There, my connection with Fairfield began

when I job-shadowed him for an undergraduate class project. In 2011, I started working as a full-time employee, as the events and donor relations coordinator. I have had the opportunity to work with and support a number of areas surrounding educational fundraising for the University of Nebraska—donor relations, development, planned giving, annual giving, corporate and foundation relations, and all other centralized service support. The foundation is an integral part of my personal and professional growth and has instilled loyalty to the organization. The organization ties together two of my passions: higher education and the nonprofit sector. As a Nebraskan, I have also possessed an inherent allegiance to the University of Nebraska, stemming from my youth. My personal and professional goals align with the mission of the foundation, which focuses on the advancement of the University of Nebraska. I believe in the mission, and I have been afforded the opportunity to see firsthand how the investments in the university positively impact the state of Nebraska and its citizens.

In many ways, I have long attributed the success and growth of the foundation and the University of Nebraska system in part to Terry Fairfield. During his tenure, Fairfield's success is quantifiable not only in numbers, but also in his relationships with others, such as donors and staff, which can only be evaluated in a qualitative sense. Pursuing a doctoral degree has expanded my knowledge of the economics of higher education and I stand by the assumption that the need for private philanthropy will continue to grow in the future. This places a greater importance on the need for successful leadership in college and university foundations across the country. Sharing Fairfield's legacy will benefit stakeholders of the University of Nebraska, the University of Nebraska Foundation, and others who are interested in advancing the field of educational fundraising. Learning about and from successful leaders is advantageous to those who are able to emulate positive leadership skills. I also wanted to document the trials and

triumphs experienced by Fairfield during his legacy at the foundation, so they are not lost in history.



## **CHAPTER 4**

### **UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA FOUNDATION HISTORY**

Although the University of Nebraska was chartered in 1869, it was not until 1936 that the fundraising arm of the University came into existence ([www.unl.edu/ucomm/aboutunl/](http://www.unl.edu/ucomm/aboutunl/)). Edgar A. Burnett served in various leadership capacities at the University of Nebraska from 1899 to 1938, as Chancellor, Dean of Agriculture, and Director of the Agricultural Experiment Station (Knoll, 1995). His Chancellorship lasted from 1929 until 1938, during a time of economical downfall, despair, and through the heart of the Great Depression. Financial hardship whittled down state appropriations, campus buildings were razed, and fewer students enrolled on campus. In trying times, Burnett turned to the solicitation of private support to supplement revenue and maintain academic excellence. In 1932, Burnett took notice of other institutions using alumni endowments as a source of revenue (Knoll, 1995). With his sight set on the future, he deemed an investment in higher education as a contribution to the greater good of society. According to Knoll (1995), the University of Nebraska Foundation was formally established in 1936 by the persistence and foresight of Chancellor Burnett who looked to endowment earnings as sustenance to perpetuate success and advancement of the University of Nebraska

Some of the first gifts to the foundation included a gift in commemoration of J.C. Seacrest's sister for the construction of a student activity building. In 1937, the second gift stemmed from a bequest of the estate from former university faculty member, David R. Major, for \$325. This was soon followed by the first investment—U.S. Treasury Certificates amounting to \$1,400, which paid 2.5% interest and matured in December 1953 ([www.nufoundation.org](http://www.nufoundation.org)).

In a short while, assets reached an excess of \$1 million and \$10 million, by 1952 and 1967, respectively. Perry W. Branch became the “successor” for Burnett in August 1943, serving

as the first full-time University of Nebraska Foundation director. The first foundation office was located in the Nebraska Student Union on the Lincoln campus in 1943. Harry R. Haynie succeeded Branch's leadership in 1963.

By 1977 the foundation engaged in its first capital campaign, "The Nebraska Campaign: A Commitment to Excellence," with a lofty goal of \$25 million. At this time the foundation was led by Haynie and D.B. "Woody" Varner, former University of Nebraska President. The campaign lasted three years and secured more than \$51.3 million in gifts. At the conclusion of the campaign, Harry Haynie retired, and Woody Varner stepped into a dual role of chairman of the board and foundation president.

From 1984 to 1986, William Wenke served as president while Varner stayed on as chairman of the board. In 1985 the foundation's assets grew to more than \$100 million (Knoll, 1995). For one year, longtime foundation staff member, Edward Hirsch sat as foundation president. "Even before Varner resigned from the foundation in 1986, it had become one of the largest among all state university foundations" (Knoll, 1995, p. 172). In 1987, Terry L. Fairfield joined the University of Nebraska Foundation and served as president and chief executive officer, following a career at Northwestern University Foundation. During this time, the Dow Jones Industrial dropped 20% in one day, and stimulated a meticulous analysis of the organizations' investment policies and asset allocations, with the help of the board of directors.

The 1990s fueled a surge in staff growth across the Lincoln and Omaha offices. In 1992, trustees provided support to open the Kearney foundation office, following the merger of the Kearney State College Foundation and the University of Nebraska Foundation. By winter of 1993, the endowment passed the \$300 million mark (Knoll, 1995). In 1996, the "Campaign Nebraska: One Nebraska. One University" capital campaign commenced and lasted until 2000.

The campaign raised more than \$727.7 million, endowed 95 faculty positions, and created approximately 1,000 new student scholarships. L. Dennis Smith, NU President at the time, considered this effort of private funding a “tremendous gift” to the state.

After 64 years of operation, in 2000, total assets of the foundation exceeded \$1 billion. In 2005, Terry Fairfield stepped down as chief executive officer and became vice chairman, while Clarence Castner stepped up as president, and was named CEO in 2008. By October 2009, the foundation launched its third capital campaign, “Campaign for Nebraska: Unlimited Possibilities” led by volunteers and is scheduled to last until 2014. This campaign reached its goal of \$1.2 billion in 2012.

The foundation celebrated its 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2011, which also became the best fundraising year in the history of the University of Nebraska Foundation. In 2011, \$172.1 million was given to support all university areas, \$130.2 million was transferred to the university, and assets exceeded \$1.7 billion (University of Nebraska Foundation, 2011). Upon Clarey Castner’s resignation in 2012, John Gottschalk, retired CEO and publisher of the *Omaha World-Herald*, served in the capacity of interim president and CEO (Abourezk, 2012). In July 2012, Brian Hastings, former executive at The Ohio State University, was announced as president and CEO of the University of Nebraska Foundation (Reed, 2012). In terms of endowment size, the University of Nebraska Foundation is one of the largest foundations for public post-secondary institutions in the nation (NACUBO, 2011).

In 2013, the University of Nebraska Foundation is comprised of four office locations around the state of Nebraska, including Lincoln, Omaha, Kearney, and Scottsbluff. In total the organization employs approximately 150 people. The foundation is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with the mission of advancing the University of Nebraska system. The university

system includes four campuses: the University of Nebraska-Lincoln (UNL), the University of Nebraska at Omaha (UNO), the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK), and the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC).

Governing leadership of the foundation is two-fold with approximately 880 trustees and 21 volunteers who serve on the board of directors ([www.nufoundation.org](http://www.nufoundation.org)). Trustees serve as ambassadors for the foundation, based on six-year terms and are elected based on their affinity and involvement to the University of Nebraska. The board of directors meets three times per year and is composed of seven committees, including: executive, financial, audit, administrative, development, nominating and board development, and grants. Two ex-officio members are a part of the board, which include the president of the University of Nebraska and the chairman of the university's board of regents.

Generosity of private donations has enabled the University of Nebraska to become the beacon of scholarship it is today. According to the University of Nebraska Foundation (<http://nufoundation.org>) the foundation believes:

- Private gifts have the power to transform higher education.
- Higher education transforms lives and communities.
- The university determines priorities.
- Donors determine where to direct gifts.
- The relationship with the donor is valued as much as the gift.
- What we help donors achieve isn't measured in dollars and cents.
- Every employee contributes to every gift.

- Our goals are reached as a team. We respect our colleagues – as individuals and as professionals.
- We should be held accountable – to each other, to our donors and to the university.
- Philanthropy should be fulfilling, inspiring and fun.
- Most of all we believe our integrity, not our endowment, is our greatest asset.

## CHAPTER 5

### THE LIFE OF TERRY L. FAIRFIELD

#### **Beginnings in Buffalo County**

The hometown of Terry Fairfield is rooted in the heartland of Nebraska, in the middle of the vast Great Plains region of the country. This area is commonly known as the tri-cities area of the state of Nebraska, composed of the cities of Grand Island, Hastings, and Kearney. His youth and family histories are inextricably linked to Kearney, Nebraska in Buffalo County. Bordering near the Platte River, Buffalo County was established in the 1850's, with Fort Kearney being recognized in 1848 on a 10 square mile military reservation (Bassett, 1916). Within Buffalo County lay the towns and villages of Amherst, Elm Creek, Gibbon, Glenwood Park, Kearney, Miller, Odessa, Pleasanton, Poole, Ravenna, Riverdale, and Shelton. The county is named for the herds of buffalo that once roamed the area's grasslands and was formerly a Pawnee Indian Territory. Historically, in the late 1800s, the area became well known as a rest area and settlement for workers constructing the railroad for Union Pacific and the Mormon Pioneer Trail that involved church members of the Latter-Day Saints traveling westward to the state of Utah (Nebraska State Historical Society, 2011).

**Family.** Fairfield's roots to central Nebraska begin with his parents, George H. Fairfield and Verda L. Hoffman Fairfield. His mother, Verda, was born to William and Bernice (Zbinden) Hoffman and grew up in Pleasanton, Nebraska. Verda graduated from high school in 1943 from Pleasanton High School, and married George on September 23, 1943, in Fort Leonard Wood, Missouri. She grew up in a farming family and worked as a nurse in Kearney, until retirement in 1987. George Fairfield was from Mason City, Nebraska. He served as director of the Kearney Public Works Department for 25 years before retiring in 1992. George was also a military man

who fought in the Battle of the Bulge during World War II and in the Korean War. He retired in 1980 as a one-star general (brigadier general) from the Nebraska National Guard.

Terry Fairfield, born November 30, 1948, grew up in Kearney, Nebraska, and was the younger brother to William L. Fairfield (Bill). Fairfield described his brother as having a successful career in the for-profit world. While Fairfield was young, his maternal grandmother also lived with the family, as his father was away at war. His grandmother, Bernice, created an impact on him from the beginning and he recalled her possessing a great amount of civility; someone who looked for the best in people and understood different points of view. Describing his childhood, Fairfield said,

We weren't wealthy at all, but it was a great place to grow up. You could go anywhere. There were huge feelings of security and I was able to get involved in anything from speed-reading to athletics of all sorts. It was just fascinating.

George and Verda were high school graduates, with Terry and Bill being the first from the extended family to attend college. He recalled his father as quiet, but seeing "every ounce of his body either outwardly or subliminally about leadership." He also described his mother's extraordinarily competitive personality and her role encouraging her sons to participate in athletics. "She was the one yelling at the little league coach and things of that nature. I remember playing catch with her all the time when I was growing up," Fairfield recalled. Reflecting on his mother's influence, Fairfield described learning both positives and negatives from his mother, recounting her unwavering bias and unwillingness to accept anything that was not of status quo. "I recall the very first time was when she was absolutely opposed to John F. Kennedy being president because he was Catholic, and that never changed."

Fairfield described his parents as hardworking and holding a number of jobs in order to send the kids to college. He explained his background, "You know, lower-middle class

upbringing, but certainly upper middle class in terms of values of upbringing.” As a child, besides the influential sports role models during the 1950’s like Mickey Mantle and the Boston Celtics, he admired his paternal great grandfather, as well as his father. “They had characteristics that were just, worthy of emulating.” His great grandfather also had a role in helping to raise Terry while his father was away to war in Korea. From him, Fairfield learned patience, humor, how to hunt, and not to talk while his great grandfather was thinking. For example, when Fairfield went to Athens, Greece in 1970, he recalled that his great grandfather had been there in 1917 while serving in the Navy. Fairfield had asked him if he made it to sites of grandeur such as the Parthenon and Acropolis, during his time overseas. He replied to his grandson, “Well I was in the Navy. Between this port and the Parthenon thing, would there have been a bar?” Fairfield replied, “Oh yes, it’s about three miles. There are a lot of bars.” Laughingly, Fairfield said the answer he received back from his great grandfather was, “Well, then I didn’t get there.” Besides a “wonderful dry sense of humor,” Fairfield also noted that his great grandfather was an inventor, as he recalled,

I’ll never forget. It was kind of sleeting outside and I’m out visiting him in Mason City [Nebraska] on a Saturday or Sunday. He kept looking outside the window and I said, “What are you looking at?” And there on the clothes line that he had built was this bucket going around, back and forth, back and forth. He was collecting ice and when it reached a certain weight, it would fall off the clothesline onto another line. Then he would go out and get it and make homemade ice cream.

Fairfield also remembered him as thoughtful and unbiased. He recalled of his great grandfather, “He had a brother who was severely handicapped and spent his life making sure that his brother had everything he needed.” Additionally, when his great grandfather was 82, he became a widower. Four years after the passing of his wife, he went to Los Angeles, California to find his



high school sweetheart. He married her and they moved back to Nebraska. “He lived life to the fullest,” explained Fairfield.

Fairfield’s other role model was his father. His father’s leadership was about seeing, not discussing. Fairfield was a witness to the respect people held for his father George. The esteem was not due to his formal positions in the military as brigade commander, battalion commander, or general. It was because of his character and who he was as a person.

I recall I must have been about 11 years old and he was working with some troops—some drills, up in Camp Riley, Minnesota, and he and I came out of the mess hall about noon one day. There must have been 6 soldiers sitting on this picnic table and we went to the one corner and set our trays down. Just as we sat down and they stood up, our table tipped and the food went down. And I’m thinking—they’re gonna be in the brig, but he didn’t do that. He got up and he said, “Ya know, we’re an engineering battalion, this shouldn’t happen.” He said, “Tomorrow, same time, the eight of us will have lunch again. My son and I will come out and sit in that corner and you’ll stand up and salute and the table won’t move. So here between now and then you’re going to engineer this table so it won’t tip.” These guys must have worked all night to get this done, but he made something positive out of the situation. And that’s pretty unique. So you saw that a lot. He was also a city engineer in Kearney, and people would do anything for him.

In terms of his parents’ influence of the development of leadership strengths, Fairfield recounted the notion of delegation and decision. Fairfield and his brother were free to make decisions for themselves, while their parents provided support and discussion, which served as a rewarding influence. Fairfield recalled his father being consistent and his mother less predictable, he talked about a time when his father’s behavior and reaction surprised him.

In the late 1960’s I was talking to him [Terry’s father] about Vietnam. I was always really upset about it. It was very much a minority war. Racial minorities fighting that war vs. white Americans was pretty much an embarrassment for our country. I asked my dad if I should go, and he said, “I would tell you yes, if I knew why we were there. And I don’t know why we’re there. I wouldn’t be surprised if I got a postcard from you in Canada and you should be surprised that I may like that you got the postcard from Canada.” So it was exactly the opposite. The guy’s whole career is military in major, major conflicts, and all that goes with that. He hardly talked about that at all, almost none.

**Education, Activities, & Work.** In reflecting on his early years of school, Fairfield vividly remembered the days of junior high school. The school randomly divided students between two sections for math and science class periods. As it would seem, there would be one difficult instructor and one easy instructor. Invariably, he would be placed in the more challenging sections. Further down the road on his educational path, he attended the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and this challenge would help him to test out of two math and science requirements as a freshman. “It was just amazing, in retrospect, the kind of quality of education I had,” he reflected. Besides math and science, he recalled excelling at curriculum in the humanities of academia, and enjoyed history and reading literature. He described the pedagogical philosophy during his time growing up; a time when educators believed if you read a lot, you would learn to write. He said, “It isn’t true and they didn’t do it much longer, but the good side of that was I really enjoy reading. To this day I enjoy reading and it can be all kinds of different things—fiction or nonfiction.”

Beyond academics, Fairfield was highly involved in athletics. Before Fairfield’s high school career, the Kearney High Bearcats had experienced much athletic success in their sports teams since reaching the state championship level in the 1940’s. However, athletics turned around during his high school career. During his time as a Bearcat, the football team earned third place for the season in the state football finals and second place in the state basketball finals. “Kearney just went crazy,” Fairfield said. He recalled having to go to the barbershop for a haircut, which his parents made him pay for. However, because of his helping hand to lead Kearney to athletic victory, his barber refused to take payment. “No, no you don’t pay for your haircut,” he told Fairfield. The winning seasons at Kearney High enabled and provided a means for the town to come together and act as a community. Fairfield compared meaningful

opportunities of celebration, like the football and basketball teams' success, to fundraising by saying,

It was fun to see how a situation or an instance of a situation could spark a whole diverse community to either appreciate or take action. You see that in our country all the time and that has a lot to do with educational fundraising. It was a compelling story and that's what we do in fundraising. We make a compelling case, of how a gift is going to make a meaningful difference.

Besides schoolwork and the extra-curricular activities during high school, Fairfield held a number of jobs. By the age of 13 he began detasseling corn, a wearisome task that involved removing the plant's pollen-filled tassels for hybridization. "It was like a windfall, because back then you could work at a retail clothing store and make 25 cents an hour. In detasseling you could make 85 cents an hour. It was miserable, absolutely miserable," he reminisced. Fairfield also worked at a parts department for Ford Motors at a dealership in Kearney. Eventually he would end up working in a retail position, at an upscale, fashion-clothing store formerly known as *The Brass Buckle*, and known today as *The Buckle*, which originated in Kearney. Additionally, during the hot and muggy summer months of high school, he worked with a crew that would lay sewer and water pipe in nearby communities. With displeasure he recounted, "That was a really miserable job. It paid a lot of money and I learned how important it was to get a college degree."

**College.** On July 13, 1973, Fairfield graduated from the University of Nebraska-Lincoln College of Arts and Sciences, with his Bachelor of Arts degree in philosophy. During his collegiate years, outside of studying, most of his time was dedicated to working. He bartended at Tony and Luigi's and stately proclaimed, "It was the best steakhouse in Lincoln." In addition to his position as bar manager at the restaurant, he worked as a security guard for a private company, standing guard to buildings from 7 p.m. Saturday night, until 7 a.m. Sunday morning. On top of working two jobs, Fairfield managed to fit into his schedule an assistantship for the

university. He was the first ever holder of the Greek assistantship, which involved advising Interfraternity and PanHellenic Councils for UNL's Greek Affairs office. With a sense of humor he said of the advisor position, "It was kind of ironic because I was a little ornery in college." In the meantime, he had gotten married and had his first daughter, Angela, who was 1 year old. Between balancing a demanding schedule and starting a family he said, "There just wasn't a lot of time." In his undergraduate years, Fairfield was also involved in Kosmet Club and the Lambda Pi Chapter of Sigma Alpha Epsilon Fraternity (SAE). On the national level of university Greek involvement, Fairfield was selected and honored to serve as eminent archon for the SAE fraternity. This required conducting the SAE initiation ceremony and memorizing a number of ritual passages. One such example is the "True Gentleman" written by John Walter Wayland in 1899 and adopted by SAE Fraternity (Green, 2009, p. 51).

The True Gentleman is the man whose conduct proceeds from good will and an acute sense of propriety, and whose self-control is equal to all emergencies; who does not make the poor man conscious of his poverty, the obscure man of his obscurity, or any man of his inferiority or deformity; who is himself humbled if necessity compels him to humble another; who does not flatter wealth, cringe before power, or boast of his own possessions or achievements; who speaks with frankness but always with sincerity and sympathy; whose deed follows his word; who thinks of the rights and feelings of others rather than his own; and who appears well in any company, a man with whom honor is sacred and virtue safe.

He recalled during this time that while it was an honor to be chosen as "the top guy in conducting the initiation ceremony" he remembered the rest of his peers going out and having a good time while he was stuck inside memorizing the scripts.

**Parenthood.** When asked about how parenthood can make an impact on personal or professional life, Fairfield described it as an interesting adventure. "Well my two daughters are my life, so I think the challenge early on is just fun, and the experiences and seeing through their eyes; how they're developing creativity, humor, and tension, that's just magnificent." Recalling

adolescence and the teenage years of his daughters, he gave great accolades to his wife in raising the girls. He said, “If things work, you literally become best friends.” He recounted an example of parenting support to his youngest daughter, Ashley.

I always provided for them, when what they wanted to do made sense—to them, not necessarily to me. For example, my youngest daughter could have gone to UNL and had tuition benefits and what have you, but she didn’t belong in Lincoln, Nebraska. She belonged in New York City. I remember telling her she could only go to NYU. She was accepted in Georgetown, Florida and all kinds of places. And she was doing some modeling and acting. I’ll be darn if she didn’t go back and meet with admissions people and got in. I think it’s helpful that she wanted it that much that she went and figured it out and did it. And the fact was, she just applied to the wrong college, probably because of me. She applied to the Stern School of Management, but she didn’t want to be in management. She ended up in media and marketing and she did very well.

Additionally, he underscored the value, experience, and passion of equestrian riding for his daughters, which was a hobby passed down by his former wife. Fairfield emphasized this activity as a means for his daughters, Angie and Ashley, to capture a competitive spirit and developing self-confidence at a young age, which positively impacted their livelihood today.

### **Turning off the Blinders**

Understanding the leadership essence of Terry Fairfield involved knowing the stories, values, and philosophies that surrounded his legacy at the University of Nebraska Foundation. This portrait documents those elements so they are not lost for the future. It involved taking a look in history, from a firsthand perspective. It is the *trompe l’oeil*, as if we could enter or walking into the story ourselves. Backtracking through the 25 years of leadership during Fairfield’s time as president and CEO, the beginning started in the 1970’s. The decade of the ‘70s brought change and doubt for America. In the beginning of the decade, Vietnam War protests were common, the Watergate Scandal ensued, President Nixon was impeached, and the music world gave birth to legends like Jimi Hendrix, Janis Joplin, and Jim Morrison (Corrigan,

2010). The 'Me' decade had arisen and Fairfield was in the initial phases of his career in higher education. Eventually, he would rise to become a leader at the University of Nebraska Foundation and instill his vision for the future of the University. He would soon put his leadership philosophies into action and show others how to "work without their blinders on," in order to produce a staff of visionaries and innovators.

**In the beginning.** Following college graduation in 1973, Fairfield entered the work force and stayed in Lincoln to join the University of Nebraska alumni office. Since 1985, the alumni association has been located at the Wick Alumni Center on 16<sup>th</sup> and R streets on city campus, but at the time they were housed out of the president's office in Varner Hall, near east campus. His task at hand was to create alumni clubs for in-state and out-of-state chapters, which is a main function of the alumni association for the purpose of networking, establishing relationships with alumni, and raising scholarship money, among other benefits provided to members across the country. He recalled one particular day, getting ready to grab lunch over the noon hour, and encountering the University of Nebraska President for the first time, Durward B. "Woody" Varner. During their introductions, Woody questioned Fairfield about his position with the alumni office and invited him to lunch. Inadvertently, they did not end up going to lunch, but instead President Varner took Fairfield to a machinery implement to buy a new roto tiller for Woody's garden. "He made me swear I'd never tell his wife," Fairfield said with a smile. According to Fairfield, they connected immediately and Woody shared the same sentiment about work, regarding the alumni office. Woody, too felt, that alumni clubs were an important piece to advancing university outreach. Woody extended his help to Fairfield and soon they traveled across the country to cities such as Cincinnati, New York, and beyond. He said,

What a great experience to have and watch how he related to people; he never looked through or around people. When he was talking to you, he was talking to you. It's interesting how few people do that well. So those were the little things I saw.

Following his stretch of work at the alumni office, Fairfield moved to the nation's capital, Washington, D.C., to work for the Council for Advancement and Support of Education (CASE). CASE is a professional association that serves higher education institutions and professionals in all areas surrounding alumni relations and development. Simultaneously, he began working on his Master of Business Administration degree at George Washington University. He was asked to be on the advisory committee to the university president of George Washington, but had to decline due to a lack of time in his schedule. He jokingly said of his time in D.C., "Angie was about three years old and we loved being there, but it was poverty."

Time would pass and eventually Woody would step down as the university president and fill the role of chairman at the University of Nebraska Foundation. At this time, Woody invited Fairfield to come back to Nebraska and help run the university's first comprehensive capital campaign in 1977, The Nebraska Campaign. The campaign ended in 1980 and raised \$51 million, doubling its original goal of \$25 million. "We did that, and it was successful," said Fairfield. After his fundraising success for Nebraska, he joined the Northwestern University Foundation in Evanston, Illinois. Before long, Woody would again invite Fairfield to return to the University of Nebraska Foundation, but this time as his successor to lead the organization and serve as the University of Nebraska Foundation President. "Woody called and said it was time to come back and run this place. So I never made my own decision," he joked.

**Leadership Philosophies.** When asked about his greatest success, Fairfield said he would not measure it quantitatively. For metrics, he looked to other areas of leadership that focused on people. In terms of the quantification of outcomes, when Fairfield returned to the

foundation to be the chief executive officer and president, the office staff was composed of 22 individuals. By the time he stepped down from the CEO role, the staff had grown to 128 people. By 2012 the staff was nearly 150. Fairfield said, “Anyone could read those [quantitative] results. It’s the other things that meant a lot. Well, they meant a lot to me.” He continued,

Being able to assemble a group of people who aren’t clones of one another, but yet collectively form a chemistry that’s bigger than any one person, enjoy their differences, and feed off one another; to see them grow is really wonderful and satisfying.

Fairfield pinpoints his ability to see the “big picture” as his key strength. “To think three and five years down the road, to be able to help strategically implement those outcomes,” he said. He continued to say, “How do you put those building blocks together? They don’t happen just because you say it; you have to do it and I guess that’s more of a management by example—what I’ve always believed in.” In addition to vision, Fairfield considered his ability to delegate as an exceptionally useful leadership strength. “I have the ability to delegate and let them do their job. I don’t think I’ve ever micromanaged. I think you set some standards by which all people conduct their selves,” Fairfield stated.

Further discussion followed on personal viewpoints and attitudes towards effective leadership. In reply to the question, “Are leaders made or born?” He replied,

I would say both. I don’t think you learn to be a leader by going to classes on leadership. I think you’re born with the skills, but leadership develops by having the opportunity to see how others deal with issues, solve those problems, motivate people and then in your own way you can emulate those characteristics. There are an awful lot of people in the business world, CEO types, and their management style is so autocratic and demanding. It’s an old management style, but it’s still effective in some issues. It’s still used a lot. But it’s not a team approach. It’s not explaining to people why you do, what you do. It’s not getting people to work together. It’s just straight down autocratic. I guess what I’m saying is, there is bad leadership, or ineffective leadership. Or ultimately that becomes ineffective and then you observe good leadership and you kind of adopt good leadership. You’ve got to be autocratic sometimes. You have to make decisions and that’s what CEOs do, but you don’t do it in isolation and you don’t do it with malice. You can evolve. You just can’t read a book about what you need to do to be successful and go and



implement it. There's a lot of people like that and lot of people believe it and try it. However, you don't usually see them running things.

In terms of traits that Fairfield found admirable in a leader, he said, "Honesty, integrity, and commitment. It's not just a leader. It's life." He expanded on the notion of commitment as a leader and saw flaws in leadership traits at the CEO level by discussing,

I see so many people that make a commitment and then all of a sudden they don't remember making that commitment. Or they say, "I misunderstood what they were saying," and that reflects very negatively to others. I don't forget those things. So if I commit to something that even in retrospect I wish I wouldn't have, I honor it. Truly, many leaders don't do that. They kind of have a different standard for themselves that they do for others. I shouldn't say leaders; too many CEOs do that kind of thing. Then you get staff that will start to talk about how he reversed himself or he made a commitment and didn't honor it and your leadership becomes in question. And it probably should.

Fairfield believed that organizational culture can also impact leadership style and played an important part in nonprofits. The culture that exists at the University of Nebraska Foundation in 2013 is one that stemmed from Fairfield's leadership philosophies. Upon Fairfield's return to the foundation in the 1987, the top four people in leadership were ages 63, 68, 70, and 77. This was a concern and a possible obstacle for implementing change. Fairfield was ensured that the executive committee on the board of directors would fully support changes that would be made in the future. He told them, "You're going to have to back me before I come back [to the foundation] because we're not going to be built for the future with these people and I've got to cut deals and what have you." Fairfield described a bleak organizational culture at the time. The atmosphere was one where little was accomplished, because people never left the office. He described, "They spent all morning reading the *Wall Street Journal* and then went to lunch. I had kind of a blank slate and I started creating this culture. I did it in a simplistic way." Fairfield

created a culture that was invoked with meaningful interaction, job satisfaction, and earnest work. He expressed,

You've heard me say a million times, "When you're in the shower in the morning, I want you excited to come to work." I don't want people to say, "Well I wish I didn't have to work." Because you're making a difference and you're having the opportunity to grow in the organization, so your work experience is a high part of high quality life experience. Boy, when you create that kind of culture, people don't say, "I can't believe I worked over 40 hours." They do what makes a difference and what it takes. And in fundraising, the bad news is you go to work from 8 to 5. The really bad news is then you go to dinners and get on airplanes and do something on the weekend that's work related. But when you have a passion for it, it's fun. So the culture is a collective passion to do things that really do make a difference. And that's fun. I really had fun.

The organizational culture that helped the foundation and university to reach major success was one that was based on Fairfield's philosophy to never "have blinders on." In regards to seeing the bigger picture he said,

I want them to see what their marketability is. When they do that, they do a better job for us. And it's my job to keep them. It's their job to make it more difficult for me to do it. It's the intangibles that have kept people from taking others jobs. It is that culture—there are very few places like we are. I think a lot of people around here see the big picture because we're a part of a big picture. That was fun to create.

The leadership advice Fairfield would give to future foundation presidents and CEOs also related to organizational culture, saying,

It's got to be your own place. You got to put your own people in the right positions you see. The past always has another pattern for the future. You keep the core values that have been developed, and build upon those. Understand the management philosophy first and then if you change it, then at least you know what you're changing. I see too many people come in to new situations and they don't spend the time getting to understand the organization and evaluating what's good and what needs tweaked or maybe making a statement that none of it is good.

The culmination of Fairfield's leadership was composed of a number of skills and philosophies. Some of the most easily identified leadership elements included qualitative

measures, flexibility, decision-making, and delegating, as seen by the dialogue from Fairfield below. First he discussed the quota approach to fundraising, saying,

Fundraising, when looked at in numeric factors—you go in and you got a monthly goal to make so many calls, and so many hits. It's just not fun. And you know, you're going through the motions. You're happy just because you got a hit that month for your accounting. Wow. You're not going to be around very long. Neither will your boss by the way.

Decision-making was an inseparable requirement of serving as CEO. Fairfield discussed handling the volume of decisions and the importance in delegating.

When you're running a large organization, you're probably going to make a thousand decisions a year. And you're going to make five or six game changers that make a difference. Of the thousand, probably what you're doing is not delegating enough. Why are you making all these decisions? So you learn how to delegate just by volume. And you don't change your mind. It really doesn't matter; it can go either way for small things. But for the big decisions, it's really hard if you made a wrong one. It's really hard to change a big decision. But, you got to be willing to do it and those are the ones you need to spend your time on. The others, you probably could go either way on. What you don't do is change your mind on things that aren't really that important. You'll become known as the Teflon manager. People will think you won't stay with your decision—you'll change, then you kind of lose all respect of your people. But there will be 4 or 5 major ones [decisions] and how do you measure the risk in those?

He also shared one of his favorite quotes from President Thomas Jefferson, the third president of the United States. Jefferson's reference dealt with progression and change.

Essentially, Fairfield suggested that organizations cannot afford to be static and individuals must move alongside the waves of time, culture, and other revolutionary contexts of advancement.

There are moments when the times require you to change. Jefferson was the greatest writer of that. Basically he said, "I am not an advocate for frequent changes in laws and constitutions, but laws and institutions must go hand in hand with the progress of the human mind. As that becomes more developed, more enlightened, as new discoveries are made, new truths discovered and manners and opinions change, with the change of circumstances, institutions must advance also to keep pace with the times." And it gives everyone the right to change. There are so many people that want to be status quo. You can't stay still.

## A Gift of a Lifetime

With a position of leadership comes a host of challenges to overcome and successes to be reaped. During Fairfield's leadership, challenges stemmed from numerous avenues including personnel matters, managing personalities, and securing financial stability for the university. Despite these challenges, there remained a perpetual cycle of achievements and celebrations that helped advance the university into a premiere institution. He was relentlessly focused on fundraising and he fondly recalled a memory with a friend and donor, George Abel. Abel, a prominent businessman and philanthropist in Nebraska, once told Fairfield in conversation, "You know, this is the third opportunity I've had to make a once in a lifetime gift."

**Challenges.** Over the years, as the foundation grew, Fairfield encountered a number of obstacles in various areas of the organization. He said, "Sometimes a challenge can't be met staying in the confines of what you're knitting and sewing. Sometimes you have to think out of the box and that's the only way you grow the box." Recalling one of his first challenges as president and CEO, he said, "I remember after being here [at the foundation] for 3 months in 1987, the market dropped 20% in one day and I thought—boy, this will be a short tenure." However, he felt that some of the most difficult challenges to overcome were related to personnel matters in university decisions. Select confrontations and difficult decisions were highlighted and recounted by Fairfield,

I think the roughest [challenge] probably was convincing the president that the medical center chancellor had to be terminated, and figuring out how to be a part of that. We had lost all our support in Omaha...all the partnerships at the medical center and with the hospitals. Many of the key people internally, that were heading the transplant program, liver and bone marrow, and what have you were going to leave. It [personnel issue] would've just stopped everything we were trying to do. And that was difficult. Anything personnel related issue is difficult. People move up and you build the skills of your people overtime. As you get bigger it's harder to do. But it's very important you do that.

For example, we were building the new surgical center on campus in the hospitals with the med center. I went to the board and we had a \$10 million dollar commitment to move forward and build, with the hope that we could raise the money. Fortunately, we did, but that's a pretty hard decision. Although the assets are big, the only really unrestricted flexible money they have—it's not that much. And then you run into multi-campus demands. Well, we ended up giving \$10 million unrestricted money to the med center, and the rest of the campuses wanted their share. So you need a president to back you on these things and to say, "Among all the needs, among all the campuses, this was the greatest one for the university." They're not easy decisions and measuring that risk is not necessarily a science, it's a little bit of an art. You're going with your own judgment about the do-ability. So those are pretty tough.

Next, Fairfield described the transition the Kearney campus underwent to join with the University of Nebraska system in the early '90s. Looking back into the history of the University of Nebraska at Kearney (2005), in 1903 the state legislature appropriated \$50,000 to build a school in the western region of the state. By 1905 the bricks and mortar were established for the Nebraska State Normal School at Kearney and its doors were open for public enrollment. The institution became known as the Nebraska State Teachers College at Kearney in 1921. By 1963 it would be known as Kearney State College, due to a system-wide requirement for state colleges. Nearly a quarter of a decade later, the state legislature passed LB247, the bill to move the state college system to the University of Nebraska system, in 1989. Officially, UNK joined the university system on July 1, 1991, following a Supreme Court review.

Merging with Kearney—the campus became a part of the university and I made my first trip to Kearney regarding the merge. I grew up there [Kearney, Nebraska] and knew all the people. I went and they said, "Fairfield don't come in here and think you can take over our foundation." And I said, "We don't necessarily want to take over the foundation, but we need to cooperate and what have you." What I did say to them is that we ought to put together a structure which is in the best interest of UNK's campus. And that's clear. Everybody bought into that. Everybody had that as an objective. So we put together a merger committee on how Kearney was going to be represented in the foundation and it was a good experience, but it was a difficult process because their foundation started in '59 and there was a lot of loyalty to it. There were 3 or 4 people that were all powerful and wanted to remain separate, so that was challenging.

Fairfield also described the decisions surrounding the University of Nebraska at Omaha campus, which has become a leading metropolitan university in current times. The UNO campus is roughly located between the streets of 61<sup>st</sup> and 67<sup>th</sup> and Dodge. He talked about the physical lay of the land and the challenges in supporting the campus' physical growth.

UNO faced difficult decisions because the campus needs were that they had outgrown their ability to grow. They [physically] had no place to grow, so we started partnering with the Aksarben Trust and the old Aksarben properties to see how that could work with the university expansion, and at the same time, honor the commitment that was made way back when the bonds were issued by the county. So we worked with the business community on that, and the foundation bought the land. We should always, for all the campuses buy tangible land for the future growth and that's what we've done. That's kind of a huge legacy as you grow it. Finding peripheral properties—to be able to expand was critically important to the university and we did it in so many ways at all four campuses.

He finished discussing challenges by focusing on donor relationships and the difficulties in presenting a big ask to donors.

If you cultivate right, you'd like to get to the point where the donor says, "Yes I want to do this. How much does this cost?" You're working towards that, but the methodology is different for different people. Some use more of an art form...it's more of an art and science—probably equally. You have got to know what you're talking about. I would say the best thing that happened to me in fundraising is being pre-med for two years and taking all the chemistry, physics, anatomy and what have you, because I could relate to many people [in these areas]. Look at campus for example. You could say, for example, to a donor that's very wealthy and very thoughtful philanthropically, "We have three priorities; two at the medical center and one at UNO that may be an interest to you. You've provided support in the past. You've dealt with so and so. Is there any one of those three you would be willing to receive a proposal, so that we can better articulate what we're trying to accomplish and why we think it's important?" And donors usually say, "Yes; well this one really interests me; or I'm the graduate of this college so I want to help." What have they just done? They didn't raise any money, but they kind of already made a commitment to give something. Doing your homework first is really helpful.

**Achievements.** With skillful and dynamic leadership, achievements can be made, goals can be met, and followers will grow. Despite the many challenges in educational fundraising for colleges and universities, Fairfield experienced much success over his tenure and put the ideas

and visions held by the four campuses of the university into reality. When asked if others identify the same strengths in Fairfield, he thought that others would see him differently than he sees himself. He said,

I hear this all the time. If I'm out and with staff during non-office hours, I'm laid back, friendly and have a great time. We're all people, we're not by position or what have you. I've been told many times by both staff and my daughters that when I was in the office, people would come in [to his office] and say, "Do you have a minute?" I would say, "Just," as I looked over the top of my glasses. People would say, "You're really an intimidating son-of-a-gun when you're in the office." I never thought I was intimidating, but I guess so and my daughters said, "Oh yeah, you're really intimidating! We always knew whether or not to bring up a subject just by the way you were looking up over your glasses or if we were in trouble or not." But I never felt that or never saw that. I think it was just when I was in the office—there are so many things. I love juggling a lot of balls. For me to have just a myopic view on one thing, which a lot of people are very good at, I instead liked having 8 or 10 balls juggled at once. The challenge of management and fundraising is making everybody thinking their ball is on top. If you can do that, then you're going to be pretty successful.

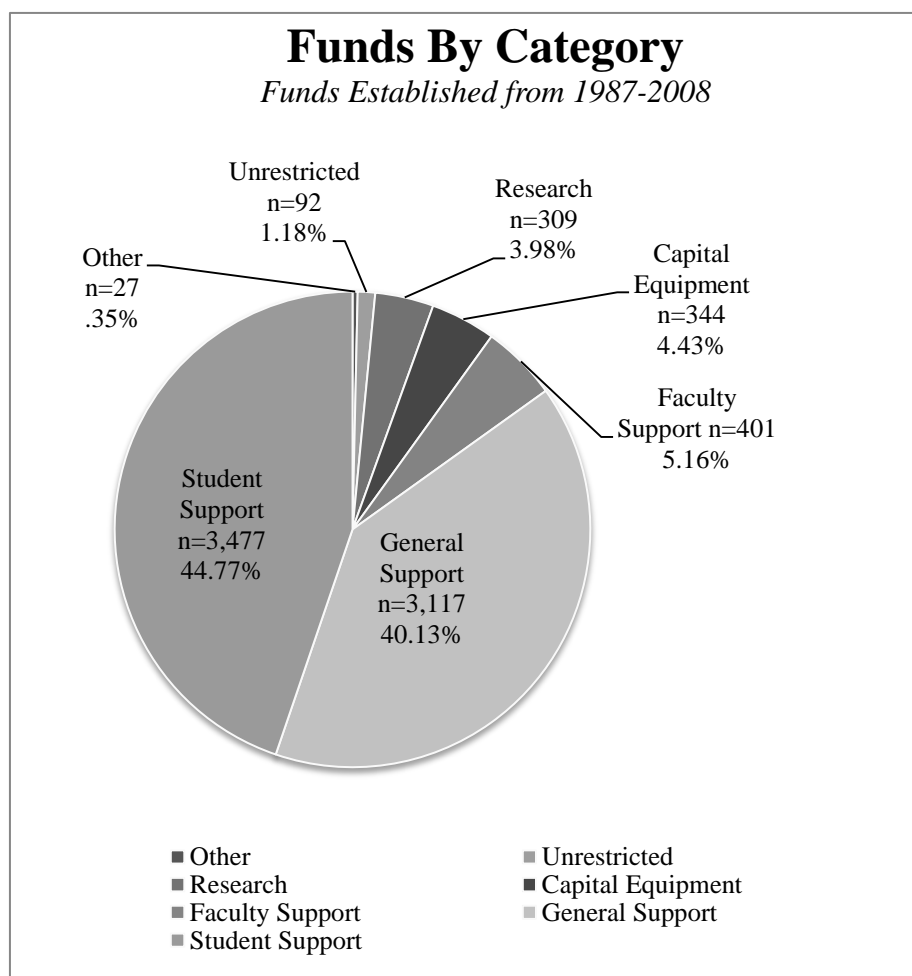
Fairfield's achievements were not only anecdotal, but possessed a bona fide, tangible, result. Attaining goals of the university often caused a chain effect, perpetuating the positive impact from one gift. To look objectively into these achievements, in quantifiable numbers, under Fairfield's leadership from 1987 to 2008, the foundation was able to establish 7,767 funds to support the University of Nebraska.

Donors are able to choose, at their discretion, what areas of the university they desire to support. Areas for gifts can be made to capital equipment, faculty support, research, student support, unrestricted, and other miscellaneous types of funds. Of the 7,767 total funds, as seen in Figure 2, 3,477 funds were created for student support and scholarships; 3,117 funds were established for general support of the university, 401 funds were created for general faculty support and endowed chairs, professorships, and fellowships; 344 funds were created for capital equipment and projects, 309 funds were created for research use; 92 unrestricted funds were

created for designation by the university's discretion, and 27 other funds were created relating to membership, program support, or University of Nebraska Foundation Charitable Gifts.

Figure 2

*Funds Established By Category*



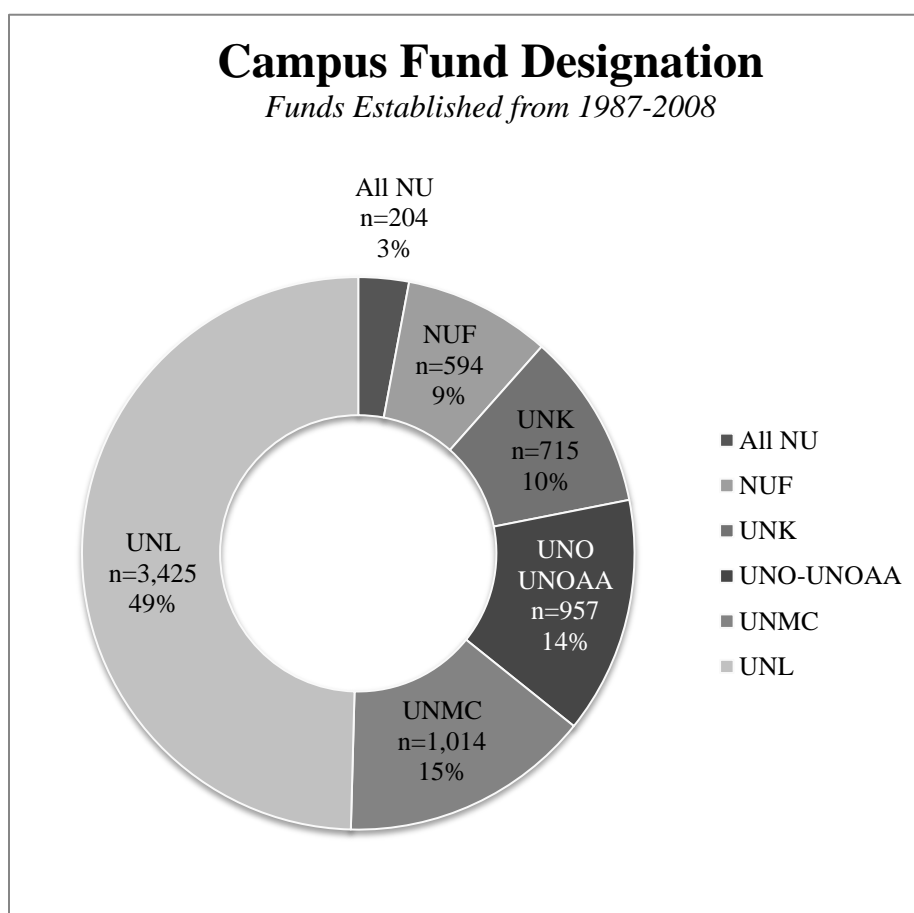
Of funds established from 1987-2008, during Fairfield's time as president and CEO, nearly half the funds were established for the flagship campus of the university's Lincoln Campus. At the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 3,425 funds were established; at the University of Nebraska Medical Center (UNMC) 1,014 of the funds were established; 957 funds were established to support the University of Nebraska at Omaha and the UNO Alumni Association;



715 funds were established to support the University of Nebraska at Kearney (UNK); 594 funds were established to be used by the University of Nebraska Foundation; and 204 funds were established and designated to the university system at large. These figures can be seen in Figure 3 below.

Figure 3

*Funds Designated by University of Nebraska Campus*



Fairfield recalled some major accomplishments beginning in 1987, saying,

Prior to 1987, private money built almost no buildings on any of the university campuses. It was all state funded. The state didn't have the money to continue to do that, so we moved in to raising private money to build buildings. During my tenure we built 26

buildings on the 4 campuses—hugely important. As I always say, “It’s what goes on inside those walls that are important.” But you got to have those walls. You got to have state of the art equipment. You’re competing for students and they need access to those things so when they go into the real world they’re going to know how to function. Also when you look at fine and performing arts, there was really never a corridor for it. It was naturally there. You had the entertainment district of the city and we built a Lied Center for Performing Arts, which join with the Temple Theater. Then we created endowments for the college and boy, seeing that blossom was great satisfaction.

Discussion was also generated on the meaningful aspects of developing relationships with donors. Fairfield was able to share his experience on what he has learned from interacting with donors and how he has been able to offer his expertise on giving. He offered some reflection and advice,

Well the learning experience is valuable. You raise some money from people that through my career, talked about war and WWII. They lived through the depression and it molded their entire life. They’re always frugal, thoughtful, caring and sharing. And you learn those experiences from people. That’s just invaluable. One thing I try to tell fundraisers, is that you can become and you will become, as I am, really great friends with some donors. But you never want to think you’re their peer. If you’re out working with someone on giving 10 million dollars—Well, I can’t give 10 million dollars. So you’ve got to keep the friendship in a professional side and it’s just sometimes hard to do. But I’ll get a lot of calls from donors that give us money, but they’re looking at making a gift to another charity or institution and they ask me for my advice. I’ll sit down with them and talk to them on the phone. So it isn’t just all about us. It’s about gaining that credibility among those friends that want their gift to make a difference.

When asked about Fairfield’s ‘masterpiece’ or greatest achievement, and how he would like his legacy as a leader at the foundation to be remembered, he described the legacy as an importance piece in moving the foundation forward and advancing the academic quality of the university. He said, “I think I helped move it along with the others, from being relevant in a minor way, to being indispensable in a major way.”

## **Twenty-fifteen**

During the interview, Fairfield conveyed the issue of community improvement and the quality of life. He said, “Why aren’t we promoting quality of life, instead of just talking about

the quality of life. It's not a unique problem to our campus, but it's true everywhere." A significant piece of the Fairfield legacy included his role in community development and service. The art and science of his leadership skills have made a lasting impression and positive impact on the city of Lincoln, Nebraska and surrounding areas. Some of Fairfield's most recent work in advancing the university simultaneously advanced Lincoln through projects of the 2015 Vision Group. The 2015 Vision is composed of a cohort of business leaders from around Lincoln, Nebraska who have collaborated efforts to reinvigorate the city, the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, and the people in the community. According to the 2015 website, the goals of this group include:

- Expanding the city's economic base through entrepreneurship and investing opportunities.
- Creating opportunities for young people to stay in Lincoln.
- Providing desired jobs, affordable housing, and expanding entertainment and recreation.
- Assisting the Lincoln campus of the university in areas of research, technology, education, arts, and athletics.
- Increase public-private partnerships for community projects.
- Encourage the pooling of private giving in strategic projects.

Kent Seacrest spoke on Fairfield's 2015 Vision involvement, stating,

The other area [in addition to the NUF] that I think he has just been renowned in accomplishing is the whole 2015 vision. Terry has been the glue in some ways to the 2015 group and everyone views him kind of as the unofficial CEO of the group, even though they haven't given him that formal title. He's helped lead the leaders of this community, which is probably the ultimate. The vision of 2015 is just a massive assistance and redevelopment to the Lincoln community, in addition to helping the university at the same time.

The areas most directly impacted from the 2015 projects include the building of the Haymarket Arena, Haymarket Park, Sports Triangle, Arts and Humanities, Ag Exposition, Downtown Plaza, P & Q Streets, Antelope Valley, and UNL Research and Development. Below is a table that describes each major project in more depth.

Table 3

*2015 Vision Projects*

<i>Project</i>	<i>Description</i>
<b>Haymarket Arena</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Approved by voters in May 2010</li> <li>• Construction of 16,000-seat arena in West Haymarket area to replace Pershing Auditorium</li> </ul>
<b>Haymarket Park</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand Haymarket Park area to create new baseball and softball fields and attract regional tournaments</li> </ul>
<b>Sports Triangle</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create and market Sports Triangle between the university's Memorial Stadium, expanded Haymarket Park, and West Haymarket Park Arena</li> <li>• Provide recreational and economic area to provide special place for state and regional sports tournaments; include parking, food, beverage, shopping opportunities</li> </ul>
<b>Arts &amp; Humanities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development University Humanities and Art Center block in Haymarket area, including first-floor retail and upper-floor residential living</li> </ul>
<b>Ag Exposition</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create year-round regional ag exhibition and events center on 84<sup>th</sup> &amp; Havelock Streets location</li> <li>• Utilizes existing university property</li> </ul>
<b>Downtown Plaza</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implement Civic Plaza at 13<sup>th</sup> &amp; P Streets and develop tower project on city parking garage for residential and retail space</li> </ul>
<b>P &amp; Q Streets</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Expand community and university related retail and entertainment on P and Q Streets.</li> <li>• Run trolley along corridor from Haymarket to Union Plaza Park</li> </ul>
<b>Antelope Valley</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop Antelope Creek and surrounding areas for waterway flows</li> </ul>
<b>UNL R &amp; D</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop public and private sector research along Antelope Valley from O street to State Fair Park to support Innovation Campus</li> </ul>

The initial startup of the 2015 vision phase began by enlisting a small group of people, seven men and one woman to serve on the group. Fairfield said, “The understanding was that we were going to provide leverage support to make projects succeed.” The Lincoln community had previously relied on the county or city to provide the work and funding, as there had never been a private component to these types of projects. The group undertook 10 development projects, beginning with the Union Plaza. The Union Plaza is a part of the Antelope Valley flood and roadway project between 21<sup>st</sup> and 22<sup>nd</sup> streets north of O street, which feature four water components, a festival space, a new connection to an existing city trail, artwork, a children’s playground, outdoor seating, and an overlook to the outdoor amphitheater (City of Lincoln, 2012). Fairfield continued, “So we raised about \$3.5 million, then turned it over to the parks foundation and they raised another \$1.4 million. They did a good job. It’s just phenomenal.” This project conjoins campus to 20<sup>th</sup> street along the Beadle Center, which is the university’s center for biotechnology. This project was a benefit to both the university and the community. Fairfield described the pressing need for these projects to happen, in order to advance both university and city communities. One example described is the construction of the Pinnacle Bank Arena.

The Devaney [Bob Devaney Sports Center at UNL] needed to be replaced. We needed a place to play men’s and women’s basketball. The community needed to replace Pershing. It was natural. Clearly, the city had to be the big funder in the overall cost of that project, with the infrastructure and all being \$360 million, but we were able to enlist a committee and help fund that committee and get the project going. It just reinvigorated the community. Then all the private investment along with it goes in for the yard [the space in front of the Pinnacle Bank Arena]; new office space, retail space, and residential housing. It’s in our backyard, our campus’ backyard. Well that’s what keeps young people here after they graduate. That’s what creates job opportunities. That’s what creates wealth that ultimately is the objective to further benefit the university.

Fairfield continued to discuss the need for action in charitable giving and how it has benefited the mission of the foundation.

So you look at challenges and the structure that you have, and at the time it wasn't suitable really to carry out this evolving and growing mission. Some would say charities shouldn't be that active. But I think they have to be. I think who really benefits in all this, is the people in the community, but certainly also our university. We took on innovation campus and then renovated Whittier [Whittier Hall was a restoration project. The building is used for work space related to campus research]. That had been a problem for 30 years. Then you know a number of downtown projects started—P & Q is once again adjoining campus and a pretty exciting place now. A lot of new restaurants, new retail... So that was a vision that was built and we implemented it; and spent a lot of time supporting the mayor, and visiting the mayor, and fighting with the mayor, Terry joked.

Many of the projects for the 2015 vision came at the right time. Fairfield discussed the direct impact on the downtown area of Lincoln and the momentum that led to successful outcomes in project funding.

We helped the Downtown Lincoln Association create a foundation so we could channel dollars through there and provide some minor support. For example, for young entrepreneurs, we bought a sign for Duo Shoes [retail shoe store]. That's something they couldn't do, but it gave them identification. We helped subsidize equipment for Panera Bread, so Panera Bread came in. And then things just start evolving. By this time next year, there's going to be nine new bars and restaurants in the yard next to the new arena. That's all part of the investment. So a little bit of the money we put in stimulates all this economic activity, which excites people about the university. That helps reach their [university] goal of increasing the undergraduate program to 30,000 students.

In addition to key timing, Fairfield was able to get private investors to provide support. In the grand scheme of things, a complimentary mix of volunteers, motivation, and generosity allowed for the initial funds to be generated.

When you get a big picture, it's some about competition, more about leadership, and both getting things done and getting the right people to buy in. I sat down with the eight people and said, "If we're serious about this, we got to put together \$35-40 million." And

individually, we put together 40 million dollars. We still had more money to raise and it shocked the community. The community needed a shock. It had not done anything in 20 years. We entered a great economic time. Over 35 years of the Build America Bonds, by the rates we received vs. project, we saved about \$68.8 million dollars. Well that's huge.

In terms of barriers to achieving the 2015 Vision, Fairfield said, "I think now it is kind of gestalt. It was the right time and when things are the right time, well boy, that's really good."

### **Fun. Bright. Driven. Mercurial.**

Recounting the steps through Fairfield's leadership path from his own perspective is a single element to the greater picture. Exploring the views and experiences from individuals who worked closely with Fairfield enriches the understanding of his leadership legacy at the foundation. It deepens the history and standpoints over the years of fundraising at the university. When asked how he would describe himself, he took a moment to reflect. After quietly thinking to himself, he said, "Fun. Bright. Driven. Mercurial. About a ten second attention span," he said laughingly. In many ways, his personal characterization aligned with how others viewed him. Eliciting the views of Fairfield's peers help complete the picture in understanding his leadership essence. It provides access to an illustration of a close, personal side of Terry Fairfield.

**Clarey.** Clarey Castner, former University of Nebraska Foundation president and CEO having known Fairfield for 24 years, shared knowledge of him and their relationship. For the first five years the two shared a professional relationship, which would then evolve into becoming close friends. Clarey expressed two times when his perspective about Fairfield changed and reached a new level infused with respect and admiration. The first event involved witnessing Fairfield's compassion towards others. During this time, a colleague in the office had fallen severely ill, and Fairfield took upon himself the responsibility to provide access to the

highest quality medical care for the employee. The second incident involved Fairfield reaching out to Clarey concerning a personal family issue, while he was only 22 years old.

When asked to describe Fairfield's legacy to the foundation, he said, "Inherently loyal. He's loyal to a fault, but that's better than the opposite. He created a culture of relationships." Clarey defined Fairfield's leadership as loyal, strong, and focused on the positive. Clarey called to mind a time when Fairfield had focused on the negative, which was unusual behavior. He said, "The few times Terry had focused on the negative, he regretted it and it took him a few steps backwards. It was out of his character. What he does is bring people up or build them up."

Working closely with Fairfield as a mentor, colleague, and friend, Clarey discussed how Fairfield challenged people and encouraged others by stimulating passion, emotion, and treating others on an equal plane. Clarey said,

He gets people thinking with values based questions. He gets people to be emotional and passionate. He would ask, "Why do you want to fundraise? What does this mean to you? What do you want to do with your life?" He understood people and was able to give real, genuine compliments. Terry is self-contained. He was unusual for his generation in that he treated everyone the same. Rank didn't matter. Everybody got their same "30 seconds" of time in his office. He encouraged others by spending time with them. He was good at encouraging others and knew you needed to make others feel good. You don't raise money when you feel bad; you raise money when you feel good. He created the idea of, "We're on it, and we got it. You're special, we're special."

Clarey attributed Fairfield's success to his personality and management skills, by saying,

His priorities were always focused on the foundation, the university, and the state. He always looked at the benefits of the larger society. How did Terry have success? He was able to boil it down. He could live a certain lifestyle he wanted to and have fun, but he identified the important things—what had to get done. And he got them done. "We" got it done. He was always able to make people feel a part of something bigger than themselves.

Clarey reminisced about the early 1990's, being in his late twenties, and experiencing the first time Fairfield showed anger or frustration towards him. He had gone to Fairfield's office to



bring in a proposal for review and Fairfield pointed out a handful of typing errors. He said to Clarey with disdain, “I’m a pretty expensive editor, don’t you think?” Clarey said two messages were made clear from that day. The first was that Fairfield approved of the proposal’s major concepts, but he wanted a final product. The second was to ensure Fairfield’s time was effectively and efficiently used.

Clarey expressed a moment in foundation history, when the organization was visibly growing and beginning to reach a heightened sense of ability to make a significant impact to the university system. Despite this time of prosperity and true blossoming of the organization, a dark, preconceived notion of Fairfield began to emerge. “People became outspoken,” described Clarey. “People likened him to Gordon Gekko [the fictional character and antagonist in the 1987 film, *Wall Street*]. He was viewed as a man of power; power that was quickly accumulated,” he said. When asked whether or not Fairfield liked the power, Clarey stated, “Terry liked it because he was able to use power to benefit the institution and not himself. Never was there an instance in which Terry abused his power.”

**John.** Leaving behind a career in academia, John Niemann started at the foundation in June 1987, one month prior to Fairfield’s start date as CEO. John recalled,

I still remember in June of ’87, there used to be a fellow by the name of Bob Sandberg. He was the planned giving director. I remember Bob Sandberg used to take me around and introduce me to people and so forth. Sandberg and I were playing golf one time and a guy across another fairway yelled to Bob, “Hey! I hear Fairfield’s coming back!” I had no clue what they were talking about, but soon I would know.

John went on to describe his relationship with Fairfield saying, “It’s as good a relationship you could have as a person working for him.” Describing Fairfield as a fair and bright leader, John said, “If you like challenges and you accept leadership and acknowledge it; and if you’re always given a fair chance to express yourself and be listened to as well as to listen, then I

was in a great position.” John said there was a quality about Fairfield that was a mystery, but no individual ever doubted his leadership or personal strength.

John gave accolades to Fairfield’s family and felt that his family pedigree was both impressive, understated, and an important part of his leadership. “His quality is outstanding; personable; a wonderful public speaker; a person that made friends easily. I would describe Terry Fairfield as a leader,” John stated.

Recalling 2005, when Fairfield stepped down from his position as president and CEO of the foundation, John shared his perspective,

Nobody really looked forward to the day when Terry was not going to be there. When he left, it was kind of a shock, but in fact he had prepared for that in his own quiet way and probably worked with the board. His legacy is untarnished, there’s no question. I learned a lot from Terry who was thoughtful, empathetic, and strong. I can honestly say in the 20 some years we worked together, we never had a serious argument. He respected what I was doing and I certainly respected what he was doing, even though we didn’t always agree. His legacy is one of being a superior leader that will always be remembered at the foundation.

Personally, I know that Terry had so much to give. You know, I am just a firm believer and advocate for the University of Nebraska and I want everything good that is possible to happen and certainly the foundation lost a treasure and person of value in that effort when Terry became less active. And I wish to this day that he was more active. Because, you know what? Terry would make a difference. It’s true. A lot of people feel that way. A lot of people miss Terry.

Moreover, John was able to see Fairfield’s leadership progress, as a result of beginning their work at the foundation during the same period of time. The praise for Fairfield’s leadership comes from not only his colleagues within the office, but those external from the organization. John further explained Fairfield’s relationship with university leaders and talked about the balance of relationship management by saying,

He certainly had a relationship of mutual respect with the chancellors. I will tell you, mutual respect doesn’t always mean agreement. But Terry’s job was a tough job. A tougher job than what he ever let on, because there are a lot of personalities

in this university, I will promise you; rising from every instructor, to the four chancellors, and the president's office. They're all different people and all seeing the world a little differently. Terry was the person that maintained a balance and positive attitude through this whole thing.

**Connie.** Joining the foundation in 1983, Connie has worked in development for the College of Architecture for nearly 30 years. She said, "I've been with Terry forever. When I started he wasn't the president, but he came in shortly after I started." Connie reflected fondly on her memories of Fairfield in the office saying, "We bonded immediately. He's a great person. He's easy to get to know. He takes you under his wing." She recalled one of the first comments Fairfield said to the staff, "We're family. We will not let you fall." Connie illustrated Fairfield's willingness to help anyone succeed and bend over backwards to help. Once Fairfield joined the foundation office, there was a familial sense among the employees. She recalled a number of examples of his compassion; first when an employee's spouse was suffering from cancer; and second when an employee had cancer. With adoration, she described the thought, empathy, and support conveyed by Fairfield that became meaningful to the process of coping during such dire events. Ultimately, Fairfield projected graciousness and understanding during delicate situations.

Describing Fairfield's leadership traits, Connie commented on his impeccable speaking ability. He was a natural orator who delivered a lasting message time and again. Connie described,

He's brilliant. He remembers everything. He can speak like nobody I've ever heard. Nobody talks like Terry. He can get up and he's so eloquent. He speaks from the heart and he means everything. He remembers everything. He remembers everybody and everything about that person. It amazes me. He's an amazing man. I just love him.

Professional development was an important aspect and benefit of being one of Fairfield's subordinates. Connie was able to learn a myriad of leadership skills from him. She recalled a personnel situation, in which she was forced to terminate an employee from their current position in the office. This resulted in a teachable moment as she said,

He was the person who helped me figure out how I had to do that. That is not an easy task for anybody, but he walked me through and helped me see how and why. But you can do it in a way that doesn't hurt anybody. You can't take crap from anybody and he's taught me a lot of good lessons.

With Fairfield there seemed to be an automatic feeling or sense of respect. Inwardly and outwardly projected inspiration or motivation from the staff was enveloped with the highest regard they felt towards Fairfield. Connie shared this sentiment by saying,

He doesn't have to do anything [to inspire]. You want to do things to make him proud of you, but to do things that you know he would appreciate; that he would stand for. He gives us a feeling, like your parents. You never want to let them down. I would never want to let Terry down. I would do everything in my power to do what he expected. And he doesn't have to ask. He has a unique leadership that allows him to be in the background, but yet you know what he wants.

There are expectations or biased opinions people will hold in regard to leadership at the CEO level. These traits are not always viewed as positive or desirable. However, Connie felt that Fairfield was a unique CEO in that he used his personality to encourage others and display concern for staff. It was a leadership behavior that was appreciated by employees, but unexpected from a CEO.

All the questions go back to his personality and how he is. You know there was a time when he would go around and say, "How are you and how are you doing with your family? Are you working too many hours? Are you traveling too much? Is this ok with your family? I don't want anybody to have relationships that start to fail because we're demanding you to be on the road or something." And then, when you're a development officer and you're traveling, that can be the case. He was always very concerned about that. They want you to get out and see so many people and do so much, but they want to still make sure you can make it at home too. And that's a fine line to walk. But he was always there to listen and help you through those things. He does unique things that you

don't even think people would do. You think your boss or your CEO is too busy to do that kind of stuff. He never was too busy. He always took time. He took time to know everybody and know about them and their family. We're [the foundation] family. That's how it was. And he cared about that. You get to this size of a firm or office and most people don't do that. He treated us like we were a small organization, which we were when he started, and he never let that go. He knows everybody here. He knows everybody by name. He knows your spouse, or fiancé, or significant other. He always took time to know that. That's special too. That helps with your leadership roles. When you don't have that personal touch, and we've all seen people who don't even glance at you. They don't know where you work in the office, let alone know who you are. There's a difference. He always made it so he knew who everybody was. And treated them like family.

**Kim.** Kim Robak, former Lieutenant Governor of Nebraska, was able to speak on a number of projects and experiences regarding her working relationship with Fairfield. Her former role in central administration at the University of Nebraska system afforded her a number of opportunities to work with Fairfield. She recalled,

I would say that Terry and I had a very good professional relationship and also a friendship that developed as a result of our working together over a decade or more when I was both in state government and at the university.

Reflecting on Fairfield she said, "It's hard to describe Terry in a few words." Kim went on to characterize him as a person who was dedicated to his work, possessed a vision for the university foundation, and did everything to ensure those visions became reality. She described how Fairfield was continuously looking for talent. "He brought together a group of very talented individuals and gave them the tools and the ability to do what they needed to do to make that vision a reality."

Kim described a number of major achievements generated by Fairfield. Notably, she commented on the process of modernizing the university, foundation, and organization as a whole. She recalled,

He really brought the foundation into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. He made it a viable, productive, and successful organization. He brought in some key leadership. He professionalized the

board. He established some very high goals and campaigns. Because of all the money and programs that he brought in, the entire university system was transformed.

Recalling an important project for the university, Kim described Fairfield as demanding. She explained, “Demanding in the sense that he made it clear what he wanted and managed people to accomplish that vision, that goal, or whatever it was that he set.” The project she was referring to dealt with the marketing and changing of the university branding identifier. Kim described, “It was an ‘N’ and a ‘U’ and it was commonly referred to as the worms.” Fairfield had a vision in his mind and was able to fund the resources needed to change the identifier to the one used by the university today. Without Fairfield’s guidance, the marketing effort would have never taken place.

Kim also spoke of a time when Fairfield’s efforts toward modernizing the institution were done so behind the scenes. This example dealt with the bricks and mortar of the university. More specifically, renovations would be made to Varner Hall, which houses the bulk of central administration offices at the university.

Varner Hall was in a state of incredible disrepair. There were leaks in the windows and wood was rotted around the windows. During the winter time, there would be towels laid on everyone’s window sills. The president’s office had old furniture that was dated, warped, and stained. It was not a place you would want to bring in a candidate for an interview. I simply remember when President Smith, Dennis Smith, was interviewing someone for a deanship or vice chancellor’s position and brought them into the office. I was embarrassed and I thought, “This is not the environment you want to have for the president of the university system.” Terry came up with an idea on how we could refinance the building, how we could put in new windows, and an HVAC system, and upgrade the handicap accessibility, while also remodeling the building. Now, it looks the way it would in a modern office with a reception area and president’s office—a beautiful president’s suite and better facilities for everyone in the office. That was something that seems minor, but it’s the face of the university. It’s something Terry managed to say, “Hmm, this is important to the university and it’s my job to support the university, so we’ll find a way to make this happen.” Again, a little thing, but Terry always managed to come up with a solution to whatever problem existed. You could take that tiny example of the renovation of Varner Hall and you could run it across the entire university. Whether it was innovation campus, the acquisition of State Fair Park, or the creation of

the big Aksarben campus—Terry was instrumental in fundraising. For any type or sum of money, Terry was behind the scenes.

Similarly to what was described by Connie, Kim replied to the question of describing how Fairfield challenged others by saying, “From my perspective, it was just an expectation. Terry had an expectation of what he wanted, so we wanted to make sure that we could meet that expectation.” She made clear that he was always available and exuded a kind demeanor in situations where he had to encourage others in a different direction of thinking, or to consider an alternative. “I know other people who have worked with him commented that his door was always open; that they could go in and visit with him and he would give them good advice,” she remarked. In addition to Fairfield’s accessibility to staff, Kim mentioned his diplomatic way of leading. Just as Clarey described Fairfield’s aversion to abusing power, Kim emphasized,

I never, ever, thought of Terry as being heavy-handed and I would say he was always very candid about what he wanted. He didn’t compete with the university and that may sound odd, but what often happens is that, especially with a stand-alone foundation, there gets to be a time when there’s a power struggle. Who’s more important—the foundation or the university itself? I never saw Terry engage in a power struggle, ever. There was never a worry on trying to decipher what Terry was thinking. He led with an upfront method of management and leadership.

Kim ended with words of praise by saying, “I think the world of Terry Fairfield. I think he is incredibly under recognized.”

**Tom.** Tom Henning’s expertise on Fairfield’s leadership stems from his former role as University of Nebraska Foundation Board of Directors Chairman. Tom said, “I have been actively involved with the foundation for at least, I think 25 years, so I’ve known Terry for at least that long.” Tom’s participation and volunteer service to the foundation began as a member of the investment committee. Eventually he would become chairman of the investment committee and next, he became the chair-elect of the board. Tom served as chairman from 2005-

2007, and past chairman thereafter. He currently serves on the investment and audit committees for the foundation. Speaking on times working alongside Fairfield, he said,

“Probably the most significant piece was that I was chair during the time of Terry’s last year as CEO of the foundation before Clarey took over. I was highly involved and working with both Terry and Clarey on that transition.”

Tom described Fairfield’s legacy at the foundation as “significant”. He described Fairfield as doing a remarkable amount of tasks, on a number of different fronts in order to move the foundation forward and provide the needed funds to the university system. “Under his leadership our fundraising went to the next level on several different occasions. The success that the foundation has enjoyed is very significant.”

Expanding on Fairfield’s leadership traits, Tom indicated that his most salient strength was ‘entrepreneurial fundraising,’ which he described as having the ability to match donors’ interests to the welfare and needs of the university. He said, “Now that sounds like what everyone does, but I don’t think it always works that way.” Tom continued,

You know it’s interesting, when they received the Paul Engler gift, you might remember that. It was like a \$20 million dollar gift. I asked Terry, “How long have you been working on that?” And he smiled and said, “About 20 years. And Woody Varner was working it before me.” So my point is, these major gifts typically have a long cultivation period and Terry has been very good at that. A lot of seeds have been sown that haven’t been harvested yet, but will be harvested in the years to come.

Likewise, Tom attributed optimism as a catalyst for Fairfield’s success. Tom made a point to say,

He was truly an optimist about how to get things done and how things would work out. I think that’s really important in that role. You bring a positive outlook into everything you do, and I think he always did.

**Kent.** As attorney at law and partner at Seacrest and Kalkowski, PC, LLC, Kent Seacrest had the opportunity to work with Fairfield on a number of foundation related projects. On describing his link to Fairfield, he said, “First, I view him as a friend. Secondly, I view him as a



client in his various capacities for the University of Nebraska Foundation.” Aiming to define Fairfield’s leadership, Kent spoke highly of him, saying, “He is a very, very effective leader. He’s got a natural blend of being very bright, very reasonable, very practical, and getting people to follow him.” Kent holds a unique ability to speak on behalf of Fairfield’s community involvement and service to the city of Lincoln, having worked on a number of projects together. He recalled one of the first developments they collaborated on, in north Lincoln, reminiscing,

The first project we worked on was the Highlands. Terry saw a bankrupt area of Lincoln, which was the Highlands area and saw great ability to help the community and help the university at the same time. With his leadership he got a lot of other key players—Robert Duncan, Duane Acklie, Jerry Schleich, Tom White, John Brager... to form a coalition. They went in and convinced the city to annex the area and settle this bankruptcy problem. As a result, he got for the University Nebraska Foundation some real key pieces of ground that became the Nebraska Technology Park in the Highlands. That was a major achievement.

Nebraska Tech Park was established in 1997 between the university and private investors to create collaboration between the university and private sector companies to promote discovery, research, and development related to technology.

Kent continued to speak on Fairfield’s involvement by describing,

He’s one of those natural people that know how to formulate—to form coalitions and create win-wins. So not only is he able to carry the university’s banner, but he’s able to indirectly help the community’s banner go forth as well. Since he fundraises, Terry has the ability to raise one dollar for the university and maybe one dollar that indirectly helps the community. That second dollar always comes back to help the university. He believes in the math that 1+1 can equal 3, by getting his community involved.

In discussing how Fairfield is motivated, Kent described a component of altruism. He said, “I think he just naturally wants to do good. So as a result, that just drives him to do good for the university and his community.” Interestingly, Ken, like John Niemann, had noted that Fairfield possessed a mysterious side or a certain mystique. He continued by saying, “Well,

Terry is so outgoing and personable, I think there's a private side to Terry that he wants to be sure stays private, for his own sanity or psyche or something."

The course of the interview turned to Fairfield's ability to both follow through with tasks and inspire those around him. Kent felt that his reach has spanned across a number of levels of leadership and constituents in the university and said,

Not only do I think he's inspired the broader university community, be at all levels—the president, the chancellor, deans, faculties, alumni, all the groups, but Terry is a renowned leader. When he says he will do something, he does it. His word in my book has always been as good as any piece of paper that he could ever sign. He follows through. He has high integrity. He's creative, imaginative, and those are just all signs of leadership. When people see it and sense it, people listen. Terry's got a high track record of people following him.

Kent recognized Fairfield's impeccable social skills and described how people were drawn to Terry and his charisma by expressing,

Terry's got a great smile and a sparkle that I think makes most people who come in contact feel warm, takes down their guard, and then he can get down to business pretty fast. He obviously has a track record that helps him too. Success does breed success and in his case, he's carried the mantle of the university and the community with great distinction.

## CHAPTER 6

### FINDINGS & THEMES

Constructing meaningful themes involve five steps, including listening for repetition in views or statements; listening for resonant metaphors and symbolism through experiences discussed; listening for institutional or cultural traditions vital for organizational cohesion; triangulation to create fluidity between multiple data sources; and portraying patterns that are experienced by participants, but may be unknown to them (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Hoffman Davis, 1997) Theme discovery is an integral part of social science research which allows scholars to fashion a construct of textual expressions and descriptions to compare and explain the central idea (Ryan & Bernard, 2003). From analysis, 56 codes were identified from 208 excerpts taken from the interview transcripts, as demonstrated in table 4. Codes are listed alphabetically.

Table 4

#### *Matrix of Codes*

2015	Achievement	Activities	Admiration	Altruism	Attitude	Background	Behind The Scenes
Bright	CEO	Challenge	Community	Creative	Decisive/ Decision	Delegate	Effective
Ego-Checking	Emulate	Family Impact	Family Life	Fearless	Fundraising	Goal Oriented	Higher Education
Humor	Job Satisfaction	Lead by Example	Leadership	Leadership Development	Leadership Traits	Loyal	Mentorship
Modernization	Modesty	Motivation	Mystery	Opportunity	Organizational Culture	Passion	People Oriented
Perception	Personality	Philosophy & Values	Relationship Management	Respect	Solutions	Strength	Subordinate Loyalty
Success	Teacher	Trust	Unspoken Expectation	Values	Vision	Weakness	Work Experience

From the list of 56 codes, five major themes emerged. Triangulation was most useful in validating the qualitative data and allowed evidence to be built for confirming themes among the individuals who participated in the interviews. Additionally, respondent validation from the interviews helped to ensure accuracy in the coding process and themes development. Following the coding process, external auditor was used to review excerpts from the transcripts. The auditor held no relationship to the project and was able to use her own criteria. The external auditor role increased reliability by peer examining the transcription text with the completed coding scheme to identify if they would have chosen alike or differing codes. This technique is described as intercoder agreement in qualitative research (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011).

To further understand and analyze how the codes coincided with each other in the text, the 56 codes were condensed to 19 codes in a code co-occurrence table. This created a more succinct outline of Fairfield's leadership attributes. Table 5 demonstrates the condensed version of the code co-occurrence extracted from the collected data. Major themes that emerged from the data included:

- Lead by example
- Passion
- Mentorship
- Vision
- Modesty

Table 5

*Condensed Code Co-Occurrence*

	2015	Achievement	Altruism	CEO	Challenge	Family Impact	Fundraising	Lead by Example	Loyalty	Mentorship	Modesty/Ego	Organizational Culture	Passion	Perception	Personality	Philosophy & Values	Relationships	Vision	Work Experience	Totals
2015		15	3	9	17	4	5	33	17	18	5	1	2	6	29	24	7	14		209
Achievement	15		1	3	12	2	12	9		2	9	2	2	5	9	15	1	15	2	116
Altruism	3	1			4		1	1			1	1		1	2	5		2		22
CEO	9	3			4		2	11	3	3		3	1	1	4	10		1		55
Challenge	17	12	4	4			2	13		9	4	2	1	4	4	16	7	8		107
Family Impact	4	2					1	3			1			1	7	6			2	27
Fundraising	5	12	1	2	2	1		8		1		2	10	5	6	9	6	4	2	76
Lead by Example	33	9	1	11	13	3	8		7	16	9	3	8	5	18	38	12	2	1	197
Loyalty	17			3				7		7	1		1	6	11	3	1	1		58
Mentorship	18	2		3	9		1	16	7		3	1	1	2	10	12	7	2	1	95
Modesty/Ego	5	9	1		4	1		9	1	3					4	5	3	3	1	49
Organizational Culture	1	2	1	3	2		2	3		1			6	3	1	7		2		34
Passion	2	2		1	1		10	8	1	1		6		2	1	13	5	2	4	59
Perception	6	5	1	1	4	1	5	5	6	2		3	2		11	4	2		1	59
Personality	29	9	2	4	4	7	6	18	11	10	4	1	1	11		20	4	10	1	152
Philosophy & Values	24	15	5	10	16	6	9	38	3	12	5	7	13	4	20		9	8	2	206
Relationships	7	1			7		6	12	1	7	3		5	2	4	9		1		65
Vision	14	15	2	1	8		4	2	1	2	3	2	2		10	8	1		1	76
Work Experience		2				2	2	1		1	1		4	1	1	2		1		18
Totals	209	116	22	55	107	27	76	197	58	95	49	34	59	59	152	206	65	76	18	

**Lead by Example**

Emerging themes occur through repetition and patterns found in the interview stories told. The element most central to Fairfield's successful leadership was leading by example. The theme of leadership by example was developed through the codes: Attitude, effective, leadership development, subordinate loyalty, and trust. As a result, many subordinates and colleagues were able to learn from Fairfield and find or make their own success. When asked about his fruitful

career at the foundation, Fairfield attributed it to others by replying, “It’s about building one hell of a staff and keeping people.” From the interview, he also proclaimed his philosophy on management by example and demonstrating the follow through on tasks; not just saying it will get done. Fairfield discussed the combination of teaching, trust, and independence. He said of leadership,

I think one of the challenging things about leadership is, it’s not easy to do, but you have the obligation as a CEO. You give them the opportunity to win or fail on their own. Yes you’re taking some risks if you’re sending someone to raise a million dollars. If they ask you to go with them, you say, “No, you can bring that in.” They may lose, or they may win. But they’re going to be so much better having done that and having thought that process through. And do you trade the immediate \$1 million off for the \$50 million that this person is going to raise for you in the future? You show them it wasn’t because they weren’t asking for money. They were asking for a catalyst, for a gift from donors to support something that’s going to make a difference—a difference to the university and a difference to a lot of lives. And so once you get that exchange going and the donor feels wonderful, the university really benefits and feels wonderful, and the fundraiser has done their job. So it’s a combination of teaching, trust, and letting them take what you’ve taught them.

Connie Pejsar added, “He just... he is so good. He taught us all well.” She elaborated on the way he modeled leadership for others by saying,

He teaches us how. There are so many models of being a leader and some of them are good and some of them are not. Being a leader is different than being the boss. Being a leader means that you trust people to do. You can delegate to them and they do what you want without standing over them. He just trusted all of us. We’ve never worked in a situation where he’s been behind us watching everything we do. He trusts us all to do and that’s why we’re so successful. If you have someone standing over you, telling you, then people never grow and they never experience. You have to fail sometimes. And he let you fail just a little, but he helps you through those times so you never hurt anything. You learn lessons instead of failing. And I think that’s more important than the other. He’s an interesting loving man. I adore that man.

Not only did Fairfield model the way for others to learn, but he led by example to challenge others. John Niemann talked about a reciprocal relationship between commanding

respect and why being a living example of his own principles served Fairfield well as a leader.

John said,

Terry led by example. There are people that lead through their authority. Terry Fairfield did not do that. He commanded respect and action, only because he demonstrated the same. He led by example. I think when Terry came, the foundation had assets of about \$200 million. I mean, it was like peanuts compared to where we are today. It was substantial for that day, but what's happened now in the foundation, is from what Terry established. We and the other people around Terry, jointly, were able to work together. Those things don't happen by accident. They happen because of a good leader. But I think the strength of his success is—he led by his own example. Like I said, the quality from which he would probably be recognized, to a lesser degree, is the acumen he developed in terms of increasing the assets of the University of Nebraska Foundation, which has grown to virtually \$2 billion today. So we need to raise the money, but we have a very serious responsibility to manage the money too. While a lot of us are out trying to generate gifts for the student and faculty, Terry was also doing that, but he was also taking on the awesome responsibility of investing the assets and identifying money managers. If we were not successful, we wouldn't be having this conversation today. In that case, Terry's reputation would be far different than what it was and is.

He also encouraged others through his own example. I mean when you're in an environment where assets are growing, guess who's really responsibility for doing that. It was really Terry Fairfield and Dan Morin [Former foundation chief financial officer]. Terry was the leader and Dan was a very able partner in the financial end of things. But how did he encourage people? People saw the assets growing and said, "wow" there must be something going on at that foundation. Growing the assets and continuing to raise more and more funds. And so, he led by example and his leadership will always be represented by the example he set. He demonstrated this in several categories—in raising money and also in being a very competent care taker for the funds on hand.

Kim Robak felt that Fairfield modeled leadership by being successful. He set desirable and exceedingly high examples, goals, and expectations for himself, which translated to the potential of others as well. Kim described,

He reached what he set out to accomplish for himself. He was a good example by showing what it takes to get something done. He wasn't afraid to make an ask and he wasn't afraid to go after a big gift or a big donor. He managed relationships well. I think he just showed what a true development professional would do and how he performed—and his results.

I remember a story when someone came to Terry once and said, “You know I really need you to close this deal.” And Terry said, “You don’t need me. You’ve had this visit with the donor and you talked about this gift. You can do it on your own. I’ll be there if you want me to be, but I don’t think you need me.” And this person told me later on that this was a turning point for her. She realized she had the skill sets necessary to do the job. So he was willing to mold people, let them grow, and ultimately accomplish on their own.

Tom Henning, felt that Fairfield was inspirational to others by his example. Tom viewed him as holding an unwavering passion for fundraising by saying,

I think that by his example he was an inspiration. I think with the foundation staff and the other fundraisers especially—because fundraising was his number one thing. Terry wasn’t as interested in other aspects of the foundation as he was in fundraising. But I think he set a good example for the fundraisers on how to cultivate long-term relationships, how to stay in front of people, and how to be entrepreneurial in the fundraising world.

## **Passion**

The theme of passion was based on the codes: altruism, impact, intrinsic satisfaction, job satisfaction, and motivation. This theme involved Fairfield’s passion in his craft and career during his role as president and CEO. He also strongly encouraged others to enjoy their work at the foundation. When asked about what is exciting about work, Fairfield said, “Pretty much everything. The intrinsic satisfaction is immeasurable. You really can’t measure it.” He continued to say,

I mean, I can’t imagine a more intrinsically satisfying job. You truly are making an incredible difference. You’re making a difference in the quality of a university, and you’re making a difference for the people that make those changes possible. You’re kind of a catalyst, if you will, and you have this network of people who have charitable interests. You’re working with the university needs, where you know they have an interest, and you’re bringing that together at a gift level that truly, whether it is a building, a professor, or program, will make a difference. Those dividends are paid back not to the donor only, but to students and to faculty. It’s a chain effect and the idea, when done right, and thought through correctly, it’s just truly satisfying.



On his professional passions, Fairfield talked about opportunity and the ability to make a difference and positively impact something.

Now, if you take the Hixson-Lied College of Fine and Performing Arts, it was a small college with no national recognition. Kind of left untouched and always the first to get cuts. It wasn't a high cost education; you're not buying a lot of scientific equipment and things of that nature. But to put that together and watch it grow over the last 15 years; look at it succeed and see the output—to see these graduates. They're so much better. That's kind of fun and you also see it on the ag side where the outreach involves things like new crops for wheat breeding, development in food science and technology, or areas where the university is producing things. The result is from gifts that made it possible, that either brought in the faculty member or enabled them to buy equipment. That's a passion, not only to start things [projects], but to see them conclude and see the impact they have. So many jobs don't allow you to do that. You may go from “a to z” but your role might be “c to f.” In our work you get to be all of it. So that's fun.

Fairfield also talked about the sense of satisfaction gained from a particular project in the College of Dentistry during the early 2000s. He talked about the powerful impact of a gift and how it was able to forever positively change the lives of people, their health, and happiness. He recalled the project that helped Sudanese immigrants living in Nebraska. In Sudan, it was often considered a mark of beauty to have one's teeth removed. The ritual was both a sign of maturity and meant to make people appear more attractive (Mangan, 2005). Fairfield and his colleague, Ryan Anderson, were able to raise money in order to fund a research team at the university. This team was composed of two professors of dentistry, two linguists, an anthropologist, a clinical psychologist, and a nutritionist who engaged in an interdisciplinary study on the lives of Sudanese refugees.

In the Sudanese culture it is seen as beautiful if they pull all their upper front teeth, so they didn't have any upon arrival in the U.S. So we went to the dental school and they agreed to do implants for these people for free. We had to find a way to fund the implants, so Ryan went to a foundation and got a \$105,000 gift. We did about 30 of these procedures. Changed their life. Totally changed their life. That was fun and that's a meaningful thing.

Clarey Castner also talked about Fairfield's passion in his work, but he talked about how people had an intrinsic fulfillment from their work, which Fairfield encouraged. There was an element of altruism, when Clarey said, "It was about a collective good. It was never about getting a paycheck." Kim Robak shared the same sentiment about Fairfield's passion by saying,

All of the buildings that were built because of the funds the foundation has raised; all the chairs that were endowed as a result of his and his team's effort; the growth of the foundation; the development—I would say it was a love and passion for the foundation and raising money for the university. Plus, he was able to treat the university as a system. He didn't just raise money for Lincoln or Omaha. He also raised it for Kearney and for the med center.

### **Mentorship**

The third theme focused on the importance of mentorship relationships, with Fairfield serving in dual roles as mentee and mentor. This theme was developed from the codes: Emulate, opportunity, teacher, and work experience. As previously mentioned, Fairfield's mentor was Woody Varner. Woody Varner served in a number of roles for the university, including chancellor, president, and president of the University of Nebraska Foundation. Varner stepped down from university president in January 1977, when Flavel Wright, president of the board of directors for the University of Nebraska Foundation; immediate past president of the foundation George Cook; and Willis Strauss of Omaha, asked Woody to lead the foundation. Woody accepted and succeeded in this role because of his ability and enthusiasm in dealing with people (Knoll, 1995). By 1985, the foundation's assets had grown to \$100 million dollars. Fairfield discussed how he believes he developed his leadership strengths, stating, "It's all just observation. You talk about mentoring. One of my great mentors was Woody Varner." Kent Seacrest spoke on the work of Woody Varner and Terry Fairfield saying,

Well, he didn't directly follow Woody Varner, but Woody Varner got the foundation to be a modern foundation and saw the potential. Terry took Woody Varner's vision and

implemented it. And we've become a competitive university foundation in the Big 10, Big 12 [conferences], and other institutional peers. It's been significant for a public institution, for a public foundation, to do what he's done. He's not only amassed billions for the university, but he's been wise and realized that by watching out for the community's interest, it's turned around and brought extra dollars in for the university. It's just very creative, very imaginative.

In terms of Fairfield as a mentor to others, it was most often mentioned that he served as an adviser to his successor, Clarey Castner. John Niemann spoke on the time when Fairfield was preparing for the transition of resignation from his role as president of the foundation. John recalled, "I think I was here three years before Clarey started, but we knew each other very well and Clarey was a terrific development officer, and a leader as well. It was clear, looking back, he was grooming Clarey." Kim Robak also spoke of Fairfield as a mentor to Clarey Castner, saying, "I know that he encouraged Clarey, who was his immediate successor. He worked with him and helped develop him." She also included, "He encouraged me. I know that he encouraged other people too." Kim spoke on Fairfield's inclination to look for talent in others. She said,

Terry was always looking for talent. He would meet somebody in a restaurant or in an evening and he would say, "You know, come see me. Here's my card." As a result, a number of young people were mentored by Terry, and might not otherwise would have had experienced such opportunities. They may not have been at the foundation, but he certainly helped them find career paths. He also knew when to give an up and coming development officer more authority, more independence.

Similarly, Fairfield spoke on his role of mentorship and finding talent in others, as he reminisced about a former foundation employee, Eric Buchanan. Buchanan worked at the University of Nebraska Foundation in corporate relations for over 11 years. he said,

I remember Eric Buchanan, a student at the time, was bartending at Barrymore's. I walked in one day and I said, "Eric, I'm hiring you as assistant director of corporate relations. Here's what your salary will be and I will pay you two-thirds of that. You work half time, the other half you finish your degree and I'm going to pay for that. Then when you get all finished, you come work for us and you get the full salary." And he has said to

me that he would have never gotten out of college without that kind of incentive. He's done a very good job since.

## **Vision**

The fourth theme involved being a visionary leader; a leader that required the ability to plan strategically and analytically for positive outcomes in the future. This theme was based on the codes: Bright, creativity, decisive, and perception. Fairfield mentioned in his interview that his greatest strength was having vision, looking into the future, and figuring out a strategic plan to implement goals. Tom Henning spoke on Fairfield's abilities by stating, "I think he's very good at seeing possibilities and cultivating long-term donor relationships." John Niemann also spoke on his ability to look into the future, saying,

He was one of those people that asked how is this going to operate? How is this going to work? I had trust and faith in Terry and I do to this day. I mentioned earlier there's always a certain mystery about Terry and he was always working and thinking and looking down the road a little bit further. Terry was very analytic, looking forward always. He was just a wonderful leader.

Kim Robak also mentioned Fairfield's foresight by mentioning,

Terry is the type of person who always had a big picture of what he wanted to accomplish. He would analyze the components and think about it, and come up with this plan to present to people. Whether it was the businessmen in Omaha, university leadership, or state government. So from that standpoint, he always understood his role and managed to, if he had an idea or vision, to get others to think it was their idea or vision. That's an incredible skill, especially when it goes as undetected. I think it was Terry's ability to do that.

In the same way, Kent Seacrest shared a similar response, commenting, "He's just a natural leader and is a visionary. He can see what should be done and get people around him to help get the vision implemented. It's just a winning combination."

## Modesty

The fifth major theme from the study delves into the modesty and ego of Fairfield's personality and leadership preference. This theme was based on the codes: behind the scenes, ego-checking, respect, and values. When asked about what is a source of motivation, Fairfield identified his competitive spirit and ability to lead without an ego. He described,

I do have to win. I do it fairly and what have you, but I've always had a very competitive winning spirit and certain people would say that a lot of my strength was because I didn't have an ego. I didn't have to take bows. I didn't want them. I didn't want the foundation in the newspaper. I wanted presidents and chancellors to take a bow and that's absolutely true. But boy, I wanted to win. I didn't care who knew about it. Staff knew about it. Staff knows when you have a great year and you make things happen. You don't have to talk about it. It's just there.

He continued by saying, "A lot of times you can accomplish a lot more things under the radar."

He felt that this type of mentality was carried out for 22 years at the foundation, despite encouragement from others to be more public. Fairfield's modesty continued as he described his legacy and preferred approach to managing the public relations component of foundation business.

You know I'm not like a U.S. president. I don't think about what my legacy is going to be. However, I can do it mathematically. I walked in at \$170 million and when I left we had \$1.7 billion. That's going to make a better university from my time stepping down to the next 100 years. That's huge.

I think style wise I always loved to be behind the scenes. The foundation was never in the newspaper, as we usually did let the campuses and president take the bows. We exist for the university and that's who we ought to be promoting. You can accomplish so much more behind the scenes than you can with visible committee activity or visible PR approaches. Not everybody agreed with that, by the way, but it's just something I enjoyed more. It wasn't that I didn't think I was good publicly, I just didn't think it was appropriate. So that was a leadership decision that really, kept us from being competitive with the institution we work on behalf of. If the foundation was taking all the bows, the foundation would have conflicts with the president or chancellor or what have you. It's subliminal. It's natural. If you avoid all those things, life is pretty good.

When asked to talk about significant honors and awards received, Fairfield said he had been honored by a lot of colleges at the university, which embarrassed him. Speaking on awards, he said, “I’ve turned down more than I’ve accepted.” He described the conflicting balance between being honored and being a fundraiser. He stated, “I guess it was never about me. I just felt more about the importance of the position of president of the foundation than I did my own personal finesse because of that position. Fairfield did share some of the honors he received in his youth, such as being in National Honor Society, athletic honors received for football and basketball, and working towards his MBA at George Washington University, among other recognitions. In college Fairfield was in Kosmet Club and said, “I dropped out in a hurry because I didn’t like painting scenery I guess”, he said humorously.

Clarey Castner added, “He had an ego and he checked his ego. He made big and small decisions, but always put the institution above himself.” It is evident that the university was a major priority in Fairfield’s values. Kim Robak commented, “He has no ego, because he was always willing to find a solution that worked best for the university.” She continued by saying,

Terry was very successful at making others feel it was their idea. I’ve always said that Terry’s greatest strength was that he had no ego. I’m not sure if that’s accurate, but I think he had the ability to check his ego. He didn’t need to take the credit for whatever project or initiative he was working on. He was happy to allow a university president or donor to receive credit. But he really was the mastermind of the great successes that took place at the foundation over the last 15 years.

I hope that Terry gets the recognition that he deserves. As I stated, a lot of what Terry did, Terry didn’t take credit for. But I would say much his legacy would be the modernization of the foundation. I think he is under recognized in terms of what he has accomplished for the university. If you look back at where the foundation was when he arrived and the situation it was in or where it was when he left, it’s an incredible journey.

Again, he knows how to check his ego. I don’t think any strong leader can exist without an ego. I think you have to believe in yourself and be able to do what needs to be done. In that regard, Terry has as big of ego as anyone. Terry knew that in order to get done what needed to get done, he wasn’t going to be the front person for most of the projects—and

he wasn't. I don't think the public could generally tell you who Terry Fairfield was. I think many of the big donors could, but Terry, again, was the mastermind behind all the projects that went on.

He knew when to put someone out front. He knew when to give donors recognition. He knew how to give donors recognition. He knew how to make the president feel like the president was important. He knew when to bring someone else in when he [Terry] was not the right person.

Fairfield's modesty was a quality admired by many. His partiality to working out of the public view enabled him to achieve numerous milestones. John Niemann also said of Fairfield regarding his resignation of being CEO,

I don't know, but it is my guess that when Terry discontinued being the CEO, he did not ever want to be perceived as an individual abusing the authority or limelight if there is, and there is, of being the president of the foundation. I certainly respect him for that.

## **Conclusion and Summary**

The art and science of fundraising leadership was explored by analyzing the experiences of Terry Fairfield, while serving the University of Nebraska Foundation as president and CEO for more than 20 years. The qualitative research helped to develop a picture and understanding of successful fundraising leadership and attempts to capture the success through the relationships and history of Fairfield. Lawrence-Lightfoot (1983) noted the purpose of exploring the social aspects of research and human subjects, saying,

Both the artist and social scientist attempt to get close to life. But neither art nor science can present total reality; so the reader/viewer/audience must be satisfied with the selection and composition of social reality. When scientists or artists carefully choose dimensions on which they will focus, however, they hope to convey something about the broader experience or terrain.

This study was a brief chronicle of Fairfield's successes and challenges as a leader, in which five major themes developed from 56 codes and 208 excerpts. Other notable components of Fairfield's leadership that emerged from the data included: subordinate loyalty, altruism,

personality, mystery, and speaking skills. One example of the subordinate loyalty was demonstrated by a quote from Connie Pejsar who said, “I would follow him anywhere. If he asked me to go work for him somewhere, I would go. I respect him. I trust him.” Numerous other quotes revealed themselves through the transcripts that demonstrated the utmost respect and loyalty to Fairfield as a leader and person from a colleagues and subordinate relationship. Fairfield’s altruistic means and objectives were apparent by his behavior, modesty, and belief in the organizational mission. Secondary informants also made note of Fairfield’s personality as a reason for success and underlying factor in his uncanny ability to work with others. Personality also goes back to the unsolvable leadership question, “Are leaders made or are leaders born?” Fairfield’s personality is a precious leadership trait he was born with that enabled him to succeed.

Interviewees also talked about the mystique of Fairfield. Thomas Cronin provided ten reasons why institutions are “bashful about teaching leadership,” with the eighth reason relating to the elusive idea that people hold in regard to leadership. Cronin said, “leadership strikes many people (and with some justification) as an elusive, hazy and almost mysterious commodity” (Wren, 1995, p. 29). John Kotter, professor emeritus of organizational behavior at Harvard University Business School also says,

“Leadership isn’t mystical and mysterious. It has nothing to do with having “charisma” or other exotic personality traits. It is not the province of a chosen few. Nor is leadership necessarily better than management or a replacement for it. Rather, leadership and management are two distinctive and complementary systems of action. Each has its own function and characteristic activities. Both are necessary for success in an increasingly complex and volatile business environment. (Wren, 1995, p. 114).

Fairfield possessed a trait admired and necessary for all leaders—public speaking. Fairfield was not only required to speak at events, in media, and with donors, but he was able to



do so with eloquence and ease. As the face of an organization, it is imperative that leaders possess strong communication skills, whether in strategy, writing, or speaking (Barrett, 2006).

## **CHAPTER 7**

### **DISCUSSION**

Chapter 7 includes further discussion of the relevance and importance of the findings, and interprets their meaning. This chapter also proposes a circular, nonlinear leadership profile model of Terry Fairfield that is applicable and universal to educational fundraising leaders. Implications of the study and future research studies are suggested based on the findings. Two propositions are made suggesting that best practices in educational fundraising leadership are circular and that fundraisers play a supplementary and necessary leadership role to institutional advancement in higher education. In general, educational fundraising research for the future is suggested and assumptions are made for forthcoming studies to be focused on diversity, as issues and demographics become more readily available and non-homogeneous.

From this study we can take away a number of leadership learning outcomes. Some outcomes are similar to the existing leadership theories in the field, while others introduce a premise. Whether or not one believes in trait theory of leadership, this study has identified a number of characteristics commonplace to all leaders. Secondly, it can be suggested that learning to lead cannot be accomplished simply by reading a book, following x, y, z path, or identifying the “ideal number.” The ideal number refers to the host of leadership and management books that suggest “x amount” of traits or “x amount” of steps to success. As Fairfield said, “You can emulate traits, but you can’t be someone else. You emulate the values you see and what others do that are engaging, rewarding, and effective. Ultimately, you develop yourself.”

#### **Overview**

To reiterate, the purpose of this qualitative study was to explore the personal and professional life events of Terry Fairfield of the University of Nebraska Foundation. Using the

research methodology of Portraiture, the qualitative data analysis procedures involved coding and theme development, in which the process yielded the emergent themes necessary to understand the impact of Terry Fairfield's leadership in nonprofit educational fundraising during his tenure at the University of Nebraska Foundation. The data were collected in one-on-one, face-to-face interviews. Results demonstrated the stories and insight from Fairfield's colleagues who hold the ability to speak on his leadership experience. Major themes developed from the data included leading by example, possessing passion and a zest for work, mentorships roles as mentee and mentor, vision necessary to strategically plan for the future, and the unpretentious and modest approach to public relations for individual and organizational roles at the foundation.

### **Significance of Results**

Over the years, Fairfield exhibited a number of leadership styles and theories that have been proven to connect individuals with success. In analyzing results, the overall question remains, what is significant about Fairfield's leadership work? What distinguishes him from the rest? Why is his story important to the field of educational fundraising? In addition to the findings of these questions, the value of this study rests in understanding the aesthetics of leadership and importance of history.

A quote previously mentioned, when asked about his leadership legacy, Fairfield made a comment fully laced in reticence, "You know I'm not like a U.S. president. I don't think about what my legacy is going to be." Contrary to this statement, there is much similarity between his leadership and leadership of American presidents in history. David McCullough, an American author, historian, and Presidential Medal of Freedom award winner, among several other high honors, said, "George Washington was our greatest president in that he set the standard. He had no example to go by. And if he had been a fool or self-indulgent, lazy glory-hound, it could've

been disastrous. He did everything right” (Browning, 2012). In this regard, Fairfield’s leadership legacy can be likened to that of founding father and first President of the United States, George Washington. Like President Washington, Fairfield set the tone for others to follow, while also eluding the hedonistic behavior of leaders.

In terms of the history of Fairfield and the NU Foundation, as well as historical accounts in general, what we know enables us to advance what we can learn. The American Historical Association points to a variety of ways that history plays an integral role. First, history is not the regurgitation of arbitrary facts and figures, but plays a special role in facilitating the understanding of people and societies. Secondly, it helps society understand change and how the world, organizations, and systems we live in came to be. Third, history contributes to moral understanding. Hearing the times and tales of those before us can guide us to massage our own ethical convictions. Fourth, formulating laws or theories on human behavior is dependent on previous knowledge from history (Stearns, 2008). “The only way to teach history, to write history, to bring people into the magic of transforming yourself into other times, is through the vehicle of the story. It isn’t just a chronology. It’s about people. History is human,” said David McCullough (Browning, 2012).

### **Interpreting Qualitative Results**

This research reveals important leadership traits necessary to succeed in an executive level of leadership for fundraisers in higher education and the nonprofit sector. It affirms previous findings from studies based on nonprofit leaders and development officers (*See Carbone, 1986; Duronio & Tempel, 1997*), as well as contributes to the literature in the educational fundraising field by creating a profile for development professionals at the CEO level, which had not yet been established. Whether it is analyzing biographical narratives,

leadership theories, or management styles, individuals from all fields of study are infatuated and engaged with leadership. Why is it important? What does it mean? What can we learn? The research on leaders is boundless and covers an ever expanding area of theories, styles, and roles. People have studied leadership around the world since ancient times, with philosophers, writers, and scholars, such as Lao-Tsu and Plato (Wren, 1995). Bernard Bass, a renowned scholar in leadership studies stated, “There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept” (Wren, 1995, p. 25).

With the intricacy and involvedness of leadership studies, combined with the findings from this research study, it can be inferred that the successful leadership displayed by Fairfield is one that is nonlinear and circular. Suggesting that educational fundraising leaders benefit from a nonlinear cognitive behavior is another definition to add to the list of leadership meaning. Nonlinear oriented leaders tend to be visionary, flexible, easily detect moral issues and are receptive to emotions, feelings, and intuition (Groves, Vance, & Paik, 2007). On the contrary, linear thinkers rely primarily on the mathematical approach to making decisions. Groves, Vance, and Paik (2007) suggested that linear thinking managers are likely to unwisely use their time in analyzing consequences of decisions and become lost in the complexity of numerous calculations.

In the case of Terry Fairfield’s leadership, a successful fundraiser’s profile is built upon the most prevalent and emergent themes shown through this study’s research data. The emergent themes serve as the most prevalent leadership traits demonstrated by Fairfield. As previously demonstrated by the condensed code co-occurrence in table 5, the most significant and prevalent codes that also were identified as a leadership trait included lead by example, passion, mentorship, vision, and modesty. Other codes that were frequently used included achievement,

challenge, personality, and philosophy and values. Although these codes were often used during the coding process, they were used as descriptions of the text and not leadership traits.

Figure 4

*Fairfield Leadership Model*



## Propositions

### **Proposition 1. Best practices in educational fundraising leadership are circular.**

It can be argued that an overlap in styles of leadership can be applied in best practices for educational fundraising. However, the proposition that best practices in educational fundraising leadership are circular is based on the results of this study and because educational fundraising for public universities is based on nonprofit leadership. Nonprofit leadership has often been

linked to servant leadership styles. Moreover, recent research in servant leader is linked to the circular leadership approach (Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999; Matteson & Irving, 2006; Murray, 2008). The Fairfield leadership model demonstrates a circular leadership process between actions, funding project cycles, and follower-subordinate impact, which is a contrast to traditional, top-down paradigms of leadership. This circular process involves subordinate's shared ownership of tasks and organization, interpersonal relationships that stimulate work ideas, increased productivity, and camaraderie.

**Proposition 2. Fundraisers play a supplementary and necessary leadership role to institutional advancement in higher education.**

In the face of a grim forecast for financial health in public institutions for higher education, Fairfield acted as a change agent and used those associated pressures for positive outcomes. In looking at the annual "Philanthropy 400" published by *The Chronicle of Philanthropy*, the largest category for 2012 was dedicated to colleges and universities, listing \$18.6 billion raised. The Philanthropy 400 lists the top 400 nonprofit organizations in the United States, and ranks them by number of dollars funded for the year. Categories are broken into colleges and universities, social service, international, hospitals and medical centers, commercial funds, health, other, community foundations, religious, environmental and animal welfare, education, Jewish federations, museums and libraries, art and culture, public broadcasting, and public affairs. More specifically, the University of Nebraska is listed at the 126<sup>th</sup> spot for overall top fundraising in 2012 for all categories, with \$171.4 million. This level of financial attainment would not be possible with administration and scholars alone. With fundraising playing an indispensable role to higher education, why is there little discussion on the leadership role of

fundraisers? Both scholars and practitioners are needed in order to build a focus on fundraising in discussion, literature, and practice.

## **Implications**

The qualitative results from this study offer implications for leaders in the educational fundraising field of higher education. The instability and uncertainty of fiscal issues in higher education will continue to impact colleges and universities. The leadership of presidents and CEOs in fundraising can ease the burden of overcoming financial issues and help persevere towards the advancement of our institutions. Fairfield's record of success serves as an exemplary case of managing financial aspects of philanthropy for a college or university, fostering relationships with university administration and donors, and leading a fundraising staff by setting examples to create a unique, empowered organizational culture.

This study is also distinct from other research analyzing fundraising roles, due to its focus on a single individual through an in-depth look into personal and professional experiences, and because of the differing structure of the University of Nebraska Foundation as a separate entity from the University of Nebraska system. Other studies that analyze development roles or institution presidents tend to identify the university president as the sole and primary fundraiser, as well as suggesting the chief development officer is in a subordinate role under the university president. While this may be the leadership structure for other institutions, in the University of Nebraska Foundation and the University of Nebraska system, the university president and the foundation president, act side-by-side, with the foundation taking the lead on philanthropic aspects of revenue generation to support the university.

The Fairfield Leadership Model in fundraising includes important elements for chief development officers to utilize while leading a team of fundraisers and support staff in raising



money for their institution. However, the component of modesty merits expanded discussion, as it is a concept in fundraising few have discussed. Modesty in Fairfield's leadership is related to public relations. Kelly (1998) proposed four different models of fundraising, but most often viewed the funding process as being a method of public relations, rather than a sales process orientation. Proper public relations can improve prospecting of donors and legitimize the organizational mission. It has been linked to increasing years of support, satisfaction from donating, and the likelihood of donors encouraging others to donate (O'Neil, 2007). The theme and discussion on Fairfield's modesty was prevalent and repetitive throughout the interviews with all informants. This helps to affirm the relationship between the elements of servant leadership, self-sacrificial leadership, and altruism, displayed by nonprofit leaders. In self-sacrificial leadership, a leader surrenders personal or professional benefits so that followers, the organization, or mission can be fulfilled or reap any advantage (Matteson & Irving, 2006). Understanding modest behavior at the CEO level of leadership in fundraising may help contribute to further understanding philanthropy and public relations in higher education and nonprofit management. The characteristic of modesty helped set apart Fairfield's leadership in fundraising from other known cases.

### **Future Research**

The 2011 ASHE Higher Education Report proposed theoretical frameworks to understanding philanthropy from the perspectives of economics, psychology, and sociology. From a number of different fields, the study of philanthropy and higher education is an important focus, as our nation's economy and model of education moves and transforms within the changing times. Researchers have focused on a number of areas such as fundraising through

alumni associations, community college funding, university presidents as primary fundraisers, capital campaigns, funding support of campus libraries, and motivations of donors.

Despite these efforts and a wide range of focus, few have analyzed the CEO leader of a foundation that supports a public university or have attempted to delve deeper into understanding the leadership practices behind the failures or success of a chief advancement officer. Attempts have been made to identify and distinguish roles, outline tasks, and pinpoint motivations, among other job-related duties. Few have documented the successes to create a leadership profile of an ideal fundraiser in history and explore both personal and professional aspects of the leader to identify key impacts on work outcomes.

Portraiture as a methodology often involves an ethnographical aspect, diversity focus, or reporting on an underrepresented group (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). The average demographic of a university president is a white Caucasian male, 61 years old, according to *The American College President 2012 Report*. Although Fairfield's narrative is closely aligned with the demographics of current and past university leadership, which lacks in diversity, future studies are likely to be more inclusive on issues of race, ethnicity, and gender. There is still little known about fundraising, in terms of empirical research that is objective, not solely based on anecdotal evidence (Lindal & Conley, 2002). A foundation of understanding fundraising leadership is needed as a base, before scholars can fully understand and explore the implications of diversity in fundraising for higher education. A number of dissertations have focused on areas related to fundraising in higher education and the roles of presidents (*See Bila, 1991; Cahill, 2003; Goddard, 2009; Jackson, 2012; Murray, 2008; Satterwhite, 2004*). Still, there are few publications that reflect fundraising leadership topics. Much of the existing research has also

been qualitative in scope. While the richness of the data creates a deeper understanding, a need exists for the quantitative data to fully complete the understanding of fundraising topics.

## **Conclusion**

To say that citizens, friends, alumnae, and other stakeholders of both the State of Nebraska and the University of Nebraska are indebted to Fairfield's work, is a gravely understated assertion. Fairfield has become a modern leader in fundraising for higher education based on his own merits, decisions, and actions. The 1954 article by Arthur Douglas, "Philanthropy Needs Leadership," describes fundraising leaders as a "starry-eyed volunteer." The central idea in this article is that "Leadership's ultimate achievement can be a better world for all of us" (p. 36). The Douglas text articulates the assumption that for-profit leaders who join the non-profit, public sector, ask, "What's in it for me?" This type of mentality is archaic in thought for many modern nonprofit organizations. Instead, nonprofit leaders should pose the question, "How can I impact this organization?" Fairfield's legacy is a stark contrast to the self-serving leadership ideals and characteristics portrayed by Douglas. The article also states, "There is no easy solution to philanthropy's problem of leadership. But there is good reason for hope" (Douglas, 1954, p. 36). Fairfield's success instills a sense of hope for the future of colleges, universities, and their financial well-being.

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## Appendix A



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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

### **Qualitative Study Participation Primary Informant**

Doctoral candidate, Stephanie Davis, under the supervision of Dr. Marilyn Grady, of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Educational Administration is conducting a qualitative research study with the purpose of exploring the life and leadership of former University of Nebraska Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer, Terry Fairfield.

Participation in the survey will take include five 60 minute interviews. There are no known risks involved in participation of this study. You will be asked to read and provide consent on an Informed Consent letter. Any personal contact information obtained through the interview process will be held in strict confidence.

If you have any questions regarding this study or your participation, please contact the primary investigator, Stephanie Davis at [sdavis9@unl.edu](mailto:sdavis9@unl.edu) or by phone at 308.383.0456.

Thank you for your participation.

Stephanie R. Davis  
Department of Educational Administration

## Appendix B



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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

### **Qualitative Study Participation Secondary Informant**

Doctoral candidate Stephanie Davis, under the supervision of Dr. Marilyn Grady, of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln Department of Educational Administration is conducting a qualitative research study with the purpose of exploring the life and leadership of former University of Nebraska Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer, Terry Fairfield.

You have been suggested as a possible interview participant by the primary informant, Terry L. Fairfield, to discuss your relationship, experience, and perspective on the leadership of Terry Fairfield at the University of Nebraska Foundation. Participation in the survey will take approximately 30 minutes of your time. There are no known risks involved in participation of this study. You will be asked to read and provide consent on an Informed Consent letter. Any personal contact information obtained through the interview process will be held in strict confidence. At the participant's discretion, the interview may take place face-to-face or by telephone.

If you have any questions regarding this study or your participation, please contact the primary investigator, Stephanie Davis at [sdavis9@unl.edu](mailto:sdavis9@unl.edu) or by phone at 308.383.0456.

Thank you for your participation.

Stephanie R. Davis  
Department of Educational Administration



## Appendix C



July 18, 2012

Stephanie Davis  
Department of Educational Administration  
1100 N 34th St Lincoln, NE 68503

Marilyn Grady  
Department of Educational Administration  
128 TEAC, UNL, 68588-0360

IRB Number: 20120712771

Project ID: 12771

Project Title: Terry L. Fairfield: A Portraiture of Nonprofit Leadership in Educational Fundraising

Dear Stephanie:

This letter is to officially notify you of the certification of exemption of your project by the Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects. It is the Board's opinion that you have provided adequate safeguards for the rights and welfare of the participants in this study based on the information provided. Your proposal is in compliance with this institution's Federal Wide Assurance 00002258 and the DHHS Regulations for the Protection of Human Subjects (45 CFR 46) and has been classified as Exempt Category 2.

You are authorized to implement this study as of the Date of Final Approval: 07/18/2012.

1. The approved informed consent documents have been uploaded to NUgrant (files with - Approved.pdf in the file name). Please use these documents to distribute to participants. If you need to make changes to the informed consent forms, please submit the revised documents to the IRB for review and approval prior to using them.

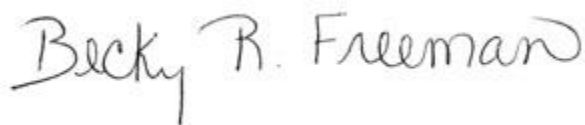
We wish to remind you that the principal investigator is responsible for reporting to this Board any of the following events within 48 hours of the event:

- \* Any serious event (including on-site and off-site adverse events, injuries, side effects, deaths, or other problems) which in the opinion of the local investigator was unanticipated, involved risk to subjects or others, and was possibly related to the research procedures;
- \* Any serious accidental or unintentional change to the IRB-approved protocol that involves risk or has the potential to recur;
- \* Any publication in the literature, safety monitoring report, interim result or other finding that indicates an unexpected change to the risk/benefit ratio of the research;
- \* Any breach in confidentiality or compromise in data privacy related to the subject or others; or
- \* Any complaint of a subject that indicates an unanticipated risk or that cannot be resolved by the research staff.

This project should be conducted in full accordance with all applicable sections of the IRB Guidelines and you should notify the IRB immediately of any proposed changes that may affect the exempt status of your research project. You should report any unanticipated problems involving risks to the participants or others to the Board.

If you have any questions, please contact the IRB office at 472-6965.

Sincerely,



Becky R. Freeman, CIP

for the IRB



## Appendix D



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM Primary Informant

Terry L. Fairfield: A Portraiture of Nonprofit Leadership in Higher Education

#### Purpose of Research

The purpose of conducting this research is to explore the leadership challenges, victories, and life events of former University of Nebraska Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer, Terry Fairfield. This biographical study is designed to identify the leadership philosophies of Fairfield and capture his impact on the University of Nebraska system, the fundraising arm of the University of Nebraska, and the state of Nebraska. As federal funding for public colleges and universities continue to decline and students are facing increased tuition cost, the significance of private fundraising and nonprofit leadership will serve as a vital component of sustainability in higher education.

#### Procedures

The semi-structured interview will discuss your experience in the leadership role as President and Chief Executive Officer of the University of Nebraska Foundation and require five 60 minute face-to-face interviews. You will be asked to read this Informed Consent Form and allow the interview to be audio recorded. The information provided in the interview will be held in strict confidence. The interview will take place in one of the meeting conference rooms at the University of Nebraska Foundation or another designated office space within the University of Nebraska Foundation Lincoln office location.

#### Risks and/or Discomforts

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the UNL IRB office at 402.472.6965. You are free to decide not to participate in this study. You can also withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

### **Confidentiality**

Any sensitive information such as address, phone, email, or other private data obtained during this study will be kept strictly confidential. The data will be stored on a password protected hard drive accessible by the primary investigator and destroyed upon completion of the research project. A transcriptionist will also have access to the interview data and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement for transcription services. You will also be named in the results.

### **Benefits**

The benefits of this participation include:

- Contributing to the understanding of leadership in practice
- Contributing to the understanding of work of the President and CEO of a university Foundation
- Contributing to the record of the history of the University of Nebraska

You may find the interview helpful in self-understanding and the information you provide will contribute to future leadership literature.

\_\_\_\_\_ Initial if you agree to be audio recorded during the interview

\_\_\_\_\_ Initial if you agree to be named in publication results

If you consent to the participation of this research, please provide your signature below

\_\_\_\_\_

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By completing the interview, you are showing consent. You may retain a copy of this consent form for your research. The secondary investigator, Dr. Marilyn Grady, supervises this project. If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please contact:

Stephanie Davis  
sdavis9@unl.edu  
308.383.0456

Dr. Marilyn Grady  
mgrady1@unl.edu  
402.472.0974

## Appendix E



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

### INFORMED CONSENT FORM Secondary Informant

Terry L. Fairfield: A Portraiture of Nonprofit Leadership in Higher Education

#### Purpose of Research

The purpose of conducting this research is to explore the leadership challenges, victories, and life events of former University of Nebraska Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer, Terry Fairfield. This biographical study is designed to identify the leadership philosophies of Fairfield and capture his impact on the University of Nebraska system, the fundraising arm of the University of Nebraska, and the state of Nebraska. As federal funding for public colleges and universities continue to decline and students are facing increased tuition cost, the significance of private fundraising and nonprofit leadership will serve as a vital component of sustainability in higher education.

#### Procedures

The semi-structured interview will discuss your experience and relationship as it pertains to the leadership role of former President and Chief Executive Officer of the University of Nebraska Foundation, Terry Fairfield. The interview requires approximately 30 minutes of your time. You may choose to participate in the interviews via face-to-face or by telephone. You will be asked to read this Informed Consent Form and allow the interview to be audio recorded. The information provided in the interview will be held in strict confidence. The interview will take place in one of the meeting conference rooms at the University of Nebraska Foundation Lincoln Office or via telecommunications.

#### Risks and/or Discomforts

There are no known risks or discomforts associated with this study. If you have any questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the UNL IRB office at 402.472.6965. You are free to decide not to participate in this study. You can also withdraw at any time without harming your relationship with the researchers or the University of Nebraska-Lincoln.

#### Confidentiality

Any sensitive information or private data obtained during this study will be kept strictly confidential. *If you wish to remain anonymous, no identifying information shall be*

*revealed to others or in the published study to maintain anonymity and protect your participant confidentiality rights.* The data will be stored on a password protected hard drive accessible by the primary investigator and destroyed upon completion of the research project. A transcriptionist will also have access to the interview data and will be required to sign a confidentiality agreement for transcription services.

### **Benefits**

The benefits of this participation include:

- Contributing to the understanding of leadership in practice
- Contributing to the understanding of work of the President and CEO of a university Foundation
- Contributing to the record of the history of the University of Nebraska

You may find the interview helpful in self-understanding and the information you provide will contribute to future leadership literature.

\_\_\_\_\_Initial if you agree to be audio recorded during the interview

\_\_\_\_\_Initial if you agree being **named** in the publication results

\_\_\_\_\_Initial if you wish to have your identity remain **anonymous**

If you consent to the participation of this research, please provide your signature below

\_\_\_\_\_

You are voluntarily making a decision whether or not to participate in this research study. By completing the interview, you are showing consent. You may retain a copy of this consent form for your research. The secondary investigator, Dr. Marilyn Grady, supervises this project. If you have any questions about the study or your participation, please contact:

Stephanie Davis  
sdavis9@unl.edu  
308.383.0456

Dr. Marilyn Grady  
mgrady1@unl.edu  
402.472.0974

## Appendix F



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

### Interview Protocol Primary Informant

**Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date, Time, and Location of the Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:** I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be audio recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with the notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you said with an incorrect interpretation; therefore, please be prepared to see any “uhs” and “ohs” that may be said.

**Project Overview:** As you know, the purpose of this study is to explore your life events, challenges, and victories as former University of Nebraska Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer.

**Review of Consent Form:** I am interested in your thoughts and feelings regarding your leadership experience at the University of Nebraska Foundation. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views and opinions. As the interview progresses, if at any point you need me to clarify something, you have a question, or you would like to stop the interview, please let me know. There is no right or wrong answers to the questions. Are you ready to begin?

#### Life Events

A. What early experiences influenced your career choice in nonprofit leadership?

- Describe your family or origin.
- Tell me about your role within the family/siblings/birth order.
- Tell me about your parents
- What is the educational background of your parents?
- How would you describe your relationship with them

- Who were your role models as a child?
- What other relationships were significant in your life growing up and why?
- What are your earliest childhood memories?
- Where did you grow up? Describe the area.
- What was school like for you?
- Who were your friends?
- What activities did you participate in?
- What did you excel in at school?
- Did you work while in high school? College?
- How has your own family relationships impacted your work?
- How does parenthood make a difference?

### **Victories**

- B. What life experiences have been most important to you in nonprofit leadership?
- What has been your greatest success?
  - What significant honors and awards have you received?
  - What do you consider as your strengths?
  - How were they developed?
  - What experiences impacted their development?
  - Do others identify the same strengths in you?
  - Did you parents influence your development of strengths?
  - How do you continue to refine these strengths?
  - What excites you about your work?
  - How would you define your professional passion?
  - Can you define what motivates you?

### **Challenges**

- C. What experiences have challenged you in nonprofit leadership?
- Describe a difficult decision you had to make?
  - Did you take or create conscious steps to reach your professional goals?
  - What has been your greatest challenge?
  - What kind of professional development activities have you engaged in?
  - How do you measure your impact
  - What strategies do you utilize to motivate your staff? Children?
  - What people influenced your leadership style
  - Who encouraged you as you developed this style?
  - Who discouraged you?

### **Leadership Philosophies**

- D. What experiences have created a personal philosophy of management in nonprofit leadership?



- Are leaders made or born?
- What is your leadership philosophy?
- How do you define your leadership style?
- How would others define your leadership style?
- Who do you admire as a leader?
- What traits does this person possess that appeal to you?
- Did you seek opportunities that fit this style or those that challenged it?
- How does the culture of the organizations impact your style of leadership?
- How do leaders create organizational culture and is it important?

### **Personal and Professional Aspects**

E. What is the essence of Terry Fairfield's legacy at the University of Nebraska Foundation?

- What brought you the University of Nebraska Foundation?
- If you had to describe Terry Fairfield, what would you say?
- If you could change anything about your career, what would you change? Why?
- What advice would you have for future Foundation presidents and CEOs?
- What are the future challenges for the Foundation or that you see in higher education fundraising in general?
- What are the challenges of developing successful fundraisers and other staff?
- What makes the Foundation or University of Nebraska unique, in terms of its impact on the state, compared to other public or private universities, colleges, and their foundations.
- Describe your past or current relationship with donors.
- What is meaningful about developing relationships with donors?
- What is the biggest challenge in making an ask?
- How would you like to be remembered as a leader?
- What do you do for fun?
- How do you relax?
- How do you balance the demands of work, family, and personal life?
- Who is your support system?

**Conclusion:** This concludes the interview. Is there anything else that you would like to discuss in this interview?

Thank you for taking the time to interview today? I will contact you when the transcript is finished for your review of its accuracy.

## Appendix G



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

### Interview Protocol Secondary Informant

**Interviewee:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date, Time, and Location of the Interview:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Introduction:** I want to thank you for taking the time to be interviewed today. What we discuss will be audio recorded and later transcribed. I will be asking you to review the transcription with the notes I make regarding my understanding of what you say. It is important that I am representing your views. It is also important that the transcription be verbatim so that I do not paraphrase something you said with an incorrect interpretation; therefore, please be prepared to see any “uhs” and “ohs” that may be said.

**Project Overview:** As you know, the purpose of this study is to explore your life events, challenges, and victories as former University of Nebraska Foundation President and Chief Executive Officer.

**Review of Consent Form:** I am interested in your thoughts and feelings regarding the leadership of Terry Fairfield at the University of Nebraska Foundation. I want to know your perspective, so please feel free to discuss your views and opinions. As the interview progresses, if at any point you need me to clarify something, you have a question, or you would like to stop the interview, please let me know. There is no right or wrong answers to the questions. Are you ready to begin?

### Secondary Informant Questions

1. How would you describe your relationship with Terry Fairfield?
2. How would you describe Terry Fairfield?
3. How would you describe the legacy of Terry Fairfield at the University of Nebraska Foundation?

4. What are Fairfield's leadership traits?
5. Describe how Fairfield:
  - Challenges others?
  - Inspires others?
  - Enables others?
  - Models for others?
  - Encourages others?
7. What else would you like to share about Terry Fairfield?

**Conclusion:** This concludes the interview. Is there anything else that you would like to discuss in this interview? Thank you for taking the time to interview today. I will contact you when the transcript is finished for your review of its accuracy.

## Appendix H



COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SCIENCES  
Department of Educational Administration

### Transcription Verification

**Title of Project: Terry L. Fairfield: A Portraiture of Nonprofit Leadership in Higher Education**

Dear research participant,

Please review the attached transcript of our recent interview regarding your experience and relationship on the leadership of Terry Fairfield and the University of Nebraska Foundation. Please make any notations to content errors to ensure all information is as accurate as possible. Below, indicate your level of approval of your part in the project by initialing the appropriate statement below.

\_\_\_\_\_ I approve of the interview transcript without changes.

\_\_\_\_\_ I approve of the interview transcript with noted changes.

\_\_\_\_\_ I do not approve of the interview transcript.

Please provide your signature below. If you are receiving this form electronically, typing your name below and typing in the date will constitute as your signature and data.

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Signature of Research Participant)

\_\_\_\_\_  
(Date)

Return this form to Stephanie Davis in person or by e-mail at sdavis9@unl.edu.

Sincerely,

Stephanie Davis, Primary Investigator