



LEADERSHIP PROFILE

President & CEO
GENAN Foundation

Charlottesville, VA

The Context

“Fearless, innovative, straightforward and generous.” These are characteristics two of their grandchildren use to describe Anne and Gene Worrell—characteristics that apply equally well to the Genan Foundation, the philanthropy they founded in 1987.

By all accounts, the Worrells were formidable partners. Combining his entrepreneurial zeal with her insatiable appetite for knowledge, they were community leaders of the first order. And while they never sought the limelight, The Genan Foundation has been a quiet, steady philanthropic force in Virginia for 35 years.

Mrs. Worrell grew up in Surry, in southeastern Virginia, and Mr. Worrell was from Bristol, across the state. Both were the first in their families to attend college, Wake Forest for him (at age 16) and George Washington University Law School, and Virginia Intermont College for her. The *Bristol Herald Courier* was the first of the 30 newspapers they would own.¹ They made their home in Bristol until moving to Charlottesville in 1970. They remained actively committed to their respective hometowns throughout their lives, and communities in all three regions remain focal points for the Foundation’s grantmaking.

Gene Worrell chaired The Genan Foundation until his death in 2006; Anne Worrell had been President of the Foundation from the beginning. She redoubled her involvement upon her husband’s death, and she remained a core driver of the Foundation’s work until her own death in 2019.

Day-to-day affairs of the Foundation have been managed for over three decades by the current



“

While they never sought the limelight, The Genan Foundation has been a quiet, steady philanthropic force in Virginia for 35 years.

¹ For a summary of the Worrell’s legacy, read their obituaries [here](#) and [here](#). For a fuller take on their business journey, see *Reflections on the Birth of a Newspaper: The Founding of Worrell Newspapers*, published in 2010.

“

The Genan Foundation was already a highly regarded philanthropy, but within the new resources the opportunities for impact are truly compelling.



President & CEO, Andrew Dracopoli, whose planned retirement prompts the current search. Mr. Dracopoli has been a trusted advisor and de facto head of the family office since 1988. Upon the appointment of his successor, he will step down as head of the Foundation and focus his energies on the design, construction and launch of the new home recently announced for the Worrell's extraordinary collection of animal art.²

The Opportunity

Several factors make this a particularly important time in The Genan Foundation's evolution:

Asset and grant growth. Mrs. Worrell's death in 2019 triggered a major influx of assets for the Foundation. As recently as twenty years ago, the Foundation's endowment was just \$3.5 million. At year-end 2021 the assets were \$42 million, and there has been a significant increase in 2022. By 2025, the Foundation's corpus is expected to stabilize at about \$200 million, as various estate and tax matters are settled.

The growth in assets means a similar growth in the grant portfolio, from just under \$2 million in 2020 to a projected \$5 million in 2022 and an anticipated \$10 million in 2025. The Genan Foundation was already a highly regarded philanthropy, but with the new resources the opportunities for impact are truly compelling.

Leadership transition. The loss of Mrs. Worrell's guiding hand and the shift in responsibilities by the Foundation's highly regarded CEO mean that for the first time since its inception the Foundation will be led by someone who was not mentored by one of the founders.

² Now on partial display at the Foundation's headquarters in Charlottesville, the Virginia Museum of Animal Art will relocate to a purpose-built facility at the William King Museum of Art in Abingdon. Further information on this transformational partnership, announced in April 2022, can be found [here](#) and [here](#).

Board engagement and development. The Foundation is blessed to be governed by a board of five highly committed directors, currently comprising two family trustees and three non-family trustees. The by-laws provide for up to seven board members.³

The Foundation's growth and maturity suggest the addition of new board members is likely in the relatively near future, and even the most experienced of Genan's board members look forward to engaging with the new President in new ways.

The task ahead will be both challenging and exciting for the new President:

- Honor the founders' legacy and values, reflecting their entrepreneurial spirit and their community commitment;
- Embrace the Foundation's highly personal operating ethos, treasured by directors, grantees and partners alike;
- Ensure the Foundation's strategy, structure and operations are appropriate to the increased grantmaking budget and the board's vision for impact; and
- Continue to do important work well—and *have fun doing so*.

Programmatically, The Genan Foundation has always had a broad portfolio of interests, with most grants falling into one or more of the following primary areas:

- **Arts & Culture**
- **Community Media:** Supporting independent, nonpartisan news organizations dedicated to high standards in journalism provided as a public service.

³ The bylaws also stipulate that non-family directors (Class B) will outnumber family directors (Class A).



“

A task ahead for the new President includes ensuring the Foundation's strategy, structure and operations are appropriate to the increased grantmaking budget and the board's vision for impact.

“

Geographically, the Foundation supports grantees in three principal regions in Virginia including Southwest Virginia, Central Virginia, and Surry County.



- **Education:** Supporting early childhood and higher education, including college and career preparation and first-generation advancement initiatives.
- **Historic Preservation:** Supporting capital campaigns for restoration and preservation of Virginia landmarks as well as educational initiatives dedicated to Virginia history and culture.
- **Healthcare:** With a focus on epilepsy, elder care, behavioral health, and women's health.
- **Poverty Alleviation:** Supporting direct services and long-term solutions to increase economic mobility for individuals and families, including workforce training and development, food security, affordable housing, and access to services.
- **Wildlife Habitat and Conservation:** Protecting the environment by preserving and enhancing outdoor spaces, wildlife habitats, waterways, and accessible greenspace.

Geographically, the Foundation supports grantees in three principal regions in Virginia:

- Southwest Virginia, centered on the City of Bristol and the Counties of Washington and Russell. The Foundation also looks for partnerships and regranting opportunities across Southwest Virginia.
- Central Virginia, including Charlottesville and its six contiguous counties.
- Surry County and James River.

The new CEO of the Genan Foundation can expect to inherit several overlapping priorities:

- **Strategic vision and leadership.** Working in concert with the board, the CEO must continue to refine the Foundation's programmatic vision and aspirations for impact.

- **Community engagement.** “We enjoy learning from grantees,” noted one trustee, and all take pride in the deep connections the Foundation has with its communities and its partners. The intimacy of relationships that was so important to the Worrells may be difficult to maintain as the Foundation grows, but Genan’s personal touch is a point of pride and an asset to be nurtured.
- **Organizational leadership.** With just one full-time employee, The Genan Foundation is the very embodiment of a lean organization. The board has no appetite for a large staff, but it realizes the growing portfolio of grants and relationships will require additional talent. The CEO must develop a shared vision for the internal resources necessary to support the Foundation’s grantmaking with the same respect, compassion and distinctive touch for which it is already known.
- **Operational excellence.** The Genan Foundation is as efficient as it is effective, but it has never operated at the sustained level required of it now. The CEO must ensure the Foundation’s systems and processes are aligned with its strategy, while always keeping in mind the human consequences of the work.



“

Working in concert with the board, the CEO must continue to refine the Foundation’s programmatic vision and aspirations for impact.

The Relationships

The President & CEO reports to	The Genan Foundation Board of Directors
and will develop and manage	A staff appropriate to the Foundation's strategy and culture
while working closely with	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual board members and board committees• Grantees and their leadership
and stewarding other key relationships, such as	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Foundations interested in Genan's footprint or focus• Program partners and collaborators• Community leaders• Regional and national thought leaders on issues relevant to the Foundation's programming• The Foundation's consultants, advisors, legal counsel, investment counsel and auditors

The Location

The Genan Foundation is based in facilities in Charlottesville, VA, that served as the family office for Gene and Anne Worrell and that continues to house the extensive collection of animal art. Once the art is moved to its new home in Abingdon, the Foundation expects to relocate to quarters best suited to its philanthropic purposes.

Charlottesville is in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains about 100 miles southwest of Washington, D.C. and 70 miles northwest of Richmond. The region is frequently cited on lists of the nation's most inviting and livable communities. The Charlottesville area is exceedingly welcoming to those who treasure an intellectually stimulating, culturally rich and environmentally varied place to live and work.

The Candidate

The most appealing candidates to become President of the Genan Foundation will be those with the philanthropic acumen, community spirit and business sense to guide the Foundation through a period of major growth and then lead a sustained effort of impactful grantmaking in three very different regions of Virginia.

The board welcomes inquiries from proven leaders whose successes and operating style could accelerate the Foundation's impact. Of greatest interest: Prospects who combine relevant records of accomplishment with a special mix of empathy, confidence and humility—all while embracing the rich legacy of the Foundation's founders and the aspirations of the current directors.

As a group, the trustees are open to candidates with a variety of backgrounds. While the lack of formal grantmaking experience is not a disqualifier per se, the board favors candidates whose prior experience mirrors the Genan Foundation's current and expected trajectory. Experience living and working in Virginia would be additive.

Candidates of greatest appeal are likely to offer a compelling mix of the following experiences and characteristics:

Expertise: The ideal candidate will offer...

- A balance of the art and science of place-based grantmaking, ideally gained in a family-oriented context; someone with a practiced awareness that impact is not always quantifiable
- A diverse professional background, reflecting a breadth of interests similar to that of the Genan Foundation
- A record of impactful leadership in a relevant community-based context and for whom teamwork and collaboration are second nature
- A respectful, empowering and facilitative style characterized by teamwork, collaboration and the commitment to do great work
- A strategic mindset and an entrepreneurial spirit; the facility for seeing the possibilities inherent in ideas, sifting and testing the best ones for further exploration
- A grounded perspective informed by real-world experience



“

The board welcomes inquiries from proven leaders whose successes and operating style could accelerate the Foundation's impact.

“

The Foundation seeks an executive who is ambitious for the Foundation, its communities and its grantees; a leader who derives genuine pleasure from others' accomplishments.



- A record of success with families and family boards comprising independent thinkers with diverse life experiences, goals and styles of communicating
- The mindset of a continuous learner with an active sense of curiosity
- Respect for the Foundation's heritage and aspirations for its impact

Culture: The Foundation seeks an executive who is...

- Respectful of lively discussions and spirited engagement
- Personable, inspiring and accessible; a leader who invites participation, expects collaboration and respects the intimacy of relationships that was fostered by the Worrell's and remains emblematic of the Foundation's work
- A natural ambassador for the mission and the communities it supports
- Well-rounded; a leader with an informed perspective on transformative grantmaking but no hidden agendas
- Comfortable in uncomfortable situations
- Disciplined yet flexible
- Courageous, creative and tenacious
- An artful relationship-builder who treats all with grace and respect
- An engaging discussion partner, whatever the occasion or forum
- Ambitious for the Foundation, its communities and its grantees; a leader who derives genuine pleasure from others' accomplishments

- Invested in the Foundation's footprint communities, always representing the Foundation with integrity, grace and good humor
- Joyful in the pursuit of shared objectives

For potential consideration or to suggest a prospect, please email

[**Genan@BoardWalkConsulting.com**](mailto:Genan@BoardWalkConsulting.com)

or call **Sam Pettway** or **Diane Westmore**
at 404-BoardWalk (404-262-7392).

