

1949

Frank Greenwall and his wife Anna Alexander Greenwall establish a small family foundation in memory of their daughter, Susan.



Frank and Anna Greenwall

early 1980s

Through the first three-plus decades of the Foundation's existence, its goals and funded projects were varied, reflecting the families' interests and passions. These included the arts, education, and research into bone cancer—the condition that took Susan's life.



John Dugan

As Frank and Anna Greenwall grew older, the Board considered the Foundation's future. Anna, who had served as the Foundation's president from its inception through 1980, passed away in 1981, at which point Frank took over the formal leadership role.

1981

In May of 1981, the Board elected to operate the Foundation indefinitely (rather than maintain an earlier understanding that it would wind down 25 years after Anna, Frank, and their daughter Nancy died). In the same year, the Foundation hired its first full-time paid employee and Executive Director, John Dugan. Soon after, significant changes were made to the Foundation's financial and governance structures to promote its stability.

1987

As Anna aged and suffered from the effects of dementia, Frank Greenwall began to take an interest in the ethical dimensions of health care. This interest ultimately led to the Foundation's first substantial bioethics grant: an award to The Hastings Center to publish a report on caring for dying patients.



The Hastings Center



As the Foundation's endowment grew, it needed more capacity in its arts and humanities program, leading to the hire of its first full-time staff. It also altered its grantmaking strategy in this area, broadening its range of grantee organizations. Over the next two decades, it would go on to fund award-winning music, dance, theater, and other works.

Lunar Moths from Saved by Science, Justine Cooper, 2004

late 1980s

1990

The Foundation hired William C. Stubing to be its fifth President. The former Director of the New York Academy of Medicine, with seminary training, Bill was well-positioned to further build out the Foundation's work in bioethics, and the Board charged him to create a program in that field. Just one year later, the Interdisciplinary Program in Bioethics was formed.



William C. Stubing



Jason Karlawish, MD, Anna Mastroianni, JD, and Jonathan Oberlander, PhD
Faculty Scholars Program Class of 2005

The first class of the Faculty Scholars Program received funding. The Foundation created the three-year career-development award to invest in junior faculty members, recognizing that this is often a difficult period in scholars' careers.

2002

2008

The global economic crisis of 2008 threatened the Foundation's finances. Foundation leadership discussed a number of options for its future before ultimately concluding that the Faculty Scholars Program alone would carry on as Greenwall's flagship initiative.



Bernard Lo, MD

Bernard Lo, MD, was selected to become the Foundation's next President & CEO, having served as Director of the Faculty Scholars Program since its inception.

2011

In the same year, the Foundation completed its transition to an exclusive focus on bioethics, as the Program in Arts and Humanities disbursed its final grants.

2013

As the Foundation's endowment bounced back, Greenwall launched the Making a Difference in Real-World Bioethics Dilemmas grant program, an initiative created to fund bioethics research projects with a clear pathway to practical impact. Early grants included projects on choice architecture, genomic sequencing, and aid-in-dying.



Tom Gallagher, MD, an awardee in the first cycle of Making a Difference grants



Dr. Siddhartha Mukherjee
Photo Credit: New York University

Siddhartha Mukherjee, MD, gave the first William C. Stubing Memorial Lecture, a new event aimed at bringing bioethics conversation to the broader public. The Lecture, now held annually, is one of the first of several initiatives in the last decade designed to broaden Foundation activities beyond the funding of traditional bioethics research.

2017

2022

Under Michelle Groman, JD, who began her tenure as the Foundation's current President & CEO in 2020, the Foundation undertook a number of new activities. These included setting strategic priorities, launching a new grant initiative supporting the translation of bioethics research to policy, and establishing a new annual award recognizing accomplishments in the field. In the fall of 2022, the Foundation celebrated the 20th anniversary of its flagship Faculty Scholars Program.



Michelle Groman, JD