

Old Baltimore family vows investment in city's future

By **Gadi Dechter**
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Carey Street, named after 18th-century port merchant, councilman and Quaker abolitionist James Carey, runs through some of the most challenged neighborhoods of West Baltimore.

A mile and a half east in the downtown commercial district stands the gleaming Johns Hopkins Carey Business School, which is celebrating this week the inauguration of its first dean, thanks to a \$50 million gift in 2006 from William Polk Carey, the merchant's great-great-great-grandson.



The New Yorker's commitment to his hometown and family legacy does not end there. The 77-year-old real estate financier said yesterday that he wants to help restore the city to the commercial glory his forebears knew and intends a major bequest that could permanently ensure that the Carey name is once more associated with Baltimore's economic revival.

"We will rise again," he said.

After receiving a ceremonial key to the city from Mayor Sheila Dixon, Carey said in an interview that he intends to leave the bulk of his estate to a foundation bearing his name, which has focused in large part on Baltimore schools. A private man, Carey prefers not to discuss his personal wealth, but he owns about 30 percent of the W.P. Carey & Co. investment firm, which has a market value of roughly \$1.2 billion.

A sizable bequest, therefore, would propel the W.P. Carey Foundation, which now has about \$20 million in assets, into the top ranks of grant-making associations focused on the city. In recent years, Carey and his foundation have given about \$65 million to area institutions, including the Gilman School, the Calvert School, the Bryn Mawr School, the Baltimore School for the Arts, the Maryland Historical Society and the Johns Hopkins University, where Carey was a trustee.

"Our goal ... is to continue the revitalization of the economy in Baltimore ... and return it to the leadership position it had in 1797," the year James Carey was elected to the City Council, William Carey told the mayor yesterday. "And it's moving in that direction."

The soft-spoken banker, who is unmarried and has no children, was flanked by about 20 relatives and trustees of his foundation, representing three generations of Careys. Most have never lived in Baltimore but say their personal and philanthropic commitment to the city has been handed down through generations.

"There was always a sense of pride about the history of the family in Baltimore," said Elizabeth P. Carey of Pennsylvania, William Carey's niece and a foundation director. "It's sort of a hard family to live up to sometimes, because they have achieved so much."

Born in 1751, James Carey established a successful shipping business in Baltimore's port after the Revolutionary War. He married Martha Ellicott, the granddaughter of Ellicott City's founder, converted to her Quaker faith and helped found the Baltimore Abolition Society, one of the country's first anti-slavery movements.

As his business flourished, Carey turned to civic pursuits. He served 12 terms on the City Council and was president of the Bank of Maryland. In 1802, Carey bought land near the harbor for use by the city's first African-American congregation.

Six generations later, William Polk Carey continued the family's entrepreneurial tradition, but in New York real estate banking. After attending the Gilman School in North Baltimore, which was co-founded by his grandmother, Anne Galbraith Carey, he left for boarding school in Connecticut and then attended Princeton and the [University of Pennsylvania](#).

His lifelong dream of a Hopkins business school germinated in the 1950s, but he was unable to persuade a family friend - and Hopkins' president - Milton S. Eisenhower to set up a program at the liberal arts college.

Decades later, after building the W.P. Carey & Co. business into a real estate investment giant managing billions of dollars in assets, Carey was able to sweeten the suggestion with the \$50 million gift that would establish the graduate school.

Carey's philanthropic approach is focused not on ministering to the poor or providing social services, as is the driving mission behind the city's biggest foundations, the Annie E. Casey Foundation and the Harry & Jeannette Weinberg Foundation. Rather, he wants to employ philanthropy as a business incubator.

"Baltimore used to be the cultural center of the United States," Carey said. He attributes the city's economic decline in large part to the acquisition or departure of corporations once based here. "We have to start having enterprises started here that want to stay headquartered in Baltimore, and one of the ways we can do that is by having more business school grads starting here."

Yash Gupta, the Carey Business School's new dean, says the university's model of a "start-up business school" is profoundly influenced by Carey, with whom he speaks regularly.

"Hopkins is a university that produces one of the largest number of discoveries in the world," Gupta said. "The question becomes: How do we translate those discoveries into marketable products that create new organizations that employ people and improve the wealth and economic systems of the city?"

Gupta envisions business students studying medical and scientific discoveries produced by Hopkins researchers, then translating them into businesses.

"Then we would encourage them to locate in Baltimore, in our of our science parks," he said.

Tony Cipollone, a vice president of the Annie E. Casey Foundation, which has helped develop the Hopkins-affiliated East Baltimore biotech park, said the city's philanthropic community would welcome Carey's approach.

"I don't think any [existing foundation] has that as a primary focus," Cipollone said. "The establishment of training and experts and financial backing that can lead to new enterprises will be warmly welcomed here."

Lester M. Salamon, a Hopkins researcher and nationally known expert on nonprofits, said Baltimore lags behind other cities in private philanthropy.

"The level of charitable giving, the level of foundations assets, I don't think, are anywhere close in Baltimore to other major cities," he said.

Salamon said the Carey family's long-term commitment to Baltimore could energize the economy, but he cautioned that the city's challenges are enormous and that foundations - though among the most visible donors - play a relatively small role in overall charity.

"Foundations are about 2 percent of all philanthropy, and philanthropy is about 12 percent of the revenue of nonprofits," Salamon said. The dedication of Carey and his relatives is "important and it can be an enormous plus," he said, "but it's not going to change things overnight in some radical fashion."

But Carey believes the city is already on the road to prosperity.

"I'm proud of being from Baltimore," he said. "It's a great city full of wonderful people, and I just want to continue seeing it get better and stronger every day."

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