

JUNE 23, 2021

Background

A history of *The Philanthropist Journal* and the Agora Foundation

The Philanthropist Journal is an online forum for information and conversations about Canada's not-for-profit and charitable sector. In 2022, it will celebrate its 50th anniversary. It is published by the Agora Foundation.

CHRONOLOGY

- 1972** The Journal is founded in response to the work of a Special Committee on Charitable Organizations of the Canadian Bar Association – Ontario, whose members had seen a need for more education and expert discussion about charity law. The effort was led by lawyer John Murray Hodgson (1921–2011), and the first editor was Bertha Wilson, later an Ontario Court of Appeal judge and then the first woman to serve as a justice of the Supreme Court of Canada. The content focused on legal, accounting, and governance issues relating to charity law, written in a scholarly style.
- 1979** The newly incorporated Agora Foundation assumes responsibility for publishing the Journal following its gradual move to a regular publication schedule overseen by its second editor, Mary Louise Dickson.
- 1981** Under the editorship of Lynn Bevan, the Journal becomes a quarterly, with a broader editorial focus and guided by an Editorial Advisory Board. The Journal in this period hired a professional editor, Joyce Forster, and began publishing book reviews.
- 1982** The newly established Canadian Centre for Philanthropy (CCFP) becomes publisher and takes a seat on the advisory board. Its participation helps expand readership and subscriptions and provides access to conferences and related materials.
- 1987** Following a financial crisis at the CCFP, the Agora Board resumes its role as publisher, with charity law expert John Hodgson, Q.C., overseeing



a successful re-organization. Financial support for this transition was supported by bequests from the estates of Margery Warren and Violet Bienewski.

- 1988** John Gregory steps in as editor.
- 1999** The principal author of the Ontario Law Reform Commission reports, David Stevens, takes over as editor.
- 2009** Donald Bourgeois assumes the editorship, while the Agora Board commissions a study recommending a transition from paper to a new online, open-access platform to increase readership, in partnership with Simon Fraser University's Centre for Scholarly Publishing. The Muttart Foundation supports the digitization of all back-issue content.
- 2013** Three sector leaders—Malcolm Burrows, Gordon Floyd, and Susan Manwaring—take over the editorial lead, expanding outreach, building community links, and promoting the development of new writing. Since then, the Journal has become a more professional operation, with long-term staff, paid writers, artists and designers, a serious presence on social media, and substantially more readers. It frequently devotes concentrated attention to single themes, approached from different viewpoints.
- 2020** The Agora Board recruits a 26-person national Editorial Advisory Committee (EAC) whose members reflect the diversity of the country, in geography, culture, and origins. The EAC will provide input on editorial quality and ensure that the concerns of Canada's charitable sector are part of the conversation that The Philanthropist Journal exists to promote.

PAST EDITORS

Madame Justice Bertha Wilson—1972 to 1975

Mary Louise Dickson—1975 to 1981

Lynn Bevan—1981 to 1988

John Gregory—1988 to 1999

David Stevens—1999 to 2009

Don Bourgeois—2009 to 2013

Malcolm Burrows/Gordon Floyd/Susan Manwaring—2013 to 2018

Gordon Floyd—2018 to 2021