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Philanthropy Initiative
Oral History Project

Interview with:
Karl Stauber
President, Danville Regional Foundation
Danville, Virginia

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AMANDA MONIZ: This is Amanda Moniz conducting an oral history interview with Karl Stauber, president of the Danville Regional Foundation. We're in Danville, Virginia, at the foundation's headquarters. It's September 12, 2018. Could you please state your name and birthplace?

KARL STAUBER: Karl Stauber. I was born in Statesville, North Carolina.

MONIZ: Great, thank you. Did you grow up in Statesville?

STAUBER: I did grow up in Statesville.

MONIZ: Could you tell me about your family and your community? What did your parents do?

STAUBER: I was born and raised in Statesville. My father worked for JC Penney, and they had their east coast distribution center in Statesville. He was a floor manager for JCPenney. My mother ran cafeterias. I grew up in a lower-middle class household in a lower-middle class community. My father was highly decorated in World War II, and stayed in the Reserve, so a couple of times we got to move for a week or two to other places, including for example, during the Bay of Pigs (1961), we moved to Jacksonville, Florida, which is where he was flying cover for the invasion fleet until the CIA told President Kennedy that the Cubans didn't have any tanks, so therefore aircraft were not necessary.

Those are little pieces of history that you come in contact with, but Statesville is not unlike Danville in the sense that it's a town that had a little more diverse economy than here, but started off as a community of Presbyterians that were trying to get away from the Anglican Church in Pennsylvania. Like many of the frontier communities along the foothills of the Appalachians, you get that independent streak from the very beginning.

MONIZ: Did your family belong to a church?

STAUBER: My mother ran the kitchen at the Presbyterian Church that I grew up in, and my father was a deacon and an elder in that church. Many of the community leaders of that community were in that church, since that church actually started the community.

MONIZ: Where did you go to school?

STAUBER: I did my undergraduate work at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, in American Studies, did a master's level certificate at the Harvard

Business School, and then a PhD in public policy at Union Institute down in Cincinnati.

MONIZ: What about as a child? Was it local schools?

STAUBER: I went to local, segregated [public] schools. My high school was desegregated while I was in high school, so we were the first class to enter into high school [segregated] and graduate with a desegregated population.

MONIZ: What year was that?

STAUBER: I graduated in 1969.

MONIZ: Okay, and can you talk about that experience?

STAUBER: Well, it was a very important—and it was a very formative—experience. The school was filled with tensions, as one can imagine, but one of the dominant forces in that high school was the high school marching band. The high school marching band, under the leadership of a gentleman here by the name of Calabrese—Jim Calabrese—it was the first, kind of social, part of the school to not just desegregate, but to actually integrate. Suddenly, half of our first chairs were all black. They weren't black just for the purposes of balancing numbers. They were black because they competed for, and they won, the chairs. That took some struggling and what not.

A group of the males in the band decided that we were going to make desegregation work. We became very active in things like stopping fights when they started, or hearing that a gang of white kids might be confronting a gang of black kids; putting ourselves in the middle of that, stopping those types of things. Really, it was an interesting school in the sense that before desegregation, it had been a fairly violent white school. One year, there was a student shot and killed on campus in what we would now call a gang conflict. At the time, we didn't know what gangs were. We thought they were things in West Side Story, or something like that. Soon after that, the police did what is now probably an illegal search of all the automobiles—all the cars—in the parking lot behind the school, and there were like 50 deadly weapons found that students were bringing and leaving in the parking lot. That kind of thing.

The adult leaders in the community had great reason to worry about this [government mandated desegregation] being a source of great conflict, but it wasn't. First, the band and then some of the service organizations, and then the sports organizations [changed]. They are the ones that led to the

successful integration of the high school. Success is a relative term, but I'll be going back next year for my 50th high school reunion, and it'll be interesting to see what the mixture is of people that show up and how lives have changed, and those types of things.

MONIZ: What led you to get involved with this group of students trying to stop fights?

STAUBER: Well, I think it was my own immature sense of social justice. I grew up in a neighborhood where I had the opportunity to interact—not with a lot of African-American children, but certainly with some. It was very clear to me that they didn't have the same opportunities I had, and I clearly didn't have the same opportunities that some of my more affluent friends did, so I could see those differential ... I remember very distinctly the bus station in Statesville until I was in high school had a white-only/colored-only water fountain and bathrooms, and those types of things. When I was in high school, I worked as a floor laborer in a flour mill that had 350 floor laborers working in it, and four of us were white, and we had the jobs because we were friends of the son of the owner.

Everybody else was black, and it was a great educational experience. It was a sense of, "Why should there be one set of rules for one group of people and another set of rules for another group of people?" Part of that was my mother's family—in particular my mother's mother (who helped raise me)—was very pointed in her criticism of the traditional white power structure and how it made it very difficult for African Americans to get ahead, and for women to get ahead. Even as a 10 year old, I was hearing that and it just was part of my consciousness. Then, in high school when they started desegregating Richmond, [Virginia], I was doing some genealogical research and I found her [my grandmother's] application for a passport in 1910. Her mother died in 1910, so her father and she did the "great tour" and traveled first to Cuba and Mexico, and then to Europe, and had to leave Europe because of World War I.

[My grandmother was raised in Richmond, VA in an affluent family]. Growing up, she was the only person I knew that had been outside of the United States that had not been in the military. She was the only woman I knew that had been outside the United States. She created for me a great interest in travel and seeing different things. I don't know if you'd call it a toy, there was a device that she had called a View Master, and it's a little toy viewing machine that you would put a set of pictures into, and you would get a stereoscopic view. She had pictures of Paris, and pictures of the pyramids, and pictures of ... I used to sit on Sunday in her house and look at those pictures, but I spent a lot of time with her and listened to her

talk about the world. I think she felt like—as a woman—she felt somewhat oppressed in that small southern town because she was often told she couldn't do things.

I think that part of it was a class orientation from her past, but part of it was also a sense of, "Why should gender determine what I'm able to do?"

MONIZ: What about philanthropy? Was that part of your childhood? Philanthropy broadly conceived, giving?

STAUBER: No, not really. Certainly not the way I think about it now. Money was given to the church. We were encouraged as children to tithe. My grandmother, she did not have a lot of money at that point. Her husband had died and left her in fairly serious debt, but she was always sending $10.00 a year to the Saint Francis School for Indians in South Dakota, or Boys Town in Nebraska, or these types of things. One of my jobs as a kid was to address envelopes for her and put stamps on and that kind of thing, and I remember as a child going, “Why is she giving money to people in Nebraska? Or, giving money to help Indian kids in South Dakota?” Over time, because of my career path, I've gone to all of those places.

MONIZ: Oh, good.

STAUBER: Not intentionally, but I used to do a lot of work in South Dakota, and would go to meetings at that school. That school, unfortunately—like many institutions of that period—had serious abuse issues that have come out more recently. As a kid, I wasn't aware of any of that, of course. That was as close as I ever got to that piece of it. The other piece of it was that my mother was very involved in the women's component of the Democratic Party—particularly the Terry Sanford part of the Democratic Party—of North Carolina. She would go to state meetings and those types of things. Because she had her own money, she made those decisions. That got me exposed to political diversity and political differences at an early age.

MONIZ: Did you ever ask your grandmother why she was giving to these far away institutions?

STAUBER: I probably did, but I don't remember asking her and I don't remember her answer.

MONIZ: Then, you graduated from high school and went to UNC. What was your experience there like?

STAUBER: Well, I was there during the anti-war movement. I was there at the end of the Civil Rights movement related to trying to help cafeteria workers have decent wages. When I got to Carolina in 1969, the state highway patrol was on campus in large numbers, and the National Guard was just off campus. This was fundamentally over labor issues, and that was an interesting thing to observe and it became a subject of discussion in many classes. The first time you smell tear gas...it creates strong memories. I smelled tear gas that fall [1969] as the National Guard, or the state police, were pushing demonstrators off campus. Fairly quickly, the larger topic became Vietnam, and I was very active in the campus Y. And at Chapel Hill, the campus Y was really one of the key parts of the anti-war movement, and "Get the CIA Off Campus," and many of those types of things.

The Y was in an old church building right in the very center of campus, and part of what was very ironic was that the police station was in the basement of the same building. Some of the Y members were Vietnam vets, and they knew a lot about technology. They ended up tapping the telephone line of the police department. I was never a leader in any of this, but I was certainly an active participant. The word would come in that the National Guard was going to come on the campus in a certain area to push demonstrators away from a building or a flagpole, or something like that, so people like me would be sent out as runners. We would run to where the demonstrators were and say, “Okay, everybody move.” It was very interesting to watch that happening. At the same time, the Y had a printing press—an old lithograph press—that was paid for by the Ford Foundation, in fact.

I don't know how it got there, but it was. We were doing a lot of demonstration posters and those types of things. I mean, I was young at the time. I was just gaining political awareness of some of these larger issues; having friends that I had gone to high school with go to Vietnam and not come back. It was not an abstract discussion. It wasn't like now. How many know somebody who's in Afghanistan? War has become almost something that we consume via the internet. Then, war was something that was much more immediate. I was very aware of the fact that, if I didn't make certain grades (I had an academic deferment before the lottery and if I didn't have a certain grade point average, I was going to Vietnam), which had its own strange, surreal sense about it.

I was involved in various groups on campus and that type of thing. It was very funny. I participated in a Get the CIA Off Campus demonstration, and then, years later, when I was going through the process of getting a security clearance, an FBI agent who was doing the security clearance

review showed me a picture with a circle around me, with my name on the photograph, in front of a building at Chapel Hill holding up a sign, “Get the CIA Off Campus.” Then, later I actually found out that for a couple of months one summer, my salary was paid by the CIA, when I worked for the United States Youth Council in New York.

Anyway, while I was in college, I also worked the whole time, and my dad and I had a deal that he would pay for half of college if I would pay for half of college. I had a job virtually every semester, and because my mother ran cafeterias, I knew a lot about food service, so I ran some small cafeterias and stuff like that. I worked as a short order cook in a delicatessen. One of the most challenging things I did was to run a halfway house. I was the night manager of a halfway house for adolescent males on parole and probation, some of whom were older than I was. Some of them were convicted murderers; drug dealers; kids that had just been at the wrong place at the wrong time. It was very interesting as a college sophomore to deal at night with these people and the systems they were part of, and then go sit in a class and listen to a lecture on the city-states of Italy in the 14th Century.

It was somewhat schizophrenic. Then, I went on and got an internship with a couple of organizations and the state superintendent of public instruction in North Carolina. That type of thing. Got married in the middle of college. Was the kind of classic person whose grades weren't very good, and then you get married and your grades go up. 47 years later, I'm still married to the same person.

MONIZ: Wow, that's wonderful. Then, after you graduated, what came next?

STAUBER: When I was at UNC, one of my professors, Ken Howard, was an expert on state budgets— creating state budgets, managing state budgets. I was lucky to have three job offers when I graduated. One with a [real estate] development company in South Carolina; one with a manufacturing company in Dayton, Ohio; and one working in the budget office in North Carolina. I took the budget office job because it was most consistent with my values. The other two jobs—I couldn't see myself in those environments. And I knew Ken Howard, who became the state budget officer. Of the people who offered me jobs, I knew him the most. I trusted him. I worked there for about a year and a half, and then took another job in state government out of that. But it was a great introductory opportunity, and that actually led me into philanthropy.

MONIZ: Tell me that story.

STAUBER: I was working in the North Carolina Department of Administration, and the secretary of the department, who had been appointed by the governor, was a guy by the name of Bill Bondurant. Bill had been the number two person at the Mary Reynolds Babcock Foundation in Winston-Salem, and was on leave from Babcock with the understanding that when he came back, he would be the CEO of the foundation. I ended up doing a number of special projects for him as secretary on issues where the governor had said, "What's our policy on how we regulate tidal lands in North Carolina?" I didn't know anything about tidal lands, but I knew how to do basic research, so I would put together a report and give it to Bill, and he would give it to the governor.

I did that a number of times for him, and he knew that I did not like my second job in state government. I didn't like who I was working for. He said, "Let's go to lunch." We went to lunch, and he said, "I'm leaving state government. I'm going back to work at the foundation. I'd really like for you to come and be the assistant director." I said, "Well, I'm not sure I want to work in philanthropy. It's pretty far removed from where things happen." He said, "Okay, here's what I want you to do. If you'll pay for it, I'll reimburse you later, but I want you to fly to Boston and I want you to meet with a man who's on my board." I said, "Who is that?" He said, "This guy by the name of Paul Ylvisaker, who's the dean of the Harvard Ed School, had been a program officer at the Ford Foundation, and had been the special assistant to the governor of New Jersey."

I said, "Okay, I'll do that." I went to Boston, and I spent a couple of days in Boston talking to Paul in an hour snippet here and there, as he was dealing with all the challenges of being dean of the Ed school that really didn't want a dean. He was trying to move it forward. We had this really interesting conversation—two day conversation—about, "How does change happen in society, and where are the opportunities for someone who is not of wealth to make a difference in society?" Paul was a very interesting guy. He's the son of a Lutheran minister from Minnesota. Very well educated, super, super smart man. We had these very long conversations about the big picture issues, but he kept bringing it back to, "How do you want to make a difference?"

After two days of those conversations, I flew back to North Carolina and I sat down with Bill and I said, "Okay, I'm not convinced that this is the right place for me, but I am convinced it'll be a good opportunity." I went to work for Bill. I moved from Durham to Winston-Salem, and spent a couple of years helping the Babcock Foundation do a strategic planning process and really think about these questions of how you make a difference in society. At that point, of the 15 or so board members, only

two of them were non-family and one of those was an attorney who worked for the family. So, for all intents and purposes, Paul Ylvisaker was really the only outside person [on the board]. Paul, when he was at Ford, worked closely with Babcock on funding civil rights efforts in the South.

He was very highly regarded by the family, but part of what I learned from Paul and from Bill Bondurant was the art of asking questions that help people to engage with critical issues, rather than be offended by the question. There were many times when I would watch Paul ask questions that clearly made the other board members—almost all of whom were of significant privilege—squirm a bit, but he would not ask them in a confrontational way. He would ask them in a very engaging way. Bill would do the same thing. He would often come at an issue sideways rather than head-on, and get people to actually engage in the issue before they had realized they were engaging in the issue.

Anyway, that was a great opportunity. While I was in that job, I continued to see Paul a couple of times a year, and he would ask me tough questions, and they were the kind of questions you'd think about for days. I remember I was a semi-finalist for the White House Fellows program, and Nixon was president. If I had been selected, which I wasn't, by the time I would have been selected, Nixon would have been gone but I didn't know that at the time. I went to see Paul and I wanted his advice on: "If I'm selected, should I take this White House fellowship in Nixon's White House?" I'll never forget, he said to me: “Karl, your friends will understand. Your enemies will attack you for it, and 99% of the people don't know and don't care.”

It was just that kind of “Oh, I'm not really as important as I thought I was.” But he did it in such a beautiful way. I've actually used that kind of framework a number of times with younger staff members here and interns here, and that type of thing. At Babcock, I led their work around early adolescents—10 to 15 year olds—which was an effort that I helped to develop. And then after that, I went to work at the Needmor Fund in Toledo, Ohio. That was a family foundation with no non-family members. Some spouses, but the vast majority of people were blood-related. They were using the foundation as a way of keeping a multi-generational family with very diverse political views together, which was something I hadn't seen before. It was a very interesting effort, but part of what was interesting to me was that, when I got there, they were all over the map.

We went through a strategic planning process, and they came to the conclusion that they wanted to focus on a few issues, but the issues they wanted to focus on ultimately were making sure that the disadvantaged

people had a voice in the issues that were important to them. Needmor became known as a foundation that focused primarily on community organizing. I got to meet with groups—and sometimes help to support groups—all over the United States that were fighting coal mines, or mountaintop removal, or cleaning up old nuclear waste sites in Rhode Island, or helping Indian tribes that had been pushed off of their historic land. It was very fascinating work. The struggle within the family was that there were some family members who said, “Well, is their position right?”

The argument that I tried to make was, that's not our judgment to make. Our judgment is: "Do we want to provide them with resources or not?" It is not, "Are the Navajo right and the Hopi not?" I said, "We shouldn't be in the business of picking who's right and who's wrong. We should be in the business of deciding where resources from the foundation can help to assure that people that are being affected by a decision, but left out of the decision, have a voice." There were people who got that nuanced position, and there were people who didn't get it. So, we were quite criticized at one point by some national advocacy groups who said, “Well, you're on both sides of the issue.” My response was: "No, we're not trying to decide who's right and who's wrong. We're trying to decide who has a full opportunity to have a voice and who doesn't."

It was almost a process definition of equity. Needmor today is a small foundation and less of a family foundation, but it continues to fund sides of a lot of political fights that are playing out at the community level. That was the other thing that I came away from that experience thinking: It's so easy to focus on national political issues or state political issues. But what I increasingly found over time was that my interest was in how it plays out in communities.

MONIZ: I'm curious. This is all fascinating, but I want to hear about your experience at the Northwest Area Foundation? Does that come next in this story?

STAUBER: Absolutely. I didn't even work for about five years at the Needmor Fund, and then the family, under my leadership, started probably one of the first (what we now would call) mission-related investing activities in the country. It was a for-profit called Economic Development Incorporated (EDI), based out of Colorado. The business plan we wrote envisioned a 10 million dollar initiative helping to take equity positions in businesses that would ultimately be owned by the workforce and the communities. This was in the early 1980s. It was a brand new idea. One of the things I discovered fairly quickly was that I wasn't particularly good at raising

money. We didn't have a natural audience. I thought religious institutions would be the natural audience.

I'll never forget. I was in Adrian, Michigan, meeting with the Mother Superior of the Adrian Dominican Sisters They had an endowment of 30 or 40 million dollars, and I made a pitch to the Mother Superior and her financial advisor that they should invest a million dollars in this fund we were creating to help (basically what we would now call) worker-owned businesses. I laid out the whole case and she said to me, “What rate of return are you looking for?” I went, “Great, we can have a real conversation here.” I told her for the risk that we were taking, we were looking for a market rate of return, which was probably at that point in the 10 to 15% range. She looked at me and she said, “That's usury.”

I'm sitting there going, "Usury?” I vaguely remembered what it was, but not being deep in the teachings of the Catholic Church, I wasn't sure really. I said to her, “Do you use that as a criteria in the rest of your investments?” She said, “No, we don't use that as a criteria in the rest of our investments.” I said, “So, why is it okay for us to be usurers, if that's a word, but it's not okay for your other investments?” That was not a really smart fundraising question. Anyway, what I came to discover was what I wasn't particularly good at: I would lay out the facts as I understood them, but I was not a good closer. After a couple of years of trying to raise additional funds, we were more than able to raise that money, and I knew that what we were trying to do was not going to work.

A friend of mine was running the Northwest Area's Foundation, Terry Saario, who I had known when she was at the Ford Foundation. She called me up and said, “I need somebody to help me with economic development grants. I don't have anybody here who understands economic development.” I said, “Okay, well I've got some days. I'll sell you some days.” That led to me spending a lot of time at Northwest Area cleaning up old grants and developing economic development efforts under her leadership. [After a few months,] she said, “Why don't you come to work for me?” So I became the Vice President of Programs at Northwest Area, and did that for about 10 years. I led their work in sustainable agriculture, and led their work in local government capacity. I did a lot of work with the Indian tribes in the Northwest Area, the eight states.

I also handled some other program areas that nobody else wanted, like the arts and healthcare. Those types of things. Did that, developed a national reputation in the agricultural community about looking at alternative systems and how they might be better supportive and produce better incomes for rural people. A good friend of mine, a guy that I had actually

met in philanthropy, Bob Nash, had been the number two person at the Winthrop Rockefeller Foundation in Arkansas when I was at Babcock, and we were pretty much the same age. He's African-American; I'm white. We were at our first big conference together as two young guys who were totally out of place, and we became good friends and stayed friends.

Well, he was Bill Clinton's [Arkansas] head of economic development, and was on the transition team for Clinton. He called me up and said, "Could you come to Washington for 30 days to work on transition issues?" I said, "Well, let me talk to my boss, but yeah." I did, and that led me to get the opportunity to serve as his deputy. He was Undersecretary for Rural Development, and I was his assistant. From there, I went on to become the Undersecretary for Research and Economics. That was the Washington part of the story. But that positioned me so that, when Terry Saario decided to retire or step down, at Northwest Area, I would be a candidate for that position. I was, and then I was selected and stayed at that job for about 11 years, so a total of 21 years at Northwest Area.

MONIZ: Can you talk about what the foundation was like when you took over, and then why you decided to shift the foundation's mission to a single focus on reducing poverty?

STAUBER: I knew the Northwest Area Foundation very well. I had obviously been there for a decade, and the foundation had 10 or 15 different program areas. Its geography was eight states—eight large states. It was giving away about 20 million dollars a year, and the board was really struggling with the question of: "We're giving away all this money, and what difference does it make?" It was struggling with an impact question. I said to them, and this was during the interview process, I said, "You don't have enough money to make a difference in a geography of this size, so you need to either decide to change your geographic focus," which they could do under their charter?, "Or, you needed to change your programmatic focus."

They were reluctant to change the geographic focus, partially because the board was from all the geography, and nobody wanted to be the board member that voted to take their state out of the mixture. We went through a process of thinking about where we could make a difference. It's ironic. I'm seen as having led the decision to focus on poverty when I actually didn't. They asked me for my recommendation. We were down to three topics. Environmental degradation within the region, poverty within the region, and the topic I wanted to focus on was the intersection of the environment and poverty. That was too focused for the board. The board chose, again, after going through this iterative process, to focus on poverty

and what I said back to them was, “Well, we're not organized to do that, so if we're going to focus on poverty, we need to really think about how we will be working on it.”

We did, but the big debate within the board ... It was a quite diverse board, but it was a board of all professionals of one type or another. For example we had Gary Stern, who was president of the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank; Cornelia Flora, one of the top rural sociologists in the country at Iowa State; Humberto Fuentes head of the Idaho Migrants Council and we had the head of corporate giving from Microsoft, Bruce Brooks. We had several prominent Native American leaders: Eloise Cobell of the Blackfeet Nation, Elsie Meeks from the Pine Ridge Reservation. It was a very professional-class group. The big debate that occurred in how we would address poverty was whether we would focus on redistribution or whether we would focus on growth as the primary driving factor.

It came to a split vote within the board. The more corporate board members—and in some ways more conservative board members— said: “It has to focus on growth.” The more left of center board members who tended to be more academic or community-based said, “No, it has to focus on redistribution.” It was a two-vote majority, but that tension remained inside the organization for the whole 11 years that I was there, and we were working on it. It was an honest tension, and it was a healthy tension. Nobody was playing games behind anybody's back or that type of thing, but a lot of the major decisions ... One of our board members was involved in Montana's largest bank, and even with what we were doing, some of the more conservative business interests in Montana were giving him a hard time over why we were focused on poverty.

The reality is that [poverty is] an issue that's very hard to address from a distance. So, [for example,] when we were working in Pocatello, Idaho, there was a big debate there about working on poverty versus working on survival of the middle class. It was interesting to sit in St. Paul and look at all the data, and make decisions about where we were going to invest, where we weren't going to invest. When at times, there were communities—Bend, Oregon [or Miner County, South Dakota] for instance—that were very ready, that had leadership that were ready to take this issue on. Other places in the region did not have leadership that wanted to take it on. One of our requirements was that all of the controlling bodies [of the recipient organizations] needed to reflect the population of the community. Well, a number of the places we worked, there was no history of cooperation across racial lines, across class lines, and trying to find those opportunities to build that shared understanding and that trust, again, was very hard to do from a distance.

MONIZ: That's fascinating, and I would love to talk more about that, but now I think we should turn to talking about your experience leading the Danville Regional Foundation. Can you tell me first a little bit about the creation of the foundation?

STAUBER: The foundation was created in 2005 through the sale of the local hospital. It's one of about 30 health conversion foundations in Virginia, and they're different names, but I prefer health conversion. There are a growing number of health conversion foundations, particularly in the southeast and more towards the west. When the hospital was sold, it was a very controversial act. This is where history becomes really so important. The hospital was sold very close to the same time that the dominant company here, Dan River Mills, went bankrupt for the fourth and final time. We have a community that can no longer see its future. Why do we exist as a community?

Then, a group of mostly male elites sell the hospital, and the money goes into creating a private foundation that they also play a role in controlling, even though none of the founders of DRF were involved directly in Dan River Mills. In my theory, a lot of the anger about the sale [and failure] of Dan River Mills—and a lot of the fear about the sale of the Dan River Mills—got transferred to the foundation. The foundation became a lightning rod. When the hospital was first sold, there were folks in local government who said, "Okay, we should get the money." There were citizens in the community that said, "Take the total amount of money and divide it by the number of citizens in the community, and we should each get a check." None of that is what happened, and the Attorney General of Virginia oversaw the transition from a non-profit hospital to a non-profit philanthropic corporation.

I wasn't here when this was happening. I got here about two years later as the first CEO, but the board members of the foundation were taking substantial heat. Our founding board chair, Bob Ashby (who has since passed away, who was a local physician here in town, a local businessman here in town), lived right across the street from one of the city's iconic churches. One Sunday after church—and this was a church he had gone to for much of his life—one Sunday after church, one of his fellow church members came up to him and said, "You should be thrown out of this church. I'm going to the board of elders," (or whatever the governing body was), "and, I'm going to move that you and your family be thrown out of this church." That's how personal it was.

People [on the board] that had businesses here had money pulled out of their businesses. Things like that. In hindsight, it probably wasn't the best

way to announce it. When I got here a couple of years later, one person said to me, “You know how the Baltimore Colts left Baltimore?” I said, “Yeah, in the dark of night.” He said, “Yeah, that's how the hospital was sold.” It comes at a time when the economy is changing dramatically, and part of what I did when I got here was I wanted to see what the attitude was before the sale, because the local newspaper actively participated in negative discourse about the sale of the hospital. There were lots of letters to the editor about the stealing of the hospital and those types of things. I went back and I read the letters to the editor in the local newspaper every Sunday from like five years before the sale on microfiche, and I read them quickly.

The hospital was not well regarded in the community. It was seen quite negatively in the community. There'd be letters to the editor about, “I'm not going to this hospital, I'm going to Reidsville,” (which is 30 miles away), or “I'm going to Duke,” (which is 60 miles away), or that type of thing. There had been a long period of unhappiness about the hospital, but as soon as the hospital sold, it became the greatest asset in the community in terms of these letters to the editor. “How could they sell our hospital? It was one of the best hospitals in a town of our size, etc..” The reality is that the hospital was headed into great financial difficulty, and it was sold at very much the right time from a community asset point of view. Again, it's part of a pattern. Potomac Hospital in Virginia was sold. Richmond Memorial in Richmond was sold to Bon Secours. The hospital in Warrenton was sold to LifePoint.

You see this pattern all over the state of Virginia, but it was a source of real controversy here at a very difficult time. One of the things that the foundation founders did was hire a group out of North Carolina—MDC, particularly David Dodson and Joan Lipsitz—to help them through a planning process. David and Joan encouraged the board early on to hold a series of public hearings. The board did hold public hearings throughout this region. It's a large region. It's 1,200 square miles. It's 20% larger than Rhode Island with a population of about 120,000 people. Most of those people are within five miles of where we're sitting right now, so it's very Danville-centric, but it's a large geography with lots of different enterprises spread across that space.

They went out and they held public hearings and lots of conversations and what not. A lot of what they heard was: “We want you to build a building for our church,” or, “We want you to help put a new roof on a school,” or those types of things. Or, “We want you to increase the size of the Boys and Girls Club.” The board was required by the IRS (because of some tax-exempt bonds at the hospital when the hospital was sold) to have four

capital projects as its first projects. It helped community groups do a number of capital projects, but then it really started to engage in a more strategic discussion about how do we use the resources we have to promote change over the long term. That's pretty much when I got hired.

One of the exercises that David Dodson and Joan Lipsitz had done that I thought was just fascinating with the board ... The board members were diverse. About 40% of them had been involved in the sale of the hospital. About 60% of them had not. People of color, people with different kind of institutional backgrounds, but one of the things that Joan and David did with the group to help them understand how they all saw the world was they took them through a history timeline exercise. They built this large timeline that asked people, “Okay, what happened here in the 1700s?” They sometimes went decades, sometimes two decades, from basically the Revolutionary War all the way through until now. Different people gave their sense of what they saw as important. Part of what Joan and David realized going through the exercise was nobody put anything in the 1960s.

Well, Martin Luther King was here in Danville several weeks before he was assassinated. He was due here the week after he was assassinated. This was not as much of a conflict point, as, say, Greensboro (45 miles from here), but it was on the national nightly news and there was a race riot here. It was white people beating up on black people who were protesting. The city deputized all of the sanitation workers (who at the time were all white), gave them clubs and sent them out with the police to attack the protestors. There's a historical marker over in front of City Hall, and it's called Bloody Monday. This was an active community in the Civil Rights movement, and the board members in recounting the history were leaving that out. Joan and David are both very adept facilitators, and so they called a break and then they started individually going around to folks and saying, "Did nothing happen here in the 1960s? There was a lot going on in America in the 1960s. Why was there nothing?"

It led to a very important conversation where one of the prominent white businessmen on the board said, "Well, those were very difficult times. We don't like to talk about them." One of the most prominent African-American leaders on the board said, "No, those were our best times. That's when we finally stopped taking it and stood up." That produced a really important conversation within the board about: “Do we have the courage to take on the tough issues, or do we just want to do the nice kind of things? This all happens before I get [to Danville].

So when I was interviewing for the job, I said to them… My wife is from Lynchburg, which is 70 miles north of here. She was taking care of an elderly sister who was in Lynchburg from Minneapolis. I was helping to take care of my parents. My father had just passed away in North Carolina, so one of us was flying down here every month. There was that life cycle moment of: Are we in the right place?

When I interviewed with the board, I said to them, "Look, I've spent most of my career trying to help communities struggle with really difficult issues. Before you hire me, you've got to decide whether you're in the change business, the transformation business or you're in the happiness business. Because if you're in the happiness business, this is the easiest job in the world, except realize you're not going to make everybody happy. But, if you're in the change business, this is hard." I had learned a lot at Northwest Area about how you work with communities, but I had always worked with communities at a distance. One of the reasons this job was so attractive to me was that I would finally get to live in the place where the work was. This is retail philanthropy.

I have literally had people come up on my front porch on Saturday night and ask why they didn't get a grant. I've had people stop me in the grocery store when I'm buying groceries, particularly after I've been doing woodworking and I'm covered with dust and not in my day uniform, and want to talk about what the foundation funds and what it doesn't fund, and how they can get a grant and that type of thing. This board, when they interviewed me, they said, "How would you characterize what we should be doing?" I said, "Well, I think this region needs to simultaneously create a new economy and a new culture. It needs to do that based on what it already has, but if you're not willing to take on creating a new economy and a new culture, I'm not the right person for you." That's really become the focus.

There's some folks that are very offended by the new culture piece of it. "What do you mean? What's wrong with our old culture?" I remind folks that Dan River had a policy (which I've never been able to verify, but I've been told it so many times) up until 1960 that they would not hire an hourly worker who had graduated from high school. They wanted people that were easy to control. The only time the mill was ever unionized was during World War II, and that's because the Roosevelt administration made them unionize. It was really a company union. The culture here was very hierarchical, and it was very paternalistic, like a lot of mill towns. Dan River had a white mill town and a black mill town. Schoolfield was the white mill town and Almagro was the black mill town.

The company owned them. The company owned the school. The company owned the church. The company owned the store. The company owned the fire station. It was only with the passage of the Civil Rights Act and the Public Accommodations Act that the company realized in the early 1960s that they didn't want to own the villages anymore. So they gave the villages to the city, but it's reflective of this very paternalistic ... It's almost like the English plantation system. A couple of years ago, I was talking to a gentleman who I ran into in a restaurant here, and at the time there was a lot of controversy over a potential uranium mine in Chatham, just north of here. It's coming back up before the Supreme Court this fall. It turns out there's a large uranium deposit in the middle of this region. It is low quality uranium, so it's hard for me to see how economically viable it is, but it would create a significant challenge for us in recruiting companies and talent to the region.

I was talking to a gentleman who I did not know, and I said, "What's your opinion on uranium?" He said, "Why?" I said, "Well, I'm just curious about what your opinion is." He said, "Well, my opinion doesn't matter." I said, "What do you mean your opinion doesn't matter?" He said, "Well, the people at the mill are going to decide." I said, "Have you been by the mill? It's gone. It's been torn down." He said, "Yeah, but you know, the people at the mill. They're going to decide." That's part of the kind of cultural norm of, "We want people that are passive, that are easy to control, who will stand in front of a loom all day and do what they're told to do, or they'll work in tobacco all day and do what they're told to do. We don't want people that want to start their own businesses. We don't want people that want to compete in a larger economy. If granddad could do okay with having gone to the sixth grade, why do you want to go to college?"

We're trying really hard to create a new culture, and to create a new economy, and do it at a time when this region is falling further and further behind the economy and culture of the rest of the state. The same is true in North Carolina. In 1970, the median household income in Danville, and the median household income in Virginia, and in the United States, were all within $10.00 of each other on a monthly basis. Today, the median household income in Danville is less than half of the median household income in Virginia. It's 60% of the national median household income, but this region decided to stay in low skill, low wage, low expectation culture and economy while other parts of Virginia decided to become high wage, high skill, high expectation.

Most of what we do every day is either in the short term, or the long term. We try and help people see the possible, engage in the possible, and

become part of the process and the progress, rather than just passive actors.

MONIZ: When we spoke previously, you told me that when you took this position, you were new to the area and that you were struck that you were now at a place-based foundation, and that if you didn't understand the history of the place, you wouldn't be able to be effective. I wonder if you could just talk a little bit about how you learned about the Dan River region when you first arrived.

STAUBER: I did two things when I got here. Actually, I did three things. One was I got every history book I could get. There are not a lot of history books. It's funny, there was an author in the 50s who wrote books here about grist mills. There's probably 800 pages of writing on grist mills. I didn't really know what a grist mill was. I knew what a flour mill was, but a grist mill was what grinds corn, not wheat, and produces grits, which is from the same root word as grist. There were a lot of these little grist mills all over the place. There was a fascinating master's thesis written by a woman at Columbia about Danville from 1885 to 1930.

I read it, and I thought it was a curious history so I started asking people about it, and I discovered she was African-American. I didn't know that. There was a whole section about the role of the church, but none of the white churches were mentioned. In hindsight, I should have realized it, but I just thought it was a really interesting picture of the community. I found another master's thesis about the history of the labor movement here. There were company histories. Dan River had three company histories written, and they were pretty typical company histories. Everything was wonderful kind of stuff. I started off trying to do the background reading that I could. I picked certain key issues, and I went to the library and tried to read old newspapers.

At one point, there were five newspapers here. There was an African-American newspaper, there was a business newspaper. There was a weekly. There was the Register and the Bee. One was a morning paper, one was an afternoon paper. Then, there was a Jewish newspaper that was written weekly, which over time, became the Jewish and Greek, because there were both Jewish populations here and Greek populations here. I tried to deal with that. One of the things I did was I asked the board to give me the names of as many people as they could, and I asked them to do it collectively. We sat the board members down, and I said, “Who do I need to talk to? Who can help me understand this place?” They gave me about 50 names. I ended up interviewing 114 people. I had five questions that I

asked everybody. Actually, six. The sixth question was who else do I need to interview?

Classic snowball sampling. I did a lot of interviewing of people, asking them to both look backwards to tell me their story about how did their family get here and what's their role been in the community and what not, and to look forward about okay, so what do you see as economic opportunities here, those types of things. Then, the other thing I did, in the first four months I was here, I was here by myself and living in an apartment down the street, and every Saturday or Sunday, I would get in my vehicle and I would drive around the geography and I would get lost. I had the best county and city maps that I could get my hands on, so I would find a country store, or a gas station, or somebody out working in their garden or what not. I still had Minnesota plates on, which made it a little bit of a big sign saying, "I'm not from here."

I would take the map, and I would go over to the person, and I would say, "Would you show me where I am on this map, and how do I get back to the main road? What are you growing here?" It'd become a basis of conversation, and I kept notes on all of those. Some people would share their names, some people wouldn't share their names. Some people would tell me family histories that went on forever. A couple of people invited me to church on Sunday. A couple of people invited me to come to their lodge meeting, or what not. In a number of cases, as soon as they asked me who I worked for, and I told them, they'd stop talking to me. That didn't happen a lot, but it certainly happened some. I had a couple of county commissioners in Caswell County in North Carolina to our south who just as soon as I said that, they literally shut their mouth and walked away from me.

It was another data point, if you will. Then, the other thing that the foundation did, more broadly, was we caused a series of issue papers to be written. We had somebody from Resources for the Future (out of Boston) do a piece on workforce development systems here. We had some public health people from East Tennessee State do a piece on health challenges in the region. I asked each one of those to not only tell me what's happening now, but help me understand how it got here, so to the extent that you can, give me a portrait of how the region evolved. Oddly enough, this community, at one point, had one of the highest syphilis rate in the United States. This place claims to have more churches than any other place in America. I don't have any idea how one validates that, and I don't really care, but it's a very church-oriented town, so to have the highest syphilis rate in the United States [would seem strange].... So you would try and understand where some of the patterns come from.

That's really the way, and the other thing I had done a fair amount of, not recently, is you would hear things that didn't make sense to you like this statement that the company wouldn't hire anybody that hadn't graduated from high school. I would try and find people who would give me an honest take on is that true, or is that just part of the mythology? Not to say that the mythology isn't important. It is, but really trying to take ... I've had a number of older people here (a number of whom have passed away). A gentleman who was on our founding board, who was the first African-American truant officer in the area, and he knows more about the black community than any historian I've ever run into. He knows it anecdotally, but for 40 years, he was just about the only African-American truant officer in the area, so he knew where kids were hiding, he knew where families were working their kids, all those kinds of things.

He'd been one of the people I got in the car with when I got here, and I said, "Kirby, you introduce me to this place. Drive me around. Tell me the stories." Long answer to your question.

MONIZ: One of the programs you helped launch was History United. Can you talk a bit about that program? How it came about, aims, successes, challenges?

STAUBER: DRF does a lot of work with interns. We've had over a hundred interns and fellows in the last 10 years. We will often start with an idea and we'll hand it to a group of interns that are here for 10 weeks. We pay them. We recruit them from universities, mostly in the eastern half of the country, but not exclusively. Some international students. We give them a topic to explore, or an idea to explore. A number of years ago when we were thinking about who we were going to recruit this summer, we talked about—I was not familiar with the concept of public history. I didn't realize I had never thought about public history versus private history versus institutional history. We were talking about, “What are things we could do that bring people together, but right now, actually separate people?"

Part of my observation here was that history separates people, and you can see the Confederate flags flying here, and you can see other elements of it. I asked the question of our team that was talking about recruiting interns, I said, “What if we looked at history as something that unites us? We all have shared history, whether or not we're aware that we have shared history.” Shared history doesn't mean how I, as an outsider, connect to the dominant society. I was trying to stay out of an insider/outsider perspective because I think it's just so easy to fall into that. Some of the history that divides us here is in fact insider/outsider history, so I really

basically asked the question, “How can we use history to unite us?” That's where History United came from.

We recruited three interns, one of whom is still here. One of whom, I think works with you.

MONIZ: Yes, small world.

STAUBER: How is she?

MONIZ: She's wonderful. A terrific colleague.

STAUBER: Yeah. She's a great person.

MONIZ: Amelia Grabowski. She’s terrific.

STAUBER: Yeah, good. One other woman who just left here about ... She worked here for a number of years, and she's just taken a job back in Massachusetts where she grew up. Maybe New Hampshire where she's from. We basically said to them: "Figure out what the foundation could support, what we could encourage that would actually see history as a uniting force, rather than a dividing force." In doing that, part of what I didn't realize was how, and I probably should have, I didn't realize how turf dominated perceptions of history are. There's a historical society here that sees history as their turf. Well, that's really white privilege history. There are some genealogical groups that see history as their turf, and some of that's racially defined, and some of it's not racially defined.

There is a museum of art and history here that's mostly what I would call heroic history. It doesn't tell the history of the people that worked in the mill, that kind of thing. All of that was part of the challenge that I didn't realize we were asking the three interns to take on. Their work was very well done, very informative. At about the same time, or maybe it was just before they got here, one of the things that we do with our board of directors is every other year, we take them to someplace to see the possible. We're about to go to Chattanooga to look at how they're doing riverfront parks and a couple of other things. We've been to Owensboro, Kentucky. We've been to Dubuque, Iowa. We've been to Lewiston-Auburn, Maine; Greenville, South Carolina; Tupelo, Mississippi. Lewiston-Auburn's an old mill town, and it's probably best known for Bates College—Bates College got its money from the family that owned the Bates Blanket Mill.

There's this huge mill in downtown. They're actually two towns. Lewiston on one side of the Androscoggin River, and the other on the other side of the river. The locals call it LA, which is, I always think, very funny. They have a history museum there that started off as one person's vision of heroic history. It's in an old mill structure down near the Androscoggin River. I think it's on the Auburn side, but I'm not sure now. Over time, through some changes in leadership and what not, it became a museum of work, not a museum of heroes. It really honors and celebrates the people that built Lewiston-Auburn and the area. It was, to me, just such a powerful place. In fact, there was a Smithsonian exhibit when we were there. Lewiston-Auburn, like a lot of northeastern textile mills apparently, had brass bands. The Smithsonian did an exhibit on the role of brass bands in mills, and it had been up, I assume, in the [Smithsonian] building on the National Mall.

It was just about to go down in Lewiston. In Lewiston-Auburn, the tension is between French Canadians and Yankees. There had been actual riots where people had been killed going all the way back to the Civil War. One group worked in the shoe factories and the other worked in the textile mills. I don't remember who was what, but there was real open animosity and there was anti-papist sentiment towards the French Canadians, all of the kind of, on a much smaller version, *Gangs of New York*. At one point, the bridge between the two towns was burned down as one group tried to stop the other group. They had their real divisions, too, but this museum of work gave them a place to honor all their ancestors, not just the ones who were colonels in the Civil War. I came back from that trip thinking we ought to figure out a way to explore the history here in Danville. We had already had the unite issue, but the history here, that has a broader footprint than just the hero worship aspect.

As a native Southerner, I think way too much of southern history is about hero worship. It's not about the corporal in such and such a unit who had a leg cut off and dealt with that for the rest of their lives, or whatever it might be. Those, and part of what was so important about all this—the reason I tell you all this—is at first our board didn't see focusing on history as a piece of creating the new culture, but once they'd seen that museum, they saw it was possible. Since then, the board has been very supportive of History United as an activity, want it to go faster, want it to go further, but I didn't do it as an intentional way of trying to sell our involvement in history, which many would see as several degrees off from focusing on building a new economy and building a new culture. After they saw that, they got it. It made it easier.

MONIZ: How has the community received this effort, particularly at a time when we're so divided nationally over history?

STAUBER: Well, I think the community's perception of it has waxed and waned. History United has created some very powerful conversations about race and genealogy that has white or black or people that have discovered that they're related to each other that didn't know that they were related to each other. Or, if they knew, there'd never been a comfortable place for them to engage that reality. That has been useful. History United has ended up focusing quite heavily on the Civil Rights period, which I'm hopeful that, over time, they will take a broader perspective and pay more attention to the other elements of the history, but part of what's happening is that the local African-American leaders that played a dominant role in the Civil Rights movement here are passing, so there's been a desire to capture their stories, those types of things. I understand that and I support that, but I hope we can have some broader conversations about going back to the beginning of, "Why is this place here and how has it changed over time?"

This has not been a static community. Very few are, but for people who have experienced the pain of the last 20 to 30 years (Danville's population peaked in 1980) the community has been going down [declining in population] ever since. The concentration of people living in poverty has been increasing because the middle class were the first to go. Responding to those forces of change, whether they be global competition or what not, is something that this community, this region's been doing. But somehow, because we don't understand that part of our history, we see it as only through the eyes of the current pain. The current election season is not helping us. There's a person running for senate here in Virginia who has come to Danville and used Danville as the backdrop for his ads on the failure of the democratic process.

He's done ads. He's done small demonstrations in front of empty textile mills saying: “This is what NAFTA did.” When, in fact, NAFTA kept that mill open an additional number of years, and some of the former Dan River folks have come out and said that. The national discussions are so divisive, and part of what I really like about working here is that you can still get 90% of the political spectrum at the table on just about any issue. They may not agree on philosophy, but the commitment to the place is still very, very strong, so it's not: "This place has dishonored my ancestors, therefore I'm going to attack you." There's a little bit of that over some of the kind of defenders of the Civil War hero monuments and that type of thing, but mostly it's been people that realize that we have to create more economic opportunity for everybody, not just one group of people.

It's there, but it's much less ... I just was at a meeting earlier this week with a bunch of colleagues from North Carolina, and I was listening to them talk about what's happening in a number of the larger communities in North Carolina. I do some work in Richmond. I see the same thing there. There may be less belief in progress here, but there's more willingness to attempt to engage it.

MONIZ: I'd like to turn to a few final reflections. The world of philanthropy has changed a lot in recent years. There's huge new wealth, new philanthropic players, there's the expansion of donor-advised funds and affinity networks. There's a whole very individualized giving by every day donors. I'm curious if you could talk about what you see as the role of regional foundations, or any mid-sized foundation, in this changing philanthropic landscape.

STAUBER: Thinking about the arc of my career of 40 years, 40 years ago some of the strongest agents for change within philanthropy were family foundations that were pushing in a more progressive direction. There also have been family foundations that have pushed in a more conservative direction, but there's been a fairly strong activist component. In the last 20 years, more and more of the conversation has been dominated by these very large, sometimes almost scientifically-oriented foundations. All of the focus on measurement and outcomes, and proof of concept and theory of change, and all of those types of things, has largely left communities out of the conversation. Then, with one's ability to raise capital online and those types of things, there's more technological connectivity but there's less social capital.

I was on a phone conversation with a national foundation last week, and they were saying, “Well, we're not really interested in what happens in rural communities.” I said, “Okay, well, I appreciate your honesty, but can you help me understand why?” They said, “Well, we don't see enough bang for the buck, and we want to have as much impact as we can have on this many people as we can have, so that means even though we used to have major programs in rural areas, everything we do now is urban.” These are people that I know somewhat, and I said to them, "So, do you think that has anything to do, that kind of attitude within a lead organization has anything to do with Trump's victory?” They said, “Nah, I don't think it had anything to do with that.”

Particularly place-based foundations that are in more rural and isolated areas, are playing for those places an even more important role. Part of the challenge is... When I started off in this field, larger foundations seemed more open to see opportunity in a wider variety of places. Now, they seem

to be focused on a smaller variety of places, and part of what I worry about is.... [living in our separate "bubbles"]. Do you know Bill Bishop's work? I'm trying to remember the name of his book. I've got it over there somewhere. [Bill Bishop's book, *The Big Sort: Why the Clustering of Like-Minded America Is Tearing Us* Apart shows how] Americans increasingly live with people who vote the way they vote, that see the way they see, and only ... I don't know if he coined this phrase or if somebody else did, but they live in a bubble. I'm sure for somebody from New York City or Los Angeles, this looks like a bubble, but I have to interact with all of the elements of this community.

I had a guest here last week who fell on the steps out front, and I ended up having to take her to the emergency room, so I spent an afternoon in the emergency room at the local hospital. That's the community, or the people that you're standing behind in the line at the Food Lion. We all have our own versions of that. We interact with folks in a more intimate way. I can't choose which United Way I'm going to work with, because there's only one United Way, and we need to work with them. I can't choose which community college I'm going to work with, because there's only two community colleges, one on each side of the border. The point I'm making is, I think the reality for place-based foundations is less political and more developmental, and we can't just choose. . One of the mistakes I've made in philanthropy and one of the lessons I've learned several times is that you have to start where the community is, not where you want it to be.

I get reminded of that all the time when there are things here that may not be what I want them to be, but I have to work with who is here. I think increasingly, as the field of philanthropy—the norms within philanthropy—are dominated by large, abstract, distant institutions, they're less relevant to places like this region. I was talking to a CEO of a major national foundation in the last couple of months, and I said to him, I said, "What's your southern strategy?" This is a foundation that used to do a lot of work in the south. I said, "What's your southern strategy?" He said, "We don't have a southern strategy." I said, "Do you have an urban strategy?" "Oh, yeah. We're doing a lot in Detroit. We're doing a lot in New York. We're doing a lot in Chicago." I said, "Do you understand the history of your own institution?"

I'm at the end of my career, so that produces its own kind of changing framework, but having said that, it's like non-urban poverty in the United States is no longer on the screen, and the things that caused that, and then the political backlash that that produces, and then people are surprised when that backlash occurs.

MONIZ: Last couple questions. Is there something that you regret, or that didn't go the way you hoped in your philanthropic career?

STAUBER: Well, the work we did at Northwest Area focusing on poverty reduction did not go the way that I had hoped. What I think we didn't understand, and in some ways it was very hard for us to work on, was: "How do you help a community become ready to take on the really difficult challenges like poverty? How do you find allies that are willing to work with you as an outsider on that?" The mistake I see being made over and over again is foundations have a lot of money and they have a lot of smart people, and they think they can buy trust. You can't buy trust. You have to earn trust. You end up trusting people that are all too often the most like you. They're highly educated. They've gone to colleges like you've gone to. They've had life experiences like you've had, so you trust them because you see them as your peers, or it's easier for you to trust them because you see them as your peers.

That drives us further and further apart. I'm sure I have made those mistakes as well. I know I've made those mistakes when working in a community where I'm not in residence. I end up relating to my peers the most, and often, my peers are not the right people that I should be relating to. It's one of the peculiarities of the field, and like I say, when I had forgotten that you have to start where the community is, not where you want it to be, I've almost always gotten in trouble.

MONIZ: What's the proudest accomplishment of your philanthropic career?

STAUBER: You know, I would say the progress we've made here [in the Danville region]. This work is a developmental curve, and a lot of folks want to do a plug-and-play approach to community revitalization, and I don't think there is a plug-and-play. You know: "Come in and do these five things and the community will turn around." Richard Florida argues what to me is basically a plug-and-play approach. This is a long term developmental curve, but I think we're past the inflection point, so when I step out of this role next year, I think there's strong enough structures and there's strong enough momentum that that work will continue, whether I'm here or not.

MONIZ: Final question. As you know, I work in a museum and we tell stories through objects. Is there an object that captures your philanthropic story?

STAUBER: Yeah. I don't know if this meets your definition of an object. The buildings that are in this neighborhood, they were built for an economy that pumped huge amounts of wealth. This was the largest tobacco market in the world in 1880, and after the Civil War, this was a community that was never

directly involved in the conflict during the Civil War so it didn't burn down, but almost immediately after the Civil War, this area started selling tobacco to the rest of the world again, which meant it had cash. This was the wealthiest community in Virginia in 1870. It was because of tobacco. So all of these Georgian buildings... Not all of them were Georgian, but many of them were Georgian ... They were built with that tobacco wealth, and they were built to serve that tobacco economy.

It's that tobacco wealth that then led to the textile mills. The textile mills didn't move here from New England. They were developed here. A simpler example [of a textile object] is [the piece of furniture] right behind you. That's called a superintendent's desk, and that's out of a textile mill. Every floor in almost every Dan River mill had one of those, and there were forms and different things in those drawers. It's a very cheap piece of furniture, probably made in a company shop, but the superintendent of each floor, or the superintendent of each building, had one of those and that's how they controlled the mill. I found that in a junk store, and you can literally see where it was cut out of the wall. Didn't change anything about it. I worked at textile mills as a kid. I was a machine cleaner in textile mill and in cotton mills on weekends, and I remember one of those.

The superintendent would stand there, and they had made it illegal to smoke in the textile mills because it was too dangerous, but they were still chewing tobacco. There was a spittoon sitting right next to it, but that's part of my own personal memory. But it's also part of the history of the economy that once existed here.

MONIZ: Well, this has been a terrific conversation. Thank you so much for taking all this time.

STAUBER: I'm happy to do it. I hope I haven't used 10 words to say what two would have done.

MONIZ: Oh, this has been terrific. Thank you.