



LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT

JANUARY 2020

**The majority of us take a kind of false satisfaction out of the fact that we would not take part in such riots or in the perennial beatings and lynchings of the South. But we overlook the manner in which, with our warped ideas of our own superiority and of the alleged inferiority of others because they are somehow different, we help to create and maintain an atmosphere of intolerance... We permit and even demand that our federal government erect barriers against refugees from war-torn countries – the very sort of people for whom America was established as a refuge and from among whom our ancestors were drawn. We forget that refugees have always brought more in wealth than they required and that they have immeasurably enriched our national heritage and our economic life.**

Marshall Field III, Founder  
Field Foundation (1893-1956)

## LETTER FROM OUR PRESIDENT



Welcome to a new year, a new decade and the 80th anniversary of the Field Foundation.

Most often milestone moments happen quietly. Our breath suddenly catches as new ideas dawn, leaving us changed irrevocably. Laugh lines deepen and memories turn static and fade, not on our birthdays but imperceptibly with each passing day, a bit with every sunrise and sunset. We live in constant, overlapping experiences. We've turned right, left,

cut through an alley and somehow, we've aged, we've moved, we've suffered deep loss and seen new vibrant lives emerge. We've made mistakes, and more mistakes and then enjoyed a great meal and laughed carelessly and loudly with people we love.

And sometimes we are given the gift of a clear milestone—a graduation, a retirement, an anniversary. At Field, we aren't as interested in celebrating our anniversary with fanfare and confetti—although that does sound delightful as I type it.

Instead, we see this new year, new decade, eightieth year of existing as a mandate to take a moment to pause. A solitary bench on the ever-unfolding path by the lake. A place to lay down our pack, rest for a moment to think about all the people who've built the route we've traveled as a Foundation, all the luminaries the Foundation has been lucky to invest in that lit our way, all the scenery changed and unchanged as we've traveled throughout the years.

There have been many iterations of the Field Foundation—guided thoughtfully by our founder and past board and staff members, a steady parade of brilliant interns and fellows, different program

officers forging trusting relationships with the visionaries in the nonprofit sector. There have been heated debates in the board room, mind expanding site visits leaving decades of program officers changed, thoughtful investment strategies deployed in both bull and bear markets that have led to successful returns on mission in addition to dollars and meaningful partnerships across sectors forged.

There have been crises in our city, recessions in our nation, many a politician imprisoned, losses of important nonprofits and scaling of initiatives that Field took a chance on by funding first.

In 2020 we will visit with some of those individuals from Field Foundation's journey who have played an irrevocable role in shaping who we are today. Look for these reflections in Voices from the Field a recurring column for this year only in upcoming eblasts.

As always we are honored to be on the odyssey with each of you, as you continue to prod us to do our best thinking, to keep our wits about us, to be in awe of the city that surrounds us and to center the people, the people, the people—as they are the ones who matter, who make change, and who set the course for our next eighty years of travel.

And to close...I want to share a personal reflection on our founder Marshall Field III—from his grandson, longtime Field board member and current Life Director Marshall Field V. It was written last year for inclusion in an upcoming book about the Gettysburg Address. One of the few original copies of the Gettysburg Address was purchased by Illinois school children whose dollars were matched by Marshall Field III and then donated to the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Museum in Springfield.

There are so many pieces of the below reflection I love, chief among them is hearing Marshall's voice so strongly as he brings both of these gentlemen to life in warm, vivid colors.

Here's to the next eighty years,



**Angelique Power, President  
The Field Foundation**

## MARSHALL FIELD V

### Reflects on Marshall Field III

My grandfather died when I was fifteen years old. We spent a lot of time together. He was the guy who taught me about fishing and hunting and the outdoors, deep loves of mine to this day. We would have a good time. He was brilliant, and kind—and had a wicked sense of humor. Once, when I was a teenager and a group of us were staying in his place in the Carolinas, he let us try us crème de menthes—as many as we wanted. Of course, then he got us all up at 5 am the very next morning to go fishing, knowing full well how terrible we'd all feel! And off we went, no one wanting to miss a day in the outdoors together.

He was also always very self-deprecating about his wealth. He was embarrassed that he had inherited so much of his money and so he worked hard his whole life, served in the armed forces and decided to give as much of his money away as possible.

Chief among his beliefs was the importance of freedom—and not just for a handful, but freedom for everyone regardless of race, creed, religion or how much you've earned. He spoke of the “disinherited” often in his book *Freedom Is More Than A Word* and of democracy and he was the primary financial supporter of Chicago's most famous community organizer, Saul Alinsky. Trying to better equip the underdog for the fight was in his bones.

I am not surprised that he matched the donations of Illinois school children to bring the Everett copy of the Gettysburg Address to the Abraham Lincoln Memorial Museum. He was very generous and quick to say yes to many. The fact that school children raised a lion share of the money for this important document I'm sure made him proud. He loved children (hence why he was President of the Child Welfare League of America). However, this donation smacks of my grandfather in two very important ways.

One, he felt the written word was democracy's biggest ally and most useful weapon against fascism.

He started the Chicago Sun (which became the Chicago Sun-Times) because he knew a city as large as Chicago needed to have more than one newspaper to provide facts and stories to its residents. To this day, the Chicago Sun-Times is considered the people's newspaper. He was an admirer of history, civics and big ideas. One of his dear friends was Franklin D. Roosevelt. He wrote his book about freedom as a love letter to the tenets of a civil society, rooted in racial justice, in socio-economic inclusivity and to push Americans to never rest on our laurels but to hold our country to the highest standards of equality for all. These are the ideas espoused in the Gettysburg Address.

Two, I think he admired Abraham Lincoln. The biggest thing Lincoln fought for was to end slavery. He took the country to war over it. Taking the country to war then was very different than it is today—you had to risk your life to do it. Abraham risked his life and many others to make America live up to a higher ideal of who it was meant to be. While my grandfather was alive, he fought the same way for factory workers on Chicago's southside and against segregation and Jim Crow policies. If it was about equality for all, he was in the fight, helping others who were most impacted to lead the way.

Like my grandfather, I am also a history buff. Having spent time reading about the Civil War, what strikes me the most about the Gettysburg Address was the complete uncertainty of the moment in which it was delivered. You must remember, at the time that speech was made, the Civil War outcome was completely uncertain. You can look back and say in hindsight the speech stopped General Lee's advance, but at that point no one knew if Lee's army would advance again. The country was engaged in a huge battle with lives lost daily.

My point is this. Lincoln packed a tremendous amount of urgency and wisdom in an incredibly short speech. He didn't waste a single word. The

country was in a time of deep divisiveness and uncertainty. America itself was at risk.

I believe we need a Gettysburg moment again today. My personal opinion is that democracy, what we founded our country on, what my grandfather dedicated his life to, is in danger. We are once again in a deeply divided state across our nation, placing individuals against individuals, policies against people and pitting freedom of some over the liberation of all.

What makes our country great are the men and women who believe in her; in the importance of broad and diverse communities, in the beauty of life in rural open spaces and busy innovative urban cities. We need to reinvest in the greater good for all of us which is linked to every person's right to live free.

I carry on my grandfather's work through the Field Foundation and spend most of my time working on environmental issues. I see conservation of the world as conversation of the self.

And ... I like nice views.