

Special Report: NPT's Power and Influence Top 50 2006

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Rain. Fire. Pestilence. Civil unrest. Pandemics. Gloom of night. What's next? Locusts? In some parts of the world, yes.

Members of Congress are demanding accountability from tax-exempt organizations and asking tough questions about finances. The Senate Finance Committee wants details on how nonprofits operate. Nonprofit leaders are working together on self-policing and financial transparency.

The leadership at rank-and-file charities - you know, the groups that actually do the hard work -- are fighting to adapt to an economy that doesn't know if it's boom or bust. It's difficult to keep up with the unprecedented need for services when giving doesn't keep pace with inflation, let alone bring in new dollars.

The 9th annual NPT Power and Influence Top 50 honorees were selected by a combination of NPT staff and a few hand-picked members of the nonprofit community, who narrowed a field of more than 200 nominees. The panelists were not permitted to be part of the list, although several very well could have been included in the selection process. The NonProfit Times editor-in-chief held veto power over finalists, which was not exercised this year.

This year's honorees will be feted at a gala event next month at The National Press Club in Washington, D.C. The event is sponsored by The NonProfit Times, Serenic Corporation, Ketchum, Mitch-Stuart Inc., and The Ultimate Gift. Given all that's been going on this past year, a night off is not such a bad idea.

Here they are, the leaders shaping the nonprofit world. They are this year's NPT Power & Influence Top 50.

Audrey Alvarado
Executive Director
National Council of Nonprofit Organizations
Washington, D.C.

Nonprofits at the state level are doing the sector's heavy lifting and Alvarado leads the umbrella organization for them all. She also is leveraging that clout with a nonprofit Congress in Washington, D.C., later this year.

Nan Aron
Founder & President
Alliance for Justice
Washington, D.C.

Aron continues, even after 30 years, as a key player in public interest law. She is a heavy weight in the often-controversial judicial nominations process, in strengthening the public interest community's influence on national policy and for fostering the next generation of advocates.

Diana Aviv
President & CEO
Independent Sector
Washington, D.C.

Aviv has become a lightning rod for both organizations that want to work more closely with Congress on charitable reform and those that don't. Some say she helped to stave off draconian changes in the law while others believe she was complicit in the sector getting rolled by Congress.

Gary Bass
Founder & Executive Director

OMB Watch
Washington, D.C.

Nobody is better at divining what legislative fine print means to the charitable sector, getting the translation out to leadership and rallying advocacy. Nothing slips by him. Nothing.

Daniel Ben-Horin
Founder & President
CompuMentor
San Francisco, Calif.

Technical assistance is taken to the sector as it should be by Ben-Horin and his team via TechSoup and TechSoup Stock. He has built the organization into the "must go first" site for information on nonprofit hardware, software and the sharing of information on every possible tech topic.

Susan Berresford
President
Ford Foundation
New York, N.Y.

With operations and funding around the globe, Berresford has a leadership role in how foundations will fund projects and behave in the world community. According to Forbes magazine, she is one of the 100 most powerful women in the world.

Shay Bilchik
President & CEO
Child Welfare League of America
Washington, D.C.

Bilchik is a top lobbyist who heads the 900-member CWLA, which educates legislators that protecting vulnerable children is a family matter. CWLA's Framework for Community Action is a

blueprint for those in the sector and elected officials to use.

Jerr Boschee
Founder & Executive Director
The Institute for Social Entrepreneurs
Eden Prairie, Minn.

A founder of the social entrepreneur movement, he is a thought leader for strategic marketing and teaching nonprofit managers that, in actuality, they are all social entrepreneurs. It's a state of mind, not just finance.

Paul Brest
President
William and Flora Hewlett Foundation
Menlo Park, Calif.

Co-convener of the Panel on the Nonprofit Sector, Brest is the leading foundation voice in the discussion about general operating revenue grants versus project support.

Kelly Browning
Executive Vice President
American Institute For Cancer Research
Washington, D.C.

A powerhouse insider on high-profile direct response boards and behind the scenes, little happens at nonprofit organizations that deal with direct response fundraising and regulation without Browning having a say in the outcome or direction of the strategy.

Emmett D. Carson
President & CEO
The Minneapolis Foundation

Minneapolis, Minn.

Carson is a master at developing collaborative relationships with all elements of the sector and segments of the communities in which they work, as well as with other organizations nationwide. There's a reason he's been on every major nonprofit umbrella board.

Rick Cohen

Executive Director
National Committee For Responsive Philanthropy
Washington, D.C.

One sector leader referred to Cohen as incorruptible. He leads an organization where the research on foundation and other giving practices does the talking. The work takes guts because it often bites the hand that feeds it.

Carla Dearing
President & CEO
Community Foundations of America
Louisville, Ky.

Disenchantment with national organizations has donors turning to put more personal capital to work in their own communities. Dearing is pioneering how financial products and process can be married for the greater good in everyone's backyard.

Dr. James Dobson
Founder & Chair
Focus on the Family
Colorado Springs, Colo.

Nobody is better at dancing along the tightrope of 501(c)(3) status and the political process than Dr. Dobson. What he and the

organization do is closely watched for guidance by other evangelical organizations and by federal regulators.

Robert Egger
Founder
D.C. Central Kitchen
Washington, D.C.

The last angry man routine actually works for him as he preaches that nonprofits must stop chasing money and start focusing on the true work at hand. He's an ideas guy who puts them into practice and makes them national models.

David Eisner
Chief Executive Officer
Corporation for National and Community Service
Washington, D.C.

Eisner is moving CNCS to be the major federal touchstone for working with the nonprofit sector, particularly with the void at the White House with the faith based office being without leadership.

Karl Emerson
Director
Bureau of Charitable Organizations
Harrisburg, Pa.

There is little doubt that charitable officials across the country look to see how Emerson handles particular issues. He is a bellwether for fellow regulators and has won the respect of attorneys who deal with charitable regulation at a national and state level.

Sara L. Engelhardt
President
The Foundation Center

New York, N.Y.

Engelhardt thinks big when it comes to providing resources and even though some efforts fail, such as trying to land Lester Salamon for a new center, she puts the organization in a unique sector leadership position.

Mark Everson
Commissioner
Internal Revenue Service
Washington, D.C.

He's serious when he says that he believes charities need more oversight and he's doing something about it. He's gone after the credit counseling agencies, seeking additional audits and accountability. But, he's made himself more available to charities than any commissioner in recent memory.

Israel L. Gaither
National Commander
Salvation Army
Alexandria, Va.

He's the shepherd of thousands of volunteers who scramble to places others are running away from. And with billions of dollars to work with in communities across the nation, SA's influence is felt locally and in the halls of Congress.

Brian Gallagher
President & CEO
United Way of America
Alexandria, Va.

Gallagher is re-establishing the UWA as a political player in Washington, D.C., and at a national

level. It's about time. His message is simple: it's bottom-line results, the lives that are changed and the communities that are shaped.

Melinda Gates
Co-Founder
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Seattle, Wash.

Melinda Gates is the driving force behind the initiatives of the world's richest foundation. She's an activist leader who sets priorities and doesn't take her hands off the process. The foundation expects results from its grantees, but also understands that change takes risk.

Robert K. Goodwin
President & CEO
Points of Light Foundation
Washington, D.C.

Goodwin has become a statesman of the volunteer community. The network of volunteers POL has cobbled together spans just about every corner of the nation. The next goal is shaping it into a greater, more effective resource during national emergencies, such as hurricanes and other natural disasters.

Charles Gould
President
Volunteers of America
Alexandria, Va.

Many brand-name charities, after Katrina, have learned that collaboration is vital. That isn't news to Gould, who has been pushing the sector for greater cohesiveness, cooperation and effectiveness. He understands the sector is more than just a few organizations.

John H. Graham IV
President & CEO
American Society of Association Executives
Washington, D.C.

Graham makes the tough decisions and clearly articulates why everyone else should also do so. After pulling ASAE back from the ledge of the abyss, he is taking a tough stand on sector accountability and is dragging people along with him, some of whom would rather not go.

Charles Grassley
U.S. Senator
Washington, D.C.

So, what happened? After telling the public via every available microphone that the sector was run by bumbling crooks, none of his self-described reforms have made it into legislation. But, as head of the Senate Finance Committee, he can, and still does, make things miserable for the industry.

Steve Gunderson
President & CEO
Council on Foundations
Washington, D.C.

He's starting to shake up the way foundations think about funding in the more encompassing concept of philanthropy versus the ideal of simple charity.

David R. Jones
President & CEO
Community Service Society of New York
New York City, N.Y.

Jones has trained his sights on affordable housing and poverty and every elected official in New York City knows about it. CSS is one of the nation's largest human service organizations so Jones has input in almost every social service pot at the local and national levels.

Irv Katz
President
National Human Services Assembly
Washington, D.C.

Human services organizations are the backbone of American society and Katz is the extremely effective leader. He's right when he argues that his members are a sensor of societal trends.

Katz has a clear blueprint of how to react, as a subsector, to those trends.

Sr. Georgette Lehmuth
President & CEO
National Catholic Development Conference
Hempstead, N.Y.

With a quiet calm and sense of purpose, Sister Georgette has restored NCDC to a leadership position. She was a key player in beating back most of the postal rate hike in 2005 and was a leader coordinating opposition to many of the recommendations of the Panel on the Nonprofit Sector.

Paulette V. Maehara
President & CEO
Association of Fundraising Professionals
Alexandria, Va.

Maehara doesn't just lead the largest and growing organization of fundraisers on the planet (yes, AFP is international), she is also sought after for the sector's most influential boards, such as American Society of Association Executives and the Panel on the Nonprofit Sector.

Jan Masaoka
Executive Director
CompassPoint Nonprofit Services
San Francisco, Calif.

Although she has announced that she's leaving her position later this year, there is no doubt that Masaoka is going to land in another influential spot. The consummate confidant, her counsel and message of greater collaboration is sought by leaders on both coasts. Let the bidding for her services begin.

William C. McGinly
President & CEO
Association for Healthcare Philanthropy
Falls Church, Va.

Philanthropy is more than just giving and getting. It's a strategy needed for strategic planning by both health organizations and donors. McGinly was among the first to insist on benchmarking and is always a leader in successfully fighting federal regulations that make no sense.

Clara Miller
President & CEO
Nonprofit Finance Fund
New York City, N.Y.

She is arguably the most influential voice in the ongoing effort to reshape thinking and practice about nonprofit capitalization and relationship to debt. She has built NFF into a clear leadership position in the CDI Loan field and does stellar capacity-building with great intelligence and savvy.

Janet Murguia
President
National Council of LaRaza

Washington, D.C.

With 300 community-based affiliates throughout the nation, Murguia uses her White House-honed political skills to help deliver capacity building at the state and local levels and for providing a Latino perspective in assets/investments, civil rights/immigration, education, employment and economic status, and health.

William D. Novelli
Chief Executive Officer
AARP
Washington, D.C.

There is no element of federal or state legislation that Novelli can't influence via mobilizing his millions of members or writing a check from a lobbying war chest that's in the tens of millions of dollars. A top communicator in the sector and with members, Novelli gets what his members want.

Peggy Morrison Outon
Bayer Center For Nonprofit Leadership
Robert Morris College
Pittsburgh, Pa.

The queen of capacity building, she has started or run three management support organizations and is a tireless advocate for MSOs. Her influence is felt not just in the U.S. but also abroad through her work with the Leader-To-Leader Institute's (Drucker Foundation) international training team.

Geoffrey W. Peters
Pro Bono General Counsel
American Charities for Reasonable
Fundraising Regulation
Vienna, Va.

Collaboration in the charity world is often discussed but seldom practiced. All Peters did this year was get two major organizations in Washington, D.C. to combine forces. Also, Peters leads or is in the middle of every regulation fight.

Jon Pratt
Executive Director
Minnesota Council of Nonprofits
St. Paul, Minn.

Calling Pratt a public policy wonk is a disservice, since wonks are generally dour and Pratt could double as a member of Second City. He has built the best-regarded of the state associations and that has won him a seat on many of the sector's important policy boards.

Lester M. Salamon
Director
Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies
Baltimore, Md.

Salamon has always emphasized the concept of citizenship as the philosophical basis of the policy field. He's the leading expert in the complex public-private partnerships and public problem-solving.

John R. Seffrin
CEO
American Cancer Society
Atlanta, Ga.

He is, perhaps, the best executive at a major charity. The ACS continues to expand. And, Seffrin has become a real powerbroker, particularly as chair at Independent Sector. How can you not put an Edward Albee fan on this list, so long as the Panel on the Nonprofit Sector doesn't become a Zoo Story?

Jill Schumann
President & CEO
Lutheran Services in America
Baltimore, Md.

Social services and policy go hand-in-hand with providing community services. Under Schumann's leadership, LSA touches roughly one in every 50 people through networks of members that have amazing clout in all of the roughly 3,000 communities in which they work.

Lorie A. Slutsky
President
New York Community Trust
New York City, N.Y.

It's like living next door to someone and you'd never know they were rich - until it's necessary. Slutsky runs the nation's largest community foundation but believes in a charitable sector that knows the neighborhoods, the various populations and how to coordinate a community's survival.

Roxanne Spillett
President
Boys & Girls Clubs of America
Atlanta, Ga.

Partner should be Spillett's middle name. She takes leveraging the assets of government, business, nonprofit partnership to new levels every day. She is a role model for seeking deals that improve not only her 3,400-member network but also the sector as a whole.

Patty Stonesifer
Chief Executive Officer
Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation
Redmond, Wash.

Yes, the \$29.1 billion was provided by Bill and Melinda Gates. But Stonesifer is the driving force in not just grant making but learning from the process and shares it with the broader charitable community - as if saving millions of lives via health initiatives in the developing world wasn't enough.

H. Art Taylor
President & CEO
BBB Wise Giving Alliance
Arlington, Va.

It seems that every day there's a new "watchdog" organization trained on the sector. Under Taylor's leadership, WGA has become the gold standard of seals of approval. He is respected as a responsible sector advocate who doesn't seek to undermine the charity, but rather strengthen it.

John Taylor
President & CEO
National Community Reinvestment Corporation
Washington, D.C.

There is nothing more important than health, food and shelter. Particularly on the fair housing and community reinvestment front, Taylor shakes the federal rafters and is coordinating force for the organizations seeking to represent those who need a decent place to call home.

Eugene R. Tempel
Executive Director
Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University
Indianapolis, Ind.

With every day, Tempel cements the CoP as the educational and research leader for real nonprofit executives, the ones actually doing the work and not just thinking about it. He brings factions together to develop practical solutions.

M. Cass Wheeler
Chief Executive Officer
American Heart Association
Dallas, Texas

Most people would call it a career after merging 56 state and metropolitan affiliates into 12 regional affiliates with a single corporate AHA structure. Wheeler was just getting started. He's also a co-convener of the Panel on the Nonprofit Sector which seeks to provide an operational framework for all charities.

Roy L. Williams
Chief Scout Executive
Boy Scouts of America
Irving, Texas

It's been a tough couple of years, with lawsuits from gay scouts and freak accidents resulting in deaths at scout camps. Through it all, Williams has led the organization as a model of standing up for what you believe and crisis management.

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