

Rip Rapson

President & CEO

Rip Rapson is president and CEO of The Kresge Foundation, a private, national foundation dedicated to expanding opportunities in America's cities through grantmaking and social investing.

Since his appointment in 2006, Rapson has led the 92-year-old foundation to adopt an array of grantmaking and investing tools to improve the economic, social, cultural and environmental conditions of urban life through six defined programs: arts and culture, education, environment, health, human services and community development in Kresge's hometown of Detroit. In 2015, the foundation awarded more than \$145 million in grants and investment commitments.

Nationally, Rapson has strengthened the philanthropic sector's role through convening, collaborating and supplementing community development activities in cities across the country. In Detroit, Rapson and the foundation provided central support to the "Grand Bargain," an unprecedented partnership between the philanthropic community, city pensioners, the State of Michigan and the Detroit Institute of Arts, to propel the City of Detroit's successful emergence from municipal bankruptcy in 2014.

A veteran of urban policy and philanthropic leadership, Rapson began his career as a legislative assistant to U.S. Rep. Don Fraser, and in that position oversaw development and passage of the Boundary Waters Canoe Area Wilderness Act of 1976, which brought full wilderness protection to the million-acre lake country of northern Minnesota.

After attending law school, Rapson became increasingly interested in philanthropy's role in urban and economic development while representing a number of Minnesota nonprofit organizations as a partner at Leonard, Street & Dienard in Minneapolis in the 1980s.

Rapson later served as the deputy mayor of Minneapolis from 1989 to 1993 and was the primary architect of its Neighborhood Revitalization program, a 20-year, \$400 million effort to strengthen the city's neighborhoods. He also directed a comprehensive redesign of the municipal budgeting process and developed the mayor's initiatives to strengthen and support families and children.

In 1993, Rapson was named a senior fellow at the University of Minnesota's Design Center for American Urban Studies. There he led a successful six-year interdisciplinary project to examine the forces affecting first-ring suburban communities and to address the challenges brought on by declining tax revenues, shifting political forces, and changing economic and social demographics. While at the Design Center, he also served as a consultant to the Annie E. Casey Foundation, where he helped the foundation develop and implement a new strategic plan.

Rapson was appointed president of the McKnight Foundation in Minneapolis in 1999. During his six-year tenure with the organization, McKnight was recognized as a national leader on a variety of public policy issues, including early childhood development, metropolitan growth, open space protection and wind energy. At the foundation, Rapson launched the Itasca Project, a private sector-led effort to develop a new regional agenda for the Twin Cities. He also advanced McKnight's work supporting arts and cultural activities, enhancing water quality and public enjoyment of the Mississippi River, and fostering economic development in rural Minnesota.

Rapson earned a bachelor's degree from Pomona College (Claremont, Calif.) and a juris doctorate from Columbia University Law School. He is the recipient of dozens of philanthropic and civic awards, most recently being named a 2015 Michiganian of the Year by *The Detroit News* and a Power and Influence Top 50 executive by *The NonProfit Times*. He has co-authored two books: "Troubled Waters," an account of the Boundary Waters legislative battle in Minnesota, and "Ralph Rapson: Sixty Years of Modern Design," a biography of his father, a globally renowned architect.

An active member of the national philanthropic and southeast Michigan civic communities, he currently serves as board chair of Living Cities, and is a board member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago's Detroit Branch, ArtPlace America, Local Initiatives Support Corporation (LISC), Detroit RiverFront Conservancy, Downtown Detroit Partnership and M-1 Rail.