



# Annual Message

“All people have a story to tell.  
And every story needs a listener.”

*Father Michael Lapsley  
Institute for Healing of Memories*

## Sharing voices from South Africa



People are constantly telling me that print annual reports are fast becoming relics in the publishing world. I don't really need the reminder. I know there is a growing trend for foundations to forgo printed annual reports and instead use their Web sites to share their financial statements, auditors' report, grant listing and other essentials that, when made available annually, provide foundations with important public accountability. In fact, some of my staff tried to convince me to dispense with a printed version of this annual report.

But then something interesting happened: The “old world” of print met the “new age” of social media and an unusual — and we hope engaging — *2009 Annual Report* was born.

The meeting occurred in midyear 2010. Because we operate on a calendar year and invest in some complex instruments, our auditors were still preparing our 2009 audit in summer 2010 and our annual report was still in the early to middle stages of production.

At the same time, our communications department had seized on the 2010 World Cup being played in South Africa to shine a spotlight on some of our grantees who are working there to build civil society. For the monthlong

soccer tournament, the Foundation provided an online forum — a blog, if you will — to allow key nonprofit leaders and staff to share reflections about their work, their challenges and their hopes for their country.

That forum offered the perfect opportunity to introduce serious sports fans, as well as the mere curious, to a side of South Africa they likely would not see as part of the typical World Cup coverage — a close-up view of the civil society sector as experienced by some of our grantees.

Our grantmaking in South Africa dates back to 1988, when we made our first exploratory grant to help grassroots nonprofit employees upgrade their skills and earn certificates in adult education and community development. By 1993, we had opened an office in Johannesburg, our first office outside the U.S., which continues to operate today.

Through the years, the Foundation has made grants totaling more than \$69 million to nonprofit organizations operating in South Africa to develop and strengthen the country's nonprofit sector. The ultimate goal of this grantmaking is to increase and improve ways for ordinary people to participate in the decisionmaking processes of a democratic society.

What better way, then, to learn about both the successes and challenges facing South Africans some 16 years after their first fully democratic

elections than to invite those working in the civil society sector to share their perspectives?

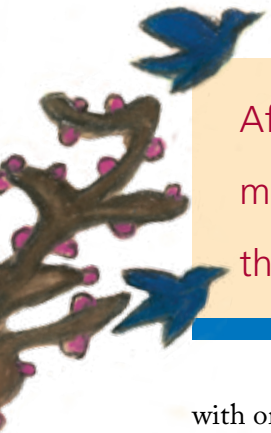
From mid-June to mid-July, a fresh essay was posted each weekday on *Beyond the Games: Reflections from South Africa during the World Cup.* By the time the final horns sounded and the last cheers faded on July 11, we had posted a diverse and thought-provoking set of essays about what excites, frustrates and inspires South Africa's non-governmental organization (NGO) leaders.

Given the depth and breadth of that material and the personal nature of some essays, it seemed only natural to broaden their readership and elevate their visibility by making voices from South Africa a theme for our *2009 Annual Report*.

We were compelled, too, by the idea that no matter where we operate — whether in Flint, Michigan; elsewhere in the U.S.; in Russia or one of the newly independent states; in South Africa or in other places around the globe — there is something important that we can do as a foundation: listen to our grantees and to the people “on the ground” and then help extend their voices in various ways, including in an annual report.

So with that as backdrop, we selected three of the 19 essays we had in hand (not an easy task, I might add), and then expanded on their richness by asking a few additional writers (all affiliated

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with organizations that are current or former grantees) to submit brief essays.

In all, we present in this report nine essays from writers who are diverse in terms of age, experience, gender and race. Together, we believe these essayists present, if not a comprehensive picture of the nonprofit sector in South Africa, at least a realistic one. The writers are:

**Archbishop Emeritus Desmond Tutu**, whom we knew for a number of years prior to his visit to our hometown of Flint in 2004, and who recently announced his retirement from public life by the end of this year;

**Father Michael Lapsley**, director of the Institute for Healing of Memories, which was created to help individuals and communities affected by political conflict and violence during apartheid to heal and move forward with their lives;

**Ela Gandhi**, executive director of Satyagraha — In Pursuit of Truth, an organization that works to bridge divisions in housing, employment and education in South Africa;

**Charles Villa-Vicencio**, founder of the Institute for Justice and Reconciliation and its former executive director;

**Kwandiwe Kondlo**, a professor at the University of the Free State and former director of the governance unit at the Human Sciences Research Council;

**Amanda Cooper**, exhibition coordinator at the Cape Town Holocaust Centre, and by far the youngest of the group at age 33;

**Nomvula Dlamini**, a senior staff member at the Community Development Resources Association, with more than 15 years of experience in nonprofit organizational development;

**Marcella Naidoo**, national director of Black Sash Trust, a human rights organization with a 55-year history of working in South Africa; and

**Tinyiko Sam Maluleke**, executive director of research at the University of South Africa and president of the South African Council of Churches.

As interesting and informative as these essays are, printing them didn't seem sufficient in this multimedia age. Therefore, we recorded a few of the writers reading their essays and are making those available on our Web site. We hope that by hearing a few of the essays read, listeners will be moved to go back and read all of the essays posted during the summer, which remain online at: [blog.mott.org](http://blog.mott.org).

At the same time, we could think of no better way to amplify the voices of our annual report essayists than to ask a South African artist to create our cover illustration. (More about this talented artist, David Hlongwane, who resides in

Khayelitsha, an informal settlement outside Cape Town, can be found on the inside cover of this publication.)

What impressed us as we reflected both on the essays written during the World Cup, as well as those we newly solicited, was how often the writers struck similar themes. Many writers described the need to be tenacious and resilient in the face of disappointment and hardship. They insisted that cooperation among all in society is not just important, it is vital to the very future of their country. They wrote about how strong communities can accomplish dramatic change. Frequently they expressed confidence that “together we can do it!” And many emphasized that NGOs can be a fierce force for creating civil society.

Amanda Cooper made the keen observation that NGOs “need to play the role of mentor and cajoler and be a mirror to reflect the need for change,” and then added: “NGOs need to be the ultimate optimists — the ones bridging cultural and society chasms, celebrating rich diversity and the value of every life.”

**Y**et another writer pointed out that when confronted by a serious challenge, people face a choice between being blinded by pessimism or seeing possibilities — a chord that resonated with us so much, we selected it as the title of this report.

And finally, the essays conveyed a deep sense that one must find a way to become emboldened — not embittered — by setbacks and seeming defeats.

In the end, it was the universality of the expressed themes that convinced us we should find a way to share them in our annual report. After all, the idea that we must work together, muster our courage and move boldly forward if we are to overcome daunting challenges is a theme that people everywhere surely can relate to. Indeed, that kind of firm determination is exactly what will be required in coastal Louisiana for months to come as the oil spill cleanup continues, as well as among those who have been hard hit by the global economic crisis and the resulting uncertainties that continue to plague us all as a result.

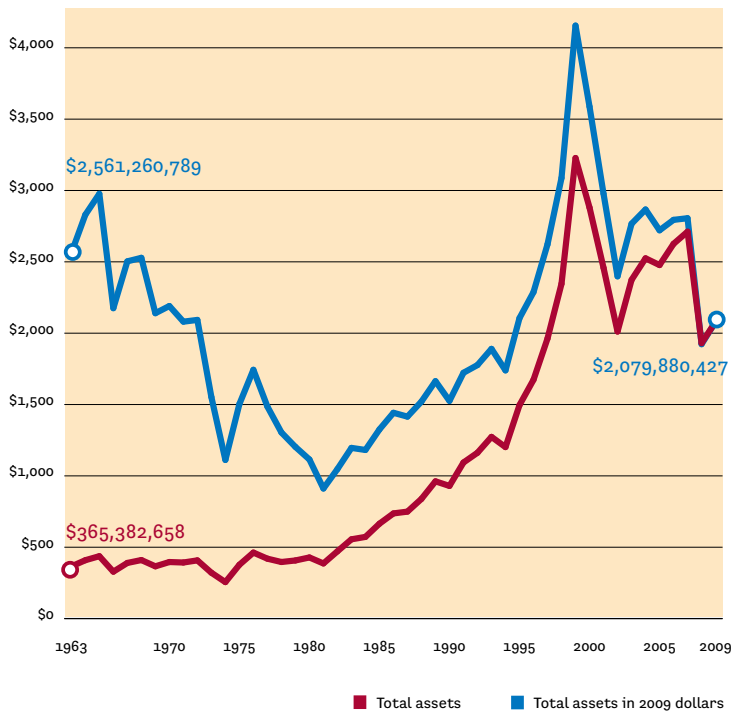
So, as you read these essays, we hope you find yourself not only enlightened about life in South Africa and informed about the role civil society is playing there, but also uplifted by the notion that “seeing possibilities” is a choice each of us can make.

### **Governance and Administration**

In 2009, we realized a slight increase in assets, which reached \$2.08 billion on December 31, 2009, compared with \$1.93 billion the previous year. On the following page, we have included a chart labeled “Total assets at market value & 2009 dollars,” which tracks our asset performance since 1963.

On January 1, 2010, two members were added to the Foundation’s Board of Trustees, bringing the total number to 15. They are: Frederick S. (Fritz) Kirkpatrick, who recently retired as vice chairman and chief executive officer of the MFO Management Company in Flint; and Charlie Nelms, chancellor of North Carolina Central University in Durham.

## Total assets at market value & 2009 dollars (in millions)



Charlie, who served on the Foundation's Board of Trustees in 2008, was chancellor at the University of Michigan-Flint from 1994 through 1998. Both men bring a wealth of knowledge and experience to their roles as Trustees, as well as keen familiarity with our home community and our Foundation.

We also have bid farewell to three long-time employees. In January 2010, Jim Krause, who served as Director of Grants Administration and Assistant Treasurer, and Marilyn Stein LeFeber, our Vice President of Communications, retired. John Brown retired from our Information Services department in July 2010.

Jim, who concluded a 31-year career with the Foundation, was legendary for his institutional

memory, especially his ability to provide detail and analysis of decades of grantmaking. He is succeeded by Mary Gailbreath, a CPA who joined our Grants Administration team in 2002 after a 16-year accounting and management career in the private sector.

Marilyn actually led our communications department twice in her career, first from 1978 to 1983 and then again from 1999 until her retirement. Her second stint occurred during a period of dramatic, fast-paced change in the communications field, and Marilyn ably led the Foundation into the new social networking era.

With her retirement, the baton was passed to Carol D. Rugg, a longtime member of the communications department, who most recently completed a 10-year assignment as a loaned executive directing the communications efforts of a research program housed at the Aspen Institute.

John began his Mott career in 1984 as an accounting assistant. But before long, the computer age was upon us and John helped the Foundation venture into new territory and embrace new technologies.

We wish Jim, Marilyn and John many long and happy years of retirement.

**William S. White**  
President