



C.S. Mott Foundation Names New CEO

By [Roberto Acosta](#) | November 18, 2018

FLINT, MI -- Ridgway H. White feels the sense of responsibility laid upon his shoulders.

White has been named the new chief executive officer of the nonprofit foundation his great-grandfather, Charles Stewart Mott, started more than 90 years ago in Flint.

His appointment by Mott Foundation Board of Trustees makes White the fourth leader in the history of the foundation whose philanthropic efforts have aided schools and neighborhoods in the city of Flint but also grown to national and international efforts.

"I think one of the key things here is my father took the foundation international and built on a huge legacy that C.S. (Mott) started," Ridgway White said.

The foundation started in 1926 with a \$320,000 endowment that has grown to more than \$3 billion, with \$3.2 billion in grants awarded to organizations in more than 60 countries under the leadership of C.S. Mott, C.S. Harding Mott, and William S. White, Harding Mott's son-in-law and Ridgway's father.

William S. White will remain on with the foundation as board chairman but has retired from the CEO position.

"I'm proud to watch Ridgway contributing to the sector and leading the Mott Foundation," he said in a [statement](#). "I'm also pleased to say I believe C.S. Mott would recognize today's Foundation and the work we're doing as his own. We've maintained a focus on our donor's intent, even as we've evolved to remain relevant."

Mott was a prominent businessman and philanthropist who served two terms as the mayor of Flint.

He was also one of the original partners in the creation of General Motors Corp. Mott served on the GM board of directors for 60 years until his death in 1973 at the age of 97.

It's important, Ridgway White said, to "continue the vision and mission that C.S. (Mott) started for the foundation and continue to try to help the city of Flint that C.S. Mott loved as his adopted hometown."

Over the years, the foundation has evolved, including Mott and Frank Manley teaming up to create a community schools' model in Flint to in more recent years providing funds in the face of the city's water crisis.

Ridgway White began at the foundation as an intern in 2002, hired on as a program assistant two years later, and worked up to vice president for special projects and chairman and became the foundation's president in January 2015 as the city's water crisis unfolded, which has caused a shift in grant-making priorities.

At least 50 percent of total grant funding in the past three years has gone to aid the city "recover and rise from the water crisis," he said.

The foundation has [committed more than \\$100 million](#) over five years to help in the efforts, from safe drinking water to community engagement, economic revitalization, as well as educational opportunities.

He stressed the importance of building on those aspects including the revitalization of the downtown area and spreading it to the rest of the city, while also using those lessons learned here to provide some assistance where needed in other communities.

"We have to build a strong, more robust civil society and make sure people can connect to their community in a more meaningful way," said Ridgway White.

He noted one of the major lessons learned of late is "during the water crisis when trust was lost in governments and government really broke down," local organizations such as the United Way, Community Foundation of Greater Flint, Hurley Medical Center became "first responders" that helped "to lessen the struggles that residents were going through."

He stressed that a "robust nonprofit sector" is needed to accomplish more things, such as education -- from birth to college to career -- that will have a lasting impact on shaping the city's future.

"The macroeconomic headwinds, the overall economy that has been pushing against Flint for decades are really strong," White said. "Our goal is to make Flint a place where people want to live, work and enjoy. If we want to have a person born in Flint to have an equal opportunity of success as elsewhere...that's a huge responsibility."

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