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# **THE JOHN S. AND JAMES L. KNIGHT FOUNDATION STATEMENT OF STRATEGY**

January 2020



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# FOREWORD

John S. and James L. Knight believed that a well-informed community could best “determine its own true interests” and was essential to a well-functioning, representative democracy. They pursued those beliefs, building and leading one of the largest and most commercially successful newspaper companies in American history. They were known for their journalistic principles, integrity, respect for others and openness to the application of evolving media technology.

The Knights, separately, formed Knight Foundation. James L. Knight explained that their foundation was to promote excellence in journalism and the success of the communities in which they worked. “Service to your community is inseparable from your responsibility as a newspaperman,” he believed. Having given those directions, the brothers were not otherwise prescriptive.

Decades after the founders’ passing, their company was sold, but their foundation remains, evolved over time and continuing to do so. This flexibility was intentional. John S. Knight wrote, “a truly effective foundation should have freedom to exercise its best judgment as required by the times and conditions under which they live.”

What remains constant is Knight Foundation’s commitment to informing and bettering our communities.

This is a statement of our core beliefs, our approach to our mission and our statement of the strategic direction of our work. It is not cast in stone. Like the Knight brothers, we believe Knight Foundation should evolve with time, society and technology, focused on ways to make relevant their passion for informing and engaging communities.



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## CORE BELIEFS

Knight Foundation strategy and programs are based on three core beliefs derived from our founders:

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**1** We believe in freedom of expression and in the values expressed in the First Amendment to the Constitution of the United States.

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**2** We believe an informed citizenry is essential for a representative democracy to function effectively.

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**3** We believe in engaged, equitable and inclusive communities.



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# SOCIAL INVESTMENT PRINCIPLES

Knight Foundation is a social investor. Our investments are guided by these principles:

## **IMPACT**

We seek ideas, leaders and initiatives that will have impact; transformational change begins with understanding things as they are and requires leaders who have vision, courage, know-how and tenacity to change them.

## **FOCUS**

We concentrate grant and other resources in the communities and in the arts where the Knight brothers once worked, and in the field of journalism.

## **OPPORTUNITY**

We seek to leverage and accelerate existing momentum in the places and fields in which we work.

## **INNOVATION**

We support innovation in the use and application of evolving technology.

## **PARTNERS**

We seek partners who share our values and goals. We work with numerous partners because none of our goals can be accomplished by a single organization.

## **RESPECT AND CIVILITY**

We treat everyone with respect and conduct our business ethically. We believe in the value of civil discourse in our own affairs and as part of a strong democracy.

## **EQUITY AND INCLUSION**

We intentionally apply an equitable and inclusive lens to our work and investments.

## **LEARNING**

We seek to understand and share insights from our work to enable greater impact.



# KNIGHT FOUNDATION GRANT-MAKING PROGRAMS

## JOURNALISM

Knight Foundation supports the First Amendment and the crucial role of journalism in a democracy to inform the community.

We invest in building a sustainable future for independent local journalism so the community can pursue its true interests. We define journalistic excellence as the full, accurate, contextual search for truth, through both reporting and commentary. We believe such journalism holds the powerful to account, inspires civic engagement and reflects the diversity of the community served.

We believe journalistic organizations must be sustainable in order to be consistently independent. We work mostly in the United States.

We invest for impact in these areas:

- **First Amendment:** We support efforts to safeguard press freedom and champion free speech.
- **Local Media:** We invest in models and methods that advance the practice of journalism, build trust, reach new and diverse audiences, and generate revenue solutions to ensure a sustainable future.
- **Talent and Leadership:** We support the development of a diverse and inclusive network of journalists, technologists and news leaders accelerating change.
- **Technology Innovation:** We promote the application of technology that responds to the changing ways people consume news and information. We invest in efforts that combat misinformation and increase access to accurate, reliable information in a rapidly changing media ecosystem.

## COMMUNITY AND NATIONAL INITIATIVES

Knight Foundation supports inclusive and equitable engagement in communities where the Knight brothers owned and operated newspapers. We fund primarily in eight cities where the foundation has resident program officers, including Akron, where our founders started Knight Newspapers, and Miami, where their business was eventually headquartered. Through donor-advised funds in local community foundations, we also fund in 18 additional cities in the United States.

We believe an engaged community is one where people are attached to the place where they live and are invested in the community's future. Engagement includes many things, such as choosing to stay in a place, participating in community and civic affairs, voting, volunteering or simply taking part in the social life of the community.

Our investments to promote more engaged communities include:

- **Public Spaces:** We invest to connect people to the places where they live and to the public life of the community through the design, construction and programming of inclusive and equitable public spaces.
- **Opportunity:** We invest to attract and retain people in communities through inclusive and effective pathways to economic opportunity.
- **"Smart Cities" as Responsive Cities:** As digital technology reshapes our lives, we invest in technology-enabled efforts that help residents connect to each other and become more informed, and that help cities be more responsive to residents.



# KNIGHT FOUNDATION GRANT-MAKING PROGRAMS

## ARTS

Knight Foundation believes arts and culture are at the core of community, connecting people to place and to each other.

We fund artists and arts organizations that create, present and provide access to artistic excellence and inspire engagement. We invest across genres and increase the impact of our work by focusing funding in the eight communities where Knight has offices.

We understand that art is about risk and imagination. We do not tell artists how to express their view and expect good art to be timeless.

Our investments focus on:

- **Authenticity and Inclusion:** We fund to accelerate trends and activity naturally occurring in each community and support artists and organizations that reflect the diversity of the communities where we work. For example, our goal in Miami is to make art general, and in Detroit, to enable artists and arts organizations to help write the city's new narrative.
- **Development of Talent and Organizations:** We seek to increase the capacity of artists and the sustainability of arts organizations.
- **Transformation:** We invest in the use of technology to create new ways to explore and make art, to express culture, and to reach, expand and engage diverse audiences.

## LEARNING AND IMPACT

Knight Foundation seeks to be a more effective social investor through insights that can drive impact in the fields and communities where we work, and we believe the greatest impact comes from sharing insights widely.

We cultivate and apply insights through:

- **Assessment:** We assess our investments to understand their impact. We monitor progress on our grant assumptions and goals, and on equity and inclusion. We do this to further impact, guide future investments and, through shared knowledge, assist grantees and others in the fields where we work.
- **Research:** We commission original research and support independent research to add to the general understanding of the present and future of informed and engaged communities.



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# COMMUNICATIONS, ADMINISTRATION AND HUMAN RESOURCES, FINANCE, INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY, GRANTS ADMINISTRATION

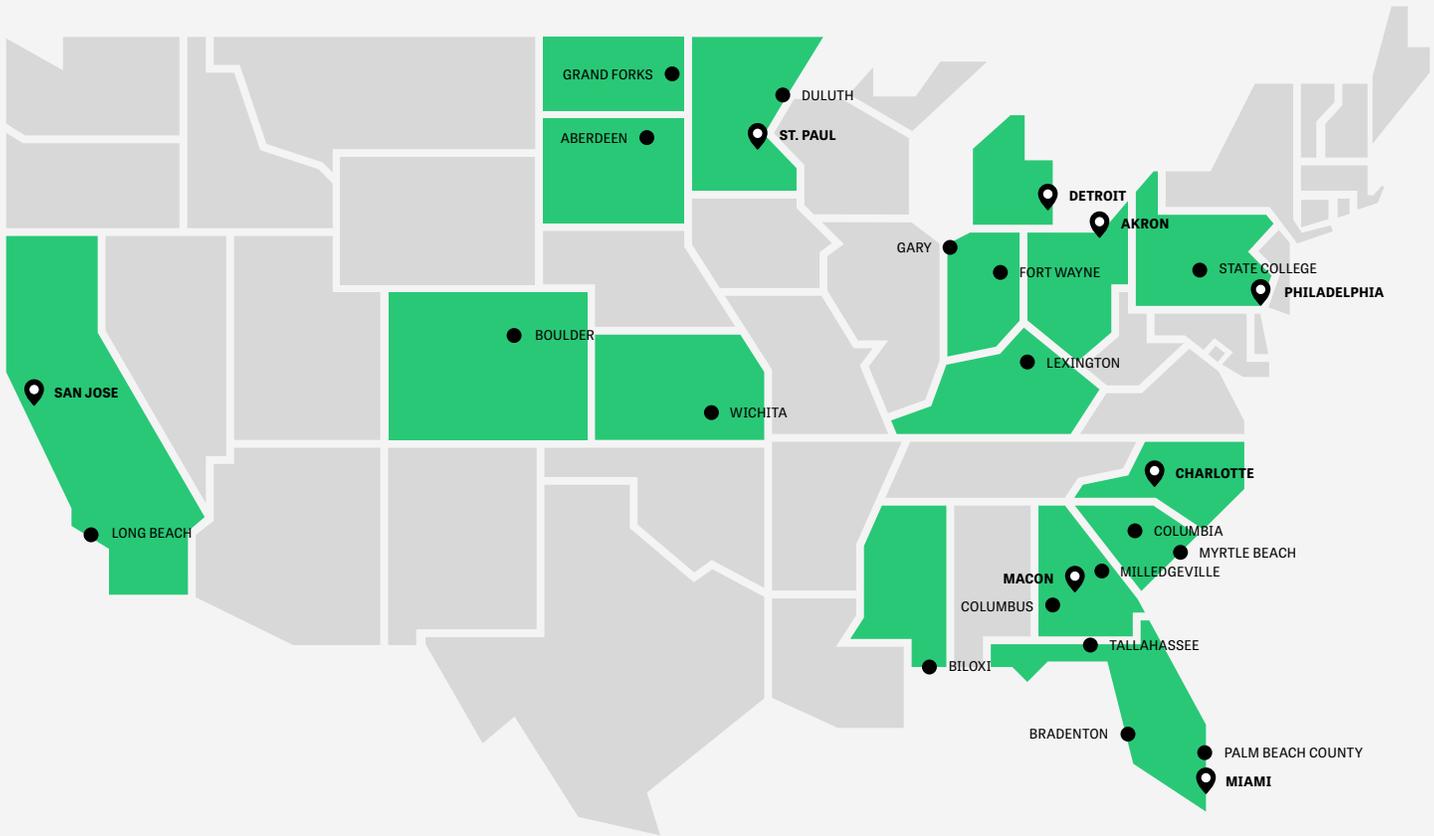
These teams work collaboratively to advance the foundation's goals.

**Communications:** We seek the widest distribution of information and understanding about our work to inform our fields of interest, attract the best ideas, build and convene networks of thinkers and leaders, and amplify the impact of our grantmaking.

**Administration and Human Resources, Finance, Information Technology:** We staff the foundation with high-performing, open-minded, agile and diverse professionals who are committed to our core beliefs and principles. We promote a culture of efficient, regulation-compliant business operations, continuous adaptation to market conditions, and optimal use of technology systems and tools. Our vendor selection processes are inclusive and equitable in order to engage diverse vendors and asset managers.

**Grants Administration:** We pursue efficient and transparent administration of our grants to ensure that our investments align with our strategies, establish a basis for learning and critical reflection, and promote fiscal accountability.

# APPENDIX A



Where we fund directly

Where We Fund Through the Local Community Foundation

# APPENDIX B

## THE PHILOSOPHY OF THE KNIGHT NEWSPAPERS

*Remarks of John S. Knight before a group of businessmen in April 1969.*

Philosophy, broadly construed, is the love of wisdom.

In application, it is the science which investigates general facts and principles of reality and of human nature and conduct.

As it pertains to journalism, philosophy embraces the general principles in a specific field of knowledge and dedication to a particular system of ethics.

The Knight philosophy of newspaper publishing, as evolved through the years, centers upon these basic points:

1. The Knight newspapers strive to meet the highest standards of journalism. We try to keep our news columns factual and unbiased, reserving our opinions for the editorial pages, where they belong.
2. Knight newspapers have no entangling alliances. We are not beholden to any political party, faction or special interest.

Our editors and officers studiously avoid conflicts of interest. I and my associates serve on no corporate boards or committees other than appropriate civic organizations or committees in the fields of education and communications.

3. It is our publishing judgment that business and general managers should conduct the managerial functions of our newspaper group; that the editors are responsible for the news, feature and editorial quality.

For newspapermen come in many molds. Some are distinguished editors, writers and photographers, others are superlative salesmen, talented circulation men and efficient production experts.

Still others, but not so many, have the genius of general management—sometimes described by Jim Knight as the “nuts and bolts” department.

Working as a team, the aforementioned and their co-workers accomplish the daily miracle of turning raw newsprint into the printed product which is sold and distributed in every 24-hour cycle of the year.

4. We believe in profitability and its achievement through efficient production and modern business procedures.

But we do not sacrifice the quality of our newspapers on the altar of the counting house.

The “unpopular” stands taken by newspapers are often the reasons for their preeminence in the field of journalism.

The truly distinguished newspapers in this country are those which have dared to face public wrath and displeasure.

We endeavor to be diligent in the areas of general management, future planning and in holding high the torch of vigilant, independent journalism.

As responsible purveyors of information and opinion, we are committed to the philosophy that journalism is likewise a public trust, an institution which serves, protects and advances the public welfare.

The Knight newspapers have a deep and abiding faith in our rich heritage of precious freedoms which can be preserved only to the degree that the public is at all times fully informed of the forces which seek to destroy them.

Few things are impossible to diligence, understanding and skill.

Thus we seek to bestir the people into an awareness of their own condition, provide inspiration for their thoughts and rouse them to pursue their true interests.

## APPENDIX C

# STATEMENT OF PURPOSE, KNIGHT FOUNDATION ANNUAL REPORT 1986

*In 1986, James L. Knight served as Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Knight Foundation. The following is the Statement of Purpose from the foundation's annual report.*

The Knight Foundation is an outgrowth of one of America's great newspaper publishing enterprises, and of the large philanthropic impulses of John S. and James L. Knight.

In both the philanthropic and publishing undertakings, the Knights have been men of broad, statesmanlike vision and uncommon devotion to the common welfare. The Foundation they created is faithful to those ideals.

Founded in 1950, the Knight Foundation is a private, independent foundation operating under the laws of Ohio and the United States.

A basic objective is to preserve, and if possible, enhance the buying power of the Foundation's assets. Another is to assess and respond to the changing needs in its fields of interests and in the communities where it operates.

In responding to proposals and also in initiating projects of its own, the Board of Trustees seeks to further the goals for the Foundation's founders in two distinct ways:

First, the Foundation supports worthy causes and organizations in communities in which the Knight-Ridder company has newspaper and other business enterprises. In making such grants, the Foundation seeks to enhance the quality of life in those communities and encourage educational, cultural, economic, social and civic betterments as promising opportunities present themselves. The Foundation also makes selected national grants in these various fields of interest.

Second, the Foundation is animated by a keen awareness of its distinctive origins. John S. and James L. Knight, in founding and leading the Knight newspapers and expanding them into the present company, emphasized their dedication to the highest standards of journalistic excellence. They have sought constantly to improve the quality of service to their readers, their communities, their nation. They pursued the same goals for the American press as an institution.

The Knight Foundation, while wholly separate from and independent of Knight-Ridder, Inc., is committed to those same values on behalf of the news profession in America. It supports the First Amendment freedoms of speech and of the press everywhere, believing that upon them rest all other human freedoms.

The Foundation will continue to support those organizations and projects which, in the judgement of its Trustees, offer special promise of advancing the quality and effectiveness of a free press in America and world-wide. In an era when the world that journalists seek to understand and explain grows steadily more complex, the Foundation gives particular emphasis to the cause of journalism education.