

Biography

Cass Wheeler recently launched his consulting practice after a distinguished career with the American Heart Association, serving as its CEO from 1997 until 2008. Under his leadership, the association merged its 56 state and metropolitan affiliates into 8 regions and adopted a single corporate structure. During this same period, revenue grew from \$400 million to \$650 million. Several new initiatives were launched including the award winning Go Red for Women Campaign to raise awareness about heart disease in women, the Alliance for a Healthier Generation (with the William J. Clinton Foundation) to fight childhood obesity, Get With the Guidelines to improve hospital care and outcomes and the Power to End Stroke targeted to African Americans. The association also approved a far-reaching health-impact goal calling for a 25 percent reduction of coronary heart disease, stroke and risk by 2010.

A business graduate from the University of Texas at Austin, Cass gained his grass roots experience with the American Cancer Society right out of college. He later was a stockbroker in Dallas with two New York Stock Exchange firms before joining the Texas Affiliate of the American Heart Association.

Wheeler is a past board chair of the National Health Council. He served as a member of the board of directors of Independent Sector where he chaired both the Audit Committee and Ethics and Accountability Committee, as well as serving on the Executive Committee. He served as co-convenor of the Panel on the Non Profit Sector, established at the request of the Senate Finance Committee to consider and recommend actions to strengthen governance, ethical conduct and effective practice of public charities and private foundations. Cass was appointed by President Clinton to serve on the *Commission on Improving Economic Opportunity in Communities Dependent on Tobacco Production While Protecting Public Health*. He also served on the boards of the National Human Services Assembly, Partnership for Prevention, Campaign for Tobacco Free Kids and Research!America. He served on the Advisory Committee for Public Health and chaired the Key Philanthropic Organizations Committee for the American Society of Association Executives.

Cass currently serves on the boards of the American Legacy Foundation, National Council on Aging, Better Business Bureau's Wise Giving Alliance, the Advisory Council of the University of California at San Francisco Center for Tobacco Control Research and Education. In January 2008, Cass was appointed to serve on the Advisory Committee to the Director of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention by Secretary Leavitt of the Department of Health and Human Services.

Wheeler has been a guest lecturer at Harvard University's Graduate Schools of Business and Public Health; the University of Texas at Dallas School of Management; the University of Texas at Austin Lyndon B. Johnson School of Public Affairs; the Georgetown University Law Center; Columbia University Graduate School of Public Health and at the Graduate Program of Dispute Resolution at Southern Methodist University.

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He has been a guest speaker at the University of Texas at Austin Graduate School of Business in its Distinguished Lecture Series. In April of 2008, Cass provided the keynote address on Health Care Reform at the University of Mississippi Medical School as part of the pre Presidential Debate series.

In September 2005, the National Human Services Association presented Cass with the Essence of Leadership Award for Excellence in National Executive Leadership. He has received the President's Award from the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance as well as the National Council of Better Business Bureaus. In 2006, 2007 and 2008 he was honored as one of the leaders selected for inclusion in NonProfit Times' Power and Influence Top 50. In July 2007, he was named to World Pharmaceutical Frontiers' first Pharma 40 – a list of the most influential people in the industry, as judged by industry experts. On December 12, 2001, he carried the Olympic torch when it traveled through Dallas on its way to the winter Olympics in Salt Lake City.

Wheeler is the author of *You've Gotta Have Heart: Achieving Purpose Beyond Profit in the Social Sector*, a book he wrote with a goal to further increase the effectiveness of the non profit sector.

A native Texan, Cass lives in Georgetown, Texas just outside of Austin and is an elder in the Presbyterian Church.