

# William Cleveland

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## Research Interests:

- Why do nonprofit organizations tend to persist?
- How do nonprofits get and stay large?
- Branding and nonprofit organizations: how nonprofits establish and change the psychological construction of their identity in the minds of stakeholders, donors, and others in the public
- Long term trends in nonprofit organizational development such as life cycle and competitive dynamics which influence public awareness, fundraising, and progress against mission goals

## Research Methodologies:

- Historical methods including library and archival research
- Interpretation of annual reports and financial statements of organizations
- Quantitative analysis of revenue and fundraising volatility for individual organizations
- Interviews

**Tentative Dissertation Title:** Brand changes for large nonprofit organizations: identity to what ends?

**Primary Advisor:** Dr. Leslie Lenkowsky

## Research Statement:

My research examines the evolution of brands at large nonprofit organizations. Beyond simply adjusting a logo or changing a tag line, interesting changes alter the organization's activities and influence how Americans perceive the organizations. The investigation starts with what is today the March of Dimes when it added new activities after the polio vaccine's success and ultimately focused solely on birth defects. Another organization is today known as the United Way, which grew at its fastest rate in the 1950s in terms of number of affiliates and funds raised. This period presents a natural experiment with two contrasting organizational structures for affiliates – the more nationally-focused United Fund approach which ultimately replaced the strictly local Community Chest. Both the United Way and March of Dimes successfully navigated their brand changes. However, organizations such as the American Eugenics Society, Women's Christian Temperance Union, and Florence Crittenton Homes faltered, losing both size and influence. This research seeks to answer the question of what led to the flourishing of some organizations and diminishment of others.

## Personal Info:

William Cleveland started his PhD program in 2009 after a 20-year career in the private sector. These experiences inform his research and honed his understanding of organizations as well as teaching skills. He is happily married and loves his two teenaged daughters along with a houseful of furry friends.