



The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation

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**THE WALLACE ALEXANDER GERBODE FOUNDATION
TO RESTRUCTURE AFTER 40 YEARS**

A Trailblazer, Gerbode Supported Reproductive Freedom, Conservation of Hawaiian Islands and SF Bay, Death with Dignity movement, Civic Engagement, Nonprofit Leadership and the Arts

SAN FRANCISCO – The Wallace Alexander Gerbode Foundation announced today that it will be reorganizing beginning March 1, 2016. One of the pioneering family foundations in the Bay Area since its establishment in 1975, the Gerbode Foundation has spent nearly \$89 million in grants and foundation-directed projects supporting communities in the Bay Area, Hawaii, and beyond. The trustees of the Gerbode Foundation have decided to split the Foundation's assets so that the next generation can focus on their own interest areas and continue their work in philanthropy. Half the funds will remain at Gerbode and the other half will result in the creation of three individual private foundations.

The Gerbode Foundation has been a trailblazer in building the capacity of the nonprofit sector and pushing for diversity in philanthropy. The Foundation has also been an incubator of social ideas and experimentation, whether as a first investor in reproductive technologies like RU-486 and Plan B or an early supporter of land conservation efforts in Hawaii. Gerbode has looked for opportunities to foster positive social change through public education and policy advocacy. The Foundation has served as an early and ongoing funder for many of its grantees, including the American Civil Liberties Union Northern California (ACLU-NC), Planned Parenthood and the Trust for Public Land.

The Foundation was established by Martha Alexander Gerbode, a descendant of the Alexander missionary family that traveled from New England to Hawaii in 1830. The family later helped create Alexander & Baldwin, one of the biggest sugar companies in Hawaii. Martha Gerbode formed the Foundation in 1971 and named it after a son who was killed in an accident.

Throughout the Foundation's 40-year history, its grantmaking has been informed by a strong commitment to equality and justice, and a deep desire to build durable institutions that have far-reaching impact. Through the Foundation, Martha's children and their families have made investments that have made meaningful changes in people's lives. They also cultivated a culture of risk-taking and innovation that reflects Martha's reputation as a maverick and visionary activist.

"For over 40 years, the Gerbode Foundation has invested in a wide range of organizations that have transformed the lives of families in the Bay Area and Hawaii in numerous ways," said Foundation President Stacie Ma'a. "We are extremely proud of the accomplishments of our grantees. We look forward to building on this legacy as the Foundation's trustees enter a new phase in their philanthropy." Stacie Ma'a has been on the staff of the Gerbode Foundation for 17 years and has served as its President since 2014.

President Emeritus Thomas Layton, who joined the Foundation in 1975, preceded Ms. Ma'a as President. During Mr. Layton's tenure, the Foundation played a significant capacity-building role for Bay Area nonprofits and supported the establishment of a wide range of nonprofit and philanthropic organizations. The Foundation often took on issues that no one else was interested in with the goal of making the system open, fair and effective for all. "From its inception, the Gerbode Foundation has looked for opportunities to support great people and to incubate new ideas. One of the hallmarks of the Foundation has been to provide venture capital for public interest work," said Tom Layton.

The restructuring of the Gerbode Foundation will mark a change but not an end to the family's tradition of giving. The family will take the remainder of 2016 to pause and reflect on how best to maintain and build on their considerable legacy. Information will be updated on the website as it becomes available.

A few examples of the Gerbode Foundation's philanthropic contributions in the Bay Area and Hawaii include:

Arts and Culture

- Instituting the Special Awards in the Arts program in 1987 designed specifically for the commissioning of local artists. These coveted, nationally respected awards have helped underwrite culturally and aesthetically diverse, acclaimed new works by prominent artists and emerging ones. The program has funded over 150 projects in the visual, literary, and performing arts.
- Supporting the creation and expansion of Hawaiian language immersion programs for preschoolers at a time when the Hawaiian language was at risk of becoming extinct. There are more teachers of Hawaiian language now than there were speakers of the language then.

Community Affairs

- Providing initial and ongoing support for leaders of the death with dignity movement to pursue legislation to provide terminally-ill patients with control over end-of-life decisions. This recently resulted in passage of such legislation in California.
- Investing in policy efforts to create a model ordinance limiting gun access in California and nationally.
- Raising the visibility of Japanese-American internment through its support of litigation and public education (films, theater and books).

Environment and Conservation

- Conserving Hawaii's valuable natural resources through continuous support of the Hawaii program of The Nature Conservancy and the national and Hawaii program for The Trust for Public Land.

- Addressing climate change through support of community-based nonprofits challenging energy giants while simultaneously investing in collaboration and dialogue among diverse partners to advance discussions about a clean energy future.

Reproductive Rights and Health

- Making program-related investments that have had a significant impact on women's ability to make decisions about their reproductive health by increasing access to RU-486 (abortion pill) and Plan B (morning after pill) across the United States.
- Expanding the network of reproductive health advocates by supporting the creation of Nurses/Lawyers/Physicians and Medical Students for Reproductive Choice.

Philanthropic Process

- Diversifying the field of philanthropy with ongoing support of funder affinity groups, including Environmental Grantmakers Association, Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders in Philanthropy, Hispanics in Philanthropy, Bay Area Blacks in Philanthropy, Women in Philanthropy, and Northern California Grantmakers.
- Investing in nonprofit consulting services, such as CompassPoint, the Foundation Center and the Nonprofit Support Center.

Strengthen the Nonprofit Sector

- Nurturing the rebirth of Cal Nonprofits, a statewide alliance of nearly 10,000 organizations representing and promoting California's growing nonprofit sector.
- Supporting the feasibility study and making program-related investments to start the Nonprofit Insurance Alliance, a national program to provide low-cost liability insurance for non-profits.
- Investing in organizations representing the public interest in the conversion of Blue Cross of California into a for-profit insurance company, resulting in a \$3.2 billion valuation that led to the creation of The California Endowment and California HealthCare Foundation.

Additional Notable Grants

The Gerbode Foundation has always looked for opportunities to partner and leverage its investments. The best examples of such grants include:

- Partnering with The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation since 2000 to support choreographers, playwrights, and composers resulting in \$4,200,000 in commissioning awards.
- Creating the Gerbode Fellows program to recognize outstanding grantee leaders in partnership with the University of California at Berkeley School of Social Welfare for over 26 years resulting in \$1,200,000 in professional development awards.
- Partnering with the Hawaii Community Foundation to create the Ho'okele Awards to recognize outstanding community leaders, resulting in over \$600,000 in professional development awards.

More information will be posted, as it becomes available, on the Foundation website: <http://gerbode.org>

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