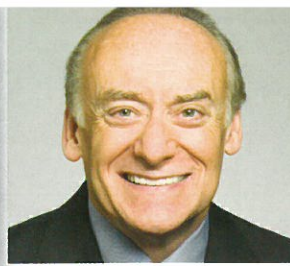


Cleveland  
MAGAZINE

# COMMUNITY LEADER

NORTHEAST OHIO'S VOICE FOR COMMUNITY PROGRESS

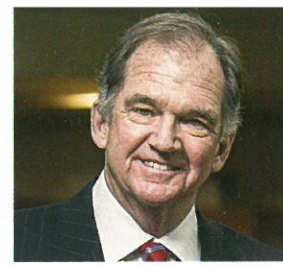
FEBRUARY 2016



LEE FISHER  
CEOs FOR CITIES



LEE FRIEDMAN  
COLLEGE NOW



BILL CHRIST  
HATHAWAY BROWN

BANKING ON  
THE FLATS  
PUBLIC-PRIVATE  
PARTNERSHIP  
REVITALIZING  
WATERFRONT

# The POWER100

NORTHEAST OHIO'S  
MOST INFLUENTIAL PEOPLE

**Beth Mooney**  
Chairman and CEO, KeyCorp

SUPER  
LAWYERS  
ANNUAL LOOK AT  
OHIO'S TOP ATTORNEYS

## 2016 POWER 100 LIST



**Robyn Minter Smyers,**  
partner-in-charge,  
Thompson Hine

**Barbara Snyder,** president, Case Western Reserve University

**Michael Symon,** chef and owner, Lola, Lolita, B Spot and Roast

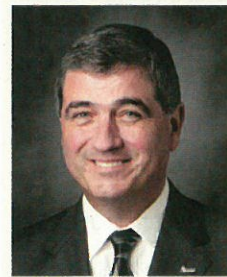
**Dan Walsh,** CEO, Citymark Capital

**Scott Wolstein,** president, The Wolstein Group; CEO, Starwood Retail Partners

**Brian Zimmerman,** CEO, Cleveland Metroparks

**Ann Zoller,** executive director, LAND Studio

## LAKE/GEAUGA



**Morris Beverage Jr.,**  
president, Lakeland  
Community College

**Jennifer Deckard,** president and CEO, Fairmount Minerals

**James Hambrick,** chairman, president and CEO, Lubrizol Corp.

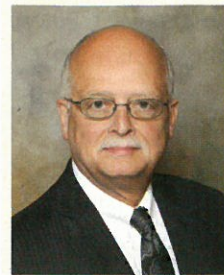
**Cynthia Moore-Hardy,** president and CEO, Lake Health

**Daniel Troy,** Lake County commissioner

## LORAIN COUNTY

**Dennis Cocco,** co-director, Great Lakes Innovation & Development Enterprise

**Jim Cordes,** administrator, Lorain County



**Kevin Flanigan,**  
president, General Plug and  
Manufacturing Co.

**John Kahl,** CEO, ShurTech Brands

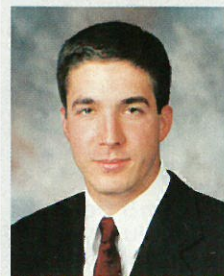
**Ted Kalo,** commissioner, Lorain County

**Ed Oley,** president and CEO, Mercy Regional Medical Center Lorain

**Donald Sheldon,** president, University Hospitals Elyria Medical Center

## MAHONING VALLEY

**Warren Anderson,** president and owner, Anderson-DuBose



**Anthony Cafaro Jr.,** co-  
president, The Cafaro Co.

**Jim Cossler,** CEO and chief evangelist, Youngstown Business Incubator

**Sam Covelli,** owner and operator, Covelli Enterprises

**Denise DeBartolo York,** chairperson, The DeBartolo Corp.

**Tom Fleming,** president, Aim NationalLease

**Thomas Humphries,** president and CEO, Youngstown-Warren Regional Chamber of Commerce

**Anthony Payiavlas,** president and CEO, AVI Foodsystems Inc.

**John Pogue,** partner, Harrington, Hoppe and Mitchell

**Tim Ryan,** U.S. representative

**Jim Tressel,** president, Youngstown State University

**Gordon Wean,** chairman, Raymond John Wean Foundation



## CAP AND GOWN TOWN

COLLEGE NOW HAS HIT ITS STRIDE AS IT SEEKS TO MAKE COLLEGE ACCESSIBLE TO EVERY CLEVELANDER.

BY LYNNE THOMPSON

**L**ee Friedman had devoted a career in community and economic development to building a better downtown Cleveland, a place where people wanted to live and play as well as work.

But the Beachwood native learned that the state of downtown Cleveland wasn't what concerned C-suite executives most during her tenure as president and CEO of the Cleveland Leadership Center, a position in which she brought the city's top leadership programs — Leadership Cleveland, Cleveland Bridge Builders, Cleveland Executive Fellowship, (i)Cleveland and Look Up to Cleveland — under one organizational structure.

Instead, they worried about how they would fill the jobs they were creating in a city where only 22 to 25 percent of residents ages 25 and older hold an associate's or bachelor's degree — a city that ranks last in educational attainment among similarly sized Midwestern municipalities.

"It just resonated with me that even when you can make a beautiful downtown or beautiful pockets of neighborhoods — which Cleveland has done — at the end of the day, it doesn't really affect the whole the way making sure every person has the opportunity to participate in the local economy," she remembers.

The realization sparked a passion for programs promoting postsecondary education. In early 2010 she met with Pat Mullin, then managing partner at Deloitte & Touche and board chair of Cleveland Scholarship Programs. The 45-year-old nonprofit was quietly providing guidance and funds to help low-income high-school students, mainly in Cuyahoga County, prepare and pay for college.

"He said, 'We're really looking to kind of turn the volume up on this organization,'" she recalls.

Friedman has done that and more during her five years as the organization's CEO. Under her direction, the nonprofit changed its name to College Now Greater Cleveland and began presenting itself as a frontline economic development force that could help employers meet their hiring needs. The result is an annual budget that has almost tripled, from approximately \$5 million to \$12 million, and a staff that grew from 45 to 160,

servicing about 25,000 learners a year. The nonprofit has counselors in public high schools, libraries and community centers throughout Cuyahoga, Lorain, Medina and Summit counties, where they begin broaching the subject of college and education-to-career pathways to students as early as the ninth grade. Assistance ranges from help prepping for the ACT and improving essay-writing skills to completing scholarship applications and evaluating financial aid packages.

Friedman's fundraising pitch is a powerful one based on fact: A \$500 donation will yield eight counseling sessions and an average of \$70,000 in financial aid for an eligible student.

"This town is very generous," she says matter-of-factly. "If you have a mission that resonates with civic, philanthropic and corporate leaders and you can find a way to strategize the mission and then create a business plan around it that makes sense — that can be measured, that can show impact and return on investment — you have a pretty good recipe. That's really what's happened here in these last 5 1/2 years."

One of the most notable ingredients in that recipe is a mentoring program for low-income students receiving a scholarship directly from College Now. (The nonprofit also manages scholarships for at least a hundred foundations and companies.) The initiative, launched three years ago, matches volunteers who have a bachelor's degree with College Now

**"Even when you can make a beautiful downtown or beautiful pockets of neighborhoods — which Cleveland has done — at the end of the day, it doesn't really affect the whole the way making sure every person has the opportunity to participate in the local economy.**

— Lee Friedman, CEO, College Now Greater Cleveland

scholarship recipients via a computer program. "It's a little like eHarmony," Friedman jokes. The students and their respective mentors meet twice a year and engage in email conversations prompted by a computer-generated question sent from mentors to students every two weeks. Those inquiries cover everything from buying books and seeking out instructors during office hours to writing resumes and landing internships.

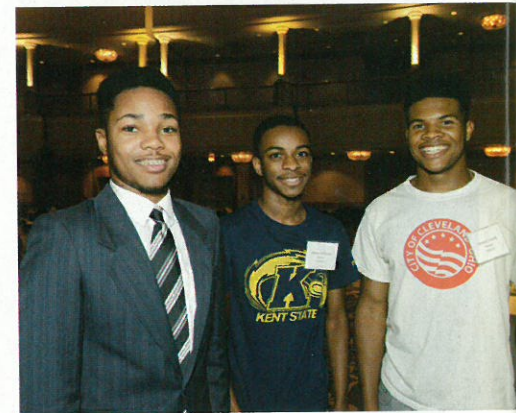
"They're helping these students develop strategy skills and thinking skills," Friedman says. "Most college kids don't come with them. I don't care what their backgrounds are."

The program has grown from 42 to almost 1,200 student-mentor pairs. The mentors represent more than 300 Northeast Ohio companies, including KeyBank, Medical-Mutual and Deloitte & Touche. Those mentors, Friedman observes, double as potential recruiters who can introduce the best and brightest to their employers. "They're doing this to give back," she observes. "But they're also doing it out of enlightened self-interest, to create a pipeline of talent." The program is on track to improve scholarship recipients' on-time graduation rate (defined as earning a bachelor's degree in six years or an associate's degree in three years) to approximately 80 percent — far better than the national rate of 55 percent and one that even bests the 75 percent rate for the nation's most affluent students. The on-time graduation rate for low-income students like the ones College Now serves, in comparison, is 15 percent.

Davon Brantley admits that he didn't think he needed a mentor when he enrolled at the Cleveland Institute of Art in 2014. The Cleveland Heights native had been the man of the house since he was 14 years old, helping his mother raise his three younger sisters and pay the bills with money earned by working at his uncle's towing company. At the same time, he managed to excel in advanced placement courses and graduate from Cleveland Heights High School with a 3.8 grade-point average.

"I was like, Well, I might as well see how it is before I actually come up with these assumptions and make it into a negative thing," he says of the program, which stipulates that participation is mandatory for College Now scholarship recipients.

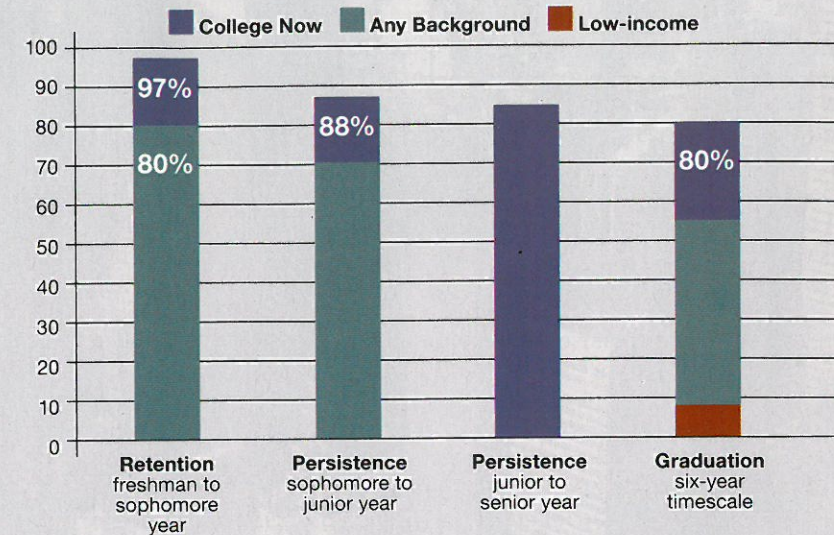
Now Brantley describes his mentor, retired professor Tim Stubner, as "a best



Lee Friedman, CEO of College Now Greater Cleveland (top), has nearly tripled funding for the education-focused nonprofit, which has helped approximately 25,000 underserved youth attain college degrees.

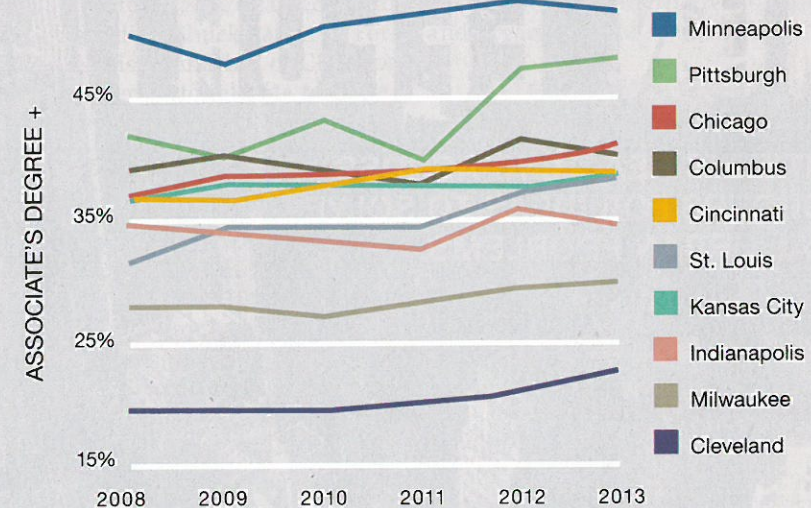
COURTESY OF COLLEGE NOW

## COLLEGE NOW MENTORING RETENTION



## EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF CLEVELAND'S PEER CITIES

Associate's Degree and Higher for Population 25 Years and Higher



friend," a guy he texts, calls and regularly meets for lunch at the Cleveland Museum of Art. He credits Stubner with helping him improve his writing skills and better balance a full load of classes and multiple jobs — demands that had him so stressed late last year that his mother feared he might quit school. Stubner advised him to take breaks and go out with his friends, keep communicating with those who love and support him, and ask for help when necessary.

"Even if college gets stressful, he makes sure that I still have my head on

straight," Brantley says.

The nonprofit also has developed programs for groups of disadvantaged students with like challenges — or, as the case may be, advantages. Friedman mentions the Cleveland Foundation College Now Scholars Program as an example. The initiative markets the top 50 Cleveland Metropolitan School District students to the nation's elite institutions of higher learning in part by taking them on an annual summer trip to schools such as Harvard and Columbia universities and funneling approximately \$1.5

**"[College Now mentors] are helping these students develop strategy skills and thinking skills. Most college kids don't come with them, I don't care what their backgrounds are." — Lee Friedman**

million in financial aid to them annually. Friedman notes these low-income students — generally the ones eligible for Pell grants and reduced or free school lunches — typically "under-match" at colleges, despite their academic credentials.

"They won't look at the top schools in the country because they don't really know about them and they're intimidated," she explains. "And the schools want these kids, because they're looking to broaden their diversity."

Friedman and her colleagues are working to obtain the funding necessary to put counselors in middle schools outside the Cleveland Metropolitan School District so they can begin discussing the prospect of attending college with more students at a younger age. The early dialogue is particularly important for kids growing up in homes where college is never mentioned or dismissed as too expensive to consider. Friedman notes that two-thirds of all jobs created will require some sort of postsecondary education by 2018.

"Kids that age are very focused on instant gratification — they'd rather be playing a game on a cell phone," she says. "So you've got to give them an aspiration or relevance: 'Stick with this. Have patience. Delay the gratification and focus, because there's such a greater good for you.'"

The effort to expand services extends to College Now's Tower City resource center, where the nonprofit offers the same free counseling it provides in high schools to adults interested in continuing their education. The budget for those programs has increased from \$200,000 to almost \$500,000, not including scholarship dollars. Friedman points out that there are approximately 40,000 open jobs in Northeast Ohio right now — jobs that might be filled by some of the half-million adults who started college and never finished.

"You can't fill that pipeline on the backs of 18-year-olds coming out of high school," she says. "You've got to reach in to the undereducated, underemployed adults." Educating adults helps further College Now's founding mission. Friedman points out that whether a child has a parent that went to college is the biggest predictor of whether he or she will venture onto that path. ●