60 Years of Service to Children
FOUNDING HISTORY

Rose & Robert Skillman, both born in Ohio, married in Cincinnati in 1907.

Rose’s father was a cattle rancher, and Robert’s family’s business was the Cleveland Vanish Company, though respiratory problems forced him to give up a family career. Robert became one of the early pioneers in the growth of the Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company (now known as 3M), alongside William L. McNight and Archibald Bush, whose legacies are also carried forward through philanthropic institutions in their names. Robert served as 3M’s sales representative for the eastern half of the country, spurred the invention of waterproof sandpaper—critical to healthy work conditions in automotive plants, developed 3M’s foreign sales in England and Europe, and became the company’s vice president and director.

After a long career at 3M, Robert retired and moved with Rose to Bloomfield Hills, MI, and Winter Park, FL. In Bloomfield Hills, the Skillman’s purchased Fairfield Farms, which they transformed into a replica of a white-fenced Kentucky farm, complete with a stable of champion horses. In 1939, Robert Skillman returned to 3M to negotiate the purchase of the Studebaker plant on Piquette Street in the Milwaukee Junction area of Detroit’s Central North End neighborhood. He also coordinated the project that would transform the facility into an adhesive plant. He worked for this company as an executive consultant until his death in 1945.

After Robert’s death, Rose Skillman continued to live in Bloomfield Hills and Florida for nearly 40 more years until her death in 1983. In addition to her love of animals—particularly horses and dogs—and her appreciation of the arts, Rose Skillman’s commitment to the welfare of vulnerable children continued to grow.

Initially, she made charitable contributions to organizations that served children. Subsequently, she worked with her attorney and accountant to incorporate The Skillman Foundation in December 1960. She served as president until she was named honorary chair in 1964. She remained a trustee of the Foundation until she passed away.

When Rose Skillman died in 1983, the assets of the Foundation totaled $100 million. Since then, the assets have grown and now total nearly $500 million. The Foundation’s annual grantmaking budget is approximately $18 million.

The Skillman Foundation staff and trustees are committed to honoring Rose Skillman’s legacy, and to use our grantmaking funds and civic leadership to be a fierce champion of Detroit children.

As of December 2019, The Skillman Foundation had made 12,082 grants totaling $652,598,718.
From our establishment in 1960 to 1984, the Foundation received semi-annual contributions from Rose Skillman to be used for charitable purposes. Grants made during this period primarily supported protective services and counseling for youth. Examples of grants made were to support the Children’s Charter of the Courts of Michigan, Common Ground, Juvenile Court for the County of Oakland, and the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse. Grants for health services and facilities rank second, with substantial investments made in medical research and health care facilities and equipment. Other grant areas were recreational services (examples include the Detroit and Pontiac Boys and Girls Club and the YMCA of Metropolitan Detroit); higher education for economically disadvantaged or students of color (examples include the United Negro College Fund); neighborhood development; arts and culture; and juvenile justice and crime prevention.

Upon Rose’s death in 1983, the Foundation began reorganizing. By 1984, the bulk of our assets were received through the sale of more than 2 million shares of 3M stock, staff was hired, and trustees established formal grantmaking areas.

“The best part was achieving a consensus among the board and the staff as to what we ought to do and why we ought to do it. We had this opportunity to do some good for Detroit.”

WILLIAM BRODHEAD
Foundation Trustee, 1983–2010
In 1985, The Skillman Foundation launched the Skillman Scholars program to provide scholarships for academically gifted, but economically disadvantaged, students to attend five of the prestigious, private preparatory high schools in the Detroit area to set them on a path toward successful careers and leadership. Scholars have gone on to become doctors, nonprofit leaders, lawyers, and acclaimed artists.

Sydney James Harcourt, an original cast member of the Tony Award–winning musical “Hamilton,” was awarded a full-tuition Skillman scholarship to attend Interlochen Arts Academy as a young man. “I had camped across the street when I was a kid, and it seemed like Hogwarts, like magical, and it changed my life completely,” he stated in a 2020 Detroit News article. “That opportunity was available to me and the scholarship came from The Skillman Foundation.”

In 2001, under the Skillman College Scholarship Program, the Foundation began providing additional grants to Skillman Scholars to support their postsecondary pursuits. In 2011, tuition grants shifted to the Skillman Promising Youth Legacy Awards. Grants of up to $10,000 supported promising Detroit graduates and youth leaders to attend the nation’s leading universities. In its first year, coinciding with the Foundation’s 50th anniversary, this program supported 50 students. In preceding years, approximately 10 annual awards were granted.
Grants shift from alleviating symptoms to influencing systems change

K-12 education becomes a primary strategic focus

Evaluation and institutional learning become core practices

To support the use of data-informed decision making as a core practice for the Foundation and its grant partners, and to help inform policymakers and the community at-large, the Foundation makes significant investments in data infrastructure and accessibility.

Key investments include:

1991: Steady annual funding for the Annie E. Casey Foundation’s Kids Count Data Book begins; continued to present day

1994: Supported the establishment of the Michigan Association for Evaluation

2008: Researched data models across the country and, in partnership with the Kresge Foundation, established Data Driven Detroit (D3)

2010: Commissioned D3 to create the State of the Detroit Child report, with ongoing support to continually update it over the years. In 2018, an online version was launched, accessible from The Skillman Foundation and D3 websites.

Michigan’s Children established

The Foundation launched, and continues to support, Michigan’s Children, a statewide independent advocacy group that works to ensure public policies are made in the best interest of children. This investment is an example of the Foundation’s recognition that meaningful and lasting community- and city-level change requires strong state policy.
Youth Sports & Recreation Initiative

The Foundation’s Youth Sports and Recreation Initiative was our first large-scale investment in afterschool/youth development. The goal was to create a high-quality afterschool system, with an emphasis on reaching youth living in areas with limited services within Detroit, Highland Park, and Hamtramck; and to advocate for recreation as an essential public service. Grant and changemaking efforts within this initiative also included investments in youth employment.

As part of the initiative, the Foundation established the Youth Sports and Recreation Commission (subsequently renamed the Youth Development Commission) in 1995. This was a public-private partnership that included the City of Detroit, state leaders, and business leaders. It was Detroit’s first citywide nonprofit organization devoted to increasing the number and the quality of afterschool programs serving Detroit youth.

Supporting quality, equitable access, and increased investment in the afterschool system have carried through our work over the decades.

Juvenile Justice Initiative

The Foundation has made investments in juvenile justice since its founding. The Juvenile Justice Initiative is an example of our longstanding efforts to replace punitive punishment with practices that help young people work through problems and expand their potential.

The Skillman Center for Children & Families at Wayne State University established & endowed 1992-1996

Now called the Merrill Palmer Skillman Institute Early Childhood Center, this nonprofit organization serves children ages 2½ – 5 of Wayne State University students, faculty, and staff, as well as families in the greater metro Detroit area. The Center is nationally respected for its research and work in child development and serves as a demonstration, observation, and practicum site for university students in pediatrics, physical therapy, nutrition, and education. The Foundation’s endowment of the Center is an example of our past investments in early childhood development.
The Foundation identified and supported a wholistic school improvement model—the Comer School Development Program—and provided $18 million in investment to Detroit elementary schools. The Comer Schools and Families Initiative was one of Detroit’s first comprehensive school reform models. It worked to increase student performance on statewide assessments by targeting three areas for improvement: instruction and student–teacher relationships; parent and community involvement in schools; and local school governance and the relationship between schools and district administration. A cross-section of partners was involved, including the teachers’ union, school administrators, parents, the board of education, Eastern Michigan University, and the Yale Child Study Center. Data showed fourth-grade reading and math scores of Comer School students outpaced those at schools that did not receive Comer supports.

“The purpose was to empower schools and to encourage parental participation and engagement. Comer was a big step in that direction.”

**STEPHEN EWING**
Foundation Trustee, 1995–2014

**Parenting Matters Initiative**

Parenting Matters is an early example of the Foundation’s efforts to support parents, caregivers, and community members to be strong child guardians and advocates. It supported efforts such as the creation of a parent helpline, an educational curriculum used broadly by Detroit schools and nonprofits, a mini-grant program to fund parent education programs through churches and small groups, and professional development for paraprofessionals who support caregivers.
Youth employment initiatives (1996–CURRENT)

The Skillman Foundation’s significant investments in youth employment include:

**1996:** Creation of Work Alternatives for Youth, an employment and job training program for young Detroiters

**2009:** Establishment of the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, a cross-sector group of private-sector employers, nonprofit and for-profit youth employment experts, funders, and public officials working together to expand youth employment in the city

**2012:** Establishment of Grow Detroit’s Young Talent, in partnership with the Detroit Youth Employment Consortium, City Connect, and City of Detroit. Each organization brought its collective efforts to the table to create a wide-reaching annual summer program that provides youth with real-world, paid employment experiences. In 2019, GDYT engaged more than 8,000 youth

Mission narrows to serve Detroit children

Between 1994–1998, the Foundation’s grantmaking became increasingly focused on serving Detroit youth, in line with Rose Skillman’s desire to reach children with greatest needs. By 1998, 80% of grants were being directed to serve Detroit kids. The board voted in 1998 to officially focus the Foundation’s mission accordingly.
**2000**

**Skillman Branch of the Detroit Public Library**

The Skillman Foundation donated $5 million to renovate, restore, and reopen the Downtown Branch of the Detroit Public Library. Upon its reopening in December of 2000, it was renamed the Robert and Rose Skillman Branch. The donation was the largest ever made to DPL in its 138-year history, made by the Foundation in honor of Detroit’s 300th anniversary (celebrated in 2001).

---

**2001**

**A Call to Service 2001-2006**

A Call to Service was a 5-year, $5-million initiative to support neighborhood churches to provide enrichment activities for children. Participating churches partnered with five or more other houses of worship, community organizations, or schools to provide continuous care for children in their program. The initiative increased collaboration between churches and established quality afterschool programs for nearly 1,500 Detroit kids.

---

**2003**

**Culture and Arts Youth Development Initiative**

The Culture and Arts Youth Development Initiative provided children access to art programs led by professional artists and promoted ways in which the arts could be used to support youth development. The initiative was not the Foundation’s first engagement in the arts. Prior to 2003 we had awarded over $15.5 million to arts and culture organizations. We continue to support art programming to help youth explore their talents and express their thoughts and emotions.
2003

**Michigan’s Office of Foundation Liaison established**

Alongside other Michigan foundations, The Skillman Foundation helped launch the Governor’s Office of Foundation Liaison. The OFL identifies and brokers innovative funding partnerships and strategic collaborations between the State and grantmakers to encourage programs and policy reforms that would improve the lives of all Michigan residents. The creation of this nonpartisan position marked the State’s first formal partnership with the foundation community.

The Skillman Foundation also helped sponsor a similar function with the City of Detroit’s Mayors Office, supporting a foundation liaison during Mayor Dennis Archer’s 1994–2001 term.

2004

**Neighborhood level grantmaking becomes a focus 2004–2012**

The Skillman Foundation transitioned to being an embedded funder, working with community to create neighborhood-level change, in 2004. This practice carried through the Good Neighborhoods Initiative, which concluded in 2016. While we continue to be ingrained in the community, and make targeted investments in specific schools and neighborhoods, our intentions of doing so are currently directed at creating citywide and system-level change to have a positive and prolonged impact on all Detroit children.

“The Foundation became an embedded foundation with an incredible focus on neighborhoods and schools.”

**DR. LILIAN BAUDER**
Foundation Trustee, 1990–2015
Through the Good Schools Initiative, the Foundation identified high-performing and improving schools in Detroit, publicly celebrated their successes, and provided them with additional supports—up to $100,000—to continue their upward trajectories.

While its priority was to showcase outstanding Detroit schools and educators, it also helped to strengthen schools. Good School awardees showed an increase in student achievement, student learning opportunities, access to technology, and professional development for teachers. Awardees became models for their peers, sharing best practices through a Good School Resources Center, which also provided schools with technical assistance and direct supports.

These investments broadened the Foundation’s focus beyond the traditional public school system to consider all city schools that were doing a good job of educating children, regardless of governance type, including public charter, private, and parochial schools.

A Good Schools Guide became the first of several Detroit efforts to provide families with a directory and assessment of city schools so they could make better-informed choices about the best educational options for their children.

Data from the first several years of the Good Schools Initiative showed that, of Detroit’s K–12 schools, high schools were struggling the most. In response, we invested in two key efforts. The first was Michigan Future Schools (2009–2015), an initiative led by Michigan Future Inc. to create new, small, high-quality high schools in Detroit. Michigan Future Schools helped launch 11 high schools, some of which are among the city’s highest performing today, including Detroit Edison Public School Academy, Jalen Rose Leadership Academy, and Benjamin Carson High School of Science and Medicine. Our second major high school investment within the Good Schools Initiative was to the United Way for Southeastern Michigan’s Great Detroit Venture Fund. The Fund created small, personalized learning environments in high schools with graduation rates of less than 60% for three consecutive years. Beginning in 2012, the Foundation supported the conversion of Cody and Osborn High Schools.

After 2012, the Foundation continued to invest in Detroit schools under the banner of the Good Neighborhoods Initiative.

“(The Good Schools Guide) put information into the hands of parents so they could make informed decisions about where their children went and what they could expect when they got there.”

**STEPHEN EWING**
Foundation Trustee, 1995–2014
The Good Neighborhoods Initiative was a decade-long $120-million commitment to improve conditions for children in six Detroit neighborhoods: Brightmoor, Chadsey-Condon, Cody Rouge, Northend Central, Osborn, and Southwest Detroit. Selected due to high concentrations of children and levels of need, these six neighborhoods were home to nearly one-third of the city’s youth population (roughly 65,000 children). GNI’s four strategy areas were education, youth development, community leadership, and safety.

“We took our Trustees on what we called ‘listening tours’ in the neighborhoods... That, to me, was so important: to develop strategies that came directly from the voices of the community.”

CAROL GOSS
Foundation President, 2004–2013

Significant outcomes of GNI included:

High school graduation rates increased from 65% to 81% in GNI neighborhoods.

Summer youth employment opportunities increased from 2,500 slots available citywide in 2008 to 8,000 paid jobs with training in 2016, through a broader public-private collaboration the Foundation helped to create.

Youth development opportunities increased from 10,000 to 14,000 from 2010 to 2014. And in 2013, the Foundation established the creation of the Youth Development Resource Center to improve youth development program quality and youth outcomes.

New organizations, including five neighborhood governance groups, were formed with resident leaders at the helm, increasing community members’ ability to influence local conditions on behalf of children. These organizations continue to operate today, advancing vital community-level and citywide change on behalf of children.

Crime rates declined by 40% in all GNI neighborhoods over the years 2009 to 2016, with youth victimization rates decreasing by 47%.

Early support for targeted blight removal in one GNI neighborhood informed an expanded approach involving 12,000 projects, the most aggressive blight removal effort to date in Detroit.

“The Foundation sought to use its resources to improve the conditions in different areas of the city where there was infrastructure to allow the Foundation to build a better future for children.”

DAVID B. LEWIS
Foundation Trustee, 2004–2015
Community Connections Small Grants Program 2006-2016

Through the Community Connections Small Grants program, The Skillman Foundation has granted approximately $6 million to resident-led projects that improved opportunities and conditions for youth. Grant awards ranged from $500 to $5,000 and were selected by neighborhood residents.

Boys of Color / My Brother’s Keeper 2008-CURRENT

The Foundation articulated a specific focus on supporting boys of color in 2008—a response to parents imploring the Foundation to help protect and promote their sons.

While the Foundation had a history of investing in efforts to support boys of color, naming a concentrated initiative was a clarion call to urge community action on their behalf.

The Foundation’s Boys of Color work positioned it as a national leader alongside other foundations pursuing these same aims. Together, we helped influence then-President Barack Obama to launch the My Brother’s Keeper initiative, calling on communities across the country to close the opportunity gaps that boys and men of color regularly face. The Skillman Foundation folded our Boys of Color work into the My Brother’s Keeper platform, partnering with the City of Detroit and more than 100 civic, social, and corporate leaders to form MBK Detroit. As a result of longstanding and combined efforts, in December 2015 the Campaign for Black Male Achievement (CBMA) ranked Detroit highest in efforts to reduce disparities for boys and men of color. Our boys of color work continues under the MBK Detroit mantle. This includes the MBK Detroit Innovation Challenge, developed in 2016 in partnership with CBMA, to solicit ideas from community members and provide seed funding for grassroots programs and leaders.
Excellent Schools Detroit established

The Skillman Foundation convened a broad coalition of education stakeholders in Detroit committed to redesigning the city’s educational system, operating as Excellent Schools Detroit. Partners included the City of Detroit, Detroit Public Schools, Detroit’s charter school sector, Detroit Federation of Teachers, Detroit Regional Chamber, Kellogg Foundation, Kresge Foundation, McGregor Fund, Detroit Parent Network, Detroit PAL, and the NAACP. Excellent Schools Detroit grew to become an independent nonprofit organization that supported parents in navigating school options by providing clear, comparable data about the city’s K–12 schools and facilitated collaboration across Detroit’s district and charter schools. It rooted several initiatives that are addressing some of Detroit’s most pressing education issues, including the City of Detroit’s Community Education Commission, 482Forward, Detroit College Access Network, and Hope Starts Here—Detroit’s Early Childhood Partnership. Having passed its pursuits along, Excellent Schools Detroit sunsetted in 2018.

Youth safety strategy 2012–2016

Listening to young people and other residents in the Good Neighborhoods, it became clear that safety was a major concern—and community members were rallying to do something about it. The Foundation had invested in safety efforts through the years, but in 2012, we named youth safety as a core focus area. Our overarching objectives were to increase the actual and perceived safety of children by engaging and aligning a broad cross-section of stakeholders—residents, community leaders, neighborhood associations, nonprofit organizations, and critical civic institutions such as the Detroit Police Department and Detroit Public Schools.

Key investments included: safe routes to schools (community patrolling, blight removal), neighborhood police officers, youth violence intervention through efforts such as Ceasefire and DLIVE, and CompStat tables—convenings of neighborhood stakeholders who review crime data and devise collaborative strategies to address persistent problems.

Our investments in safety continue, particularly those that shield and deter young people from violence.
Supporting Detroiters through City bankruptcy

In addition to our ongoing grantmaking support to steady—and in some cases, improve—conditions for Detroit children during the Great Recession and City of Detroit bankruptcy, The Skillman Foundation made a 20-year, $3.5-million pledge to Detroit's "Grand Bargain" fund. Our funding was specifically directed to preserving the pensions for City of Detroit retirees, which were on the chopping block in the Grand Bargain settlement.

Another set of investments specific to Detroit’s recovery were our efforts to remove blight. The city’s population had been in decline for decades when the Great Recession and foreclosure crisis hit, exponentially growing the number of abandoned properties. Our efforts included a pilot blight removal program in Brightmoor, a partnership with the Detroit Blight Authority to map blight across the city, and help to direct $21 million in federal funding to Detroit’s blight removal efforts.

Additionally, in 2014, alongside the Ford and Kresge Foundation, we supported the creation of the City of Detroit’s first-ever Office of Development and Grants. As of December 2019, the office that has attracted more than $1 billion in outside funding to support dozens of initiatives that improve Detroiters’ quality of life.
The Skillman Foundation spurred the establishment of Detroit Children’s Fund in 2013 to provide a vehicle for increased corporate, philanthropic, and individual funding to reach Detroit’s K–12 schools. DCF is a nonprofit organization focused on making high-potential investments to expand successful schools, greatly improve lower performing schools, and discover and develop talented educators so that every child in Detroit can receive an excellent education. The Skillman Foundation continues to grant a portion of DCF’s general operating support and works closely with its program staff to ensure efforts are complementary across the two organizations for the best impact on schools and students. In 2019, Detroit Children’s Fund granted $7 million to improve education for Detroit kids.

“With The Skillman Foundation’s support, Detroit Children’s Fund has become a leader in the effort to improve public education for the youth of Detroit. DCF is forming strategic partnerships with public school leaders to implement strategies that will significantly improve student success. As Chairman of The Skillman Foundation, and as a board member of Detroit Children’s Fund, I am proud to be involved with two great organizations who are both working tirelessly to bring equity and opportunity to Detroit’s children.”

BILL EMERSON
Foundation Trustee, 2014–current

In December of 2014, The Skillman Foundation convened a diverse group of cross-sector leaders who came together to address the growing deterioration of school quality and finances under state emergency management. Through the Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren, Detroiters regained control of their schools and their children’s fate. Its advocacy resulted in $667 million from the State of Michigan to address the fiscal health of Detroit Public Schools. It ended a decade of
unsuccessful state-appointed emergency management and restored local control to Detroit citizens through an elected school board and new superintendent. Its call for more coordination and accountability across the charter and traditional public–school landscape was taken up by the formation of the City of Detroit’s Community Education Commission.

While its first phase of work focused on legislative action, its second phase set an agenda around the most pressing issues in education that Detroiter could advance. Efforts seeded by the Coalition that carry forward this agenda include: the City of Detroit’s Community Education Commission; Teach 313, a citywide educator talent initiative; and Every School Day Counts Detroit, a collective effort of schools and community groups working together to support student attendance.

**Cody Rouge Initiative**

Launched by Skillman Foundation Trustees, the Cody Rouge Initiative seeks to create a model for collaborative public–private investment aimed at shifting the trajectory of a neighborhood. Investments are reflective of community input, aligned to have the greatest impact, and are focused on child well-being and outcomes. Cody Rouge, a west–side Detroit neighborhood, was selected largely due to the strong resident and youth leadership developed during the Good Neighborhoods Initiative. The Cody Rouge Initiative invests in education and career preparation for area youth as well as in neighborhood infrastructure and environment. Current partners are: The Skillman Foundation, DTE Energy, General Motors, Quicken Loans, Cody Rouge Community Action Alliance, Trinity Health, City of Detroit Planning Department, and Detroit Public Schools Community District.

Through the Cody Rouge Initiative’s advocacy and funding support, Cody Rouge/Warrendale was added to the City of Detroit’s $130–million Strategic Neighborhood Fund. Unique among other neighborhood development plans, a child–centered design was created for Cody Rouge—and was informed by neighborhood youth who conducted community research and provided recommendations. This process serves as a model for future community development projects, locally and nationally.
In 2016, seven Detroit students filed a lawsuit against the State of Michigan to assert that literacy is a constitutionally protected right. They blamed substandard performance in school on poor conditions within classrooms, including missing or unqualified teachers, physically dangerous facilities, and inadequate books and materials. The Skillman Foundation provided funding for students to pursue their case, as well as continued advocacy. After a four-year court process, judges on Michigan’s Sixth Circuit Court ruled in favor of the Detroit Seven. The Foundation helped lead negotiations between the students and the State of Michigan. The result of this was Governor Whitmer’s acknowledgement of the ruling through a settlement, proposing legislation to provide Detroit public schools $94.4 million for literacy-related programs and to return some financial independence to the district. The settlement also provides the plaintiffs with monetary support to pursue their educational goals. The Skillman Foundation and Detroit Public Schools Foundation are supporting the youth to develop their education and career plans.

The Right to Literacy lawsuit advanced the movement for equitable, quality education for all, with the Detroit Seven serving as a catalyst for others to urge courts across the United States to declare that all children have the right to learn to read and write.
The Skillman Foundation launched the Opportunity Agenda for Detroit Children in 2017, a citywide strategy that works to provide equitable opportunities for all Detroit children by influencing system-level changes. It developed after 11 years of Good Neighborhoods work, fueled by two key developments. We saw gaps in what was sustainable and possible at the neighborhood-level without citywide—and statewide—system-level changes. Additionally, major context changes were underway in post-bankruptcy Detroit. Opportunities to advance system-level changes were increasing. Strong system leaders had emerged, investments in the city were growing, and the global narrative of Detroit began turning from gloom to glow. The Foundation saw the chance to take the progress and learnings developed from our neighborhood work and amplify these across the city to reach all Detroit kids.

The work the Foundation had been doing for decades to support the development of school-aged children transferred to a pointed ambition to ensure that all Detroit kids have the opportunities they need to direct their future and lead their city and country to greater prosperity. In order to do so, we focus on the K-12 system, including afterschool and college and career pathways, because it has an outsized impact on child well-being and youth outcomes.

Read more about the Opportunity Agenda for Detroit Children on pages 48–59.
The Community Education Commission formed in response to a call from the Coalition for the Future of Detroit Schoolchildren for increased coordination, quality, and accessibility across the city’s school districts. With support from The Skillman Foundation, the CEC’s initial projects included the GOAL Line, a bus line connecting families with a variety of school and afterschool options, and the reinvigoration of a Detroit Schools Guide.

“...and we hold assets of approximately $500 million to continue to do so. That is the power of endowed philanthropy. We’ve been able to span our impact across many generations. We have responded to the needs of our youth and their families in an ever-shifting context, pivoting to address the most pressing issues of the time. Endowed philanthropy allows us to be steadfast and nimble.

The Skillman Foundation is a fierce, consistent champion for Detroit children. The societal and systemic changes we seek to make require both patience and urgency. Patience to stay diligent, knowing that these changes take time, and urgency that balances our long view with the fact that kids can’t wait.”

TONYA ALLEN
Foundation President, 2014–current

SKILLMAN FOUNDATION PRESIDENTS
ROSE SKILLMAN, 1960–1964
LEONARD SMITH, 1964–1999
WILLIAM BECKHAM, 2000
KARI SCHLACHTENHAUFEN, 2001–2003
CAROL GOSS, 2004–2013
TONYA ALLEN, 2014–current

60-year grant total: $652,598,718

In our 60-year history, we have invested more than $650 million to bolster children and their communities—and we hold assets of approximately $500 million to continue to do so. That is the power of endowed philanthropy. We’ve been able to span our impact across many generations. We have responded to the needs of our youth and their families in an ever-shifting context, pivoting to address the most pressing issues of the time. Endowed philanthropy allows us to be steadfast and nimble.

The Skillman Foundation is a fierce, consistent champion for Detroit children. The societal and systemic changes we seek to make require both patience and urgency. Patience to stay diligent, knowing that these changes take time, and urgency that balances our long view with the fact that kids can’t wait.”

TONYA ALLEN
Foundation President, 2014–current