

## **Roanoke Times**

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by Kandy Elliott and Ginny Jarrett

You may not realize it but today women control more than 51 percent of the personal wealth in the United States, and they are set to inherit trillions of dollars more as the World War II generation begins to transfer its wealth. So, it should come as no surprise that women now make up the majority of philanthropic donors in the United States.

Women who tend to contribute their money often do so in different ways than men. While men may tend to base philanthropy on business connections or a desire for public recognition, women tend to give because they want to make a difference. They want to feel an emotional connection.

They also value relationships with the organizations they support. Women frequently give money to launch programs and to those organizations they view as bringing about social change.

One such example was noted in David Harrison's Nov. 19 news story, "Women's group gives to students." On Nov. 18, a local philanthropic group, The Roanoke Women's Foundation, awarded its annual grants; this year, \$162,000 was given to three important and worthy community organizations: DePaul Family Services, The Bradley Free Clinic and Virginia Western Community College's Educational Foundation.

The VWCC Educational Foundation grant of \$100,000 is the largest given in the foundation's four-year history and will provide support for the City of Roanoke Community College Access Pilot Program, which we anticipate will provide the opportunity for more than 100 city high school students to receive a two-year college degree.

Even in these unsettling economic times, the people in the Roanoke Valley continue to exhibit great generosity. Tremendous amounts of money are given in support of the many and varied organizations in our community.

All of us have strengths we can share. At the end of the day, it's as simple as trying to make our community a better place in which to live and raise our families. During this season of sharing and giving, let us all challenge ourselves to make a mark that lasts.

*(Elliott and Jarrett, both of Roanoke, are co-founders of The Roanoke Women's Foundation.)*