

## Bronfman: Foundation has given \$325-million to 1,700 organizations

» A total of 92 individuals and couples are now on the Giving Pledge roster, including Facebook founder Mark Zuckerberg, blockbuster movie producer George Lucas and investor Carl Icahn.

While he refused to say he was urging other Canadians to step up, Mr. Bronfman stands out for being only the second Canadian on the list. His brother, Edgar, who preceded Charles in committing to the Giving Pledge, became a U.S. citizen years ago, but Charles says he remains a proud Canadian and never took out U.S. citizenship even though he has lived in New York for some time.

Forbes magazine ranked the Montreal-born Charles Bronfman in 2012 as the 13th-richest Canadian, with a net worth of about \$2-billion (U.S.).

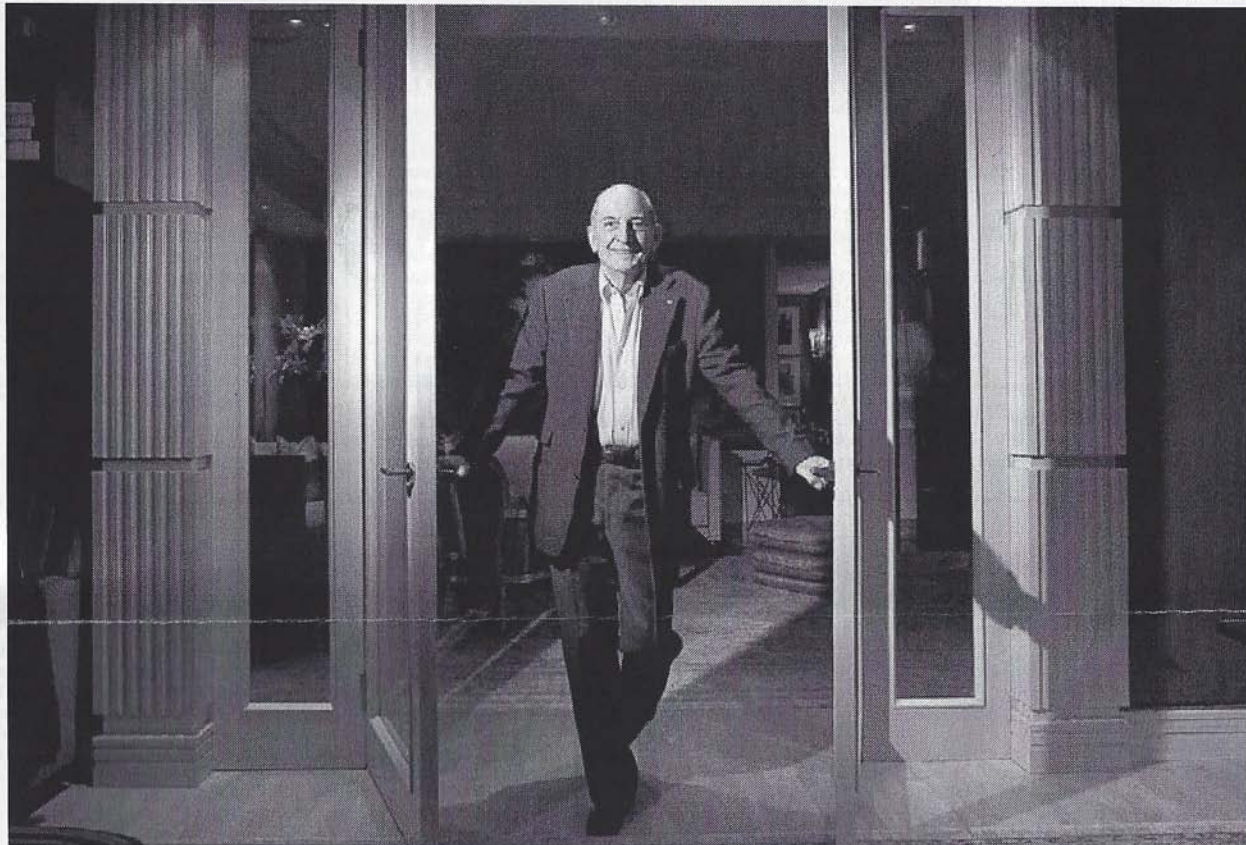
He is no longer active in business, but describes himself as a “hands-on” philanthropist. He launched a foundation in 1986 with his late wife, Andrea.

Among the causes are “the enhancement of Canadianism” via the Historica-Dominion Institute, producer of the now-famous Heritage minutes on television that highlight major events in Canadian history; and sponsoring free trips to Israel for young North American Jews.

Another cause is offering informal education to children in Israeli schools as a supplement to their regular curriculum.

Mr. Bronfman said he decided about 40 years ago, when he was at Seagram, to become a committed philanthropist.

“In my 40s – when I was giving to the Red Cross, United Jewish Appeal and other charities – I said to myself, this is all well and good but these are really amorphous things and maybe there are some causes



Charles Bronfman has committed to give half of his wealth to philanthropy by taking the Giving Pledge. CHRISTINNE MUSCHI/THE GLOBE AND MAIL

out there that I really give a damn about,” he said.

That finally came true with the foundation The Andrea and Charles Bronfman Philanthropies, which has so far given about \$325-million to some 1,700 organizations.

Mr. Bronfman – who has a book called *The Art of Giving*, co-written with foundation pres-

ident Jeffrey Solomon, coming out next week – met Mr. Gates in January at an alternative investment conference in Miami, but said he was not subjected to a pitch about the Giving Pledge.

In a letter posted on the Giving Pledge website – one of the few requirements for new recruits – Mr. Bronfman says he

grew up in a household that was very active in Jewish, local Montreal and Canadian charities.

“I’ll never forget we four siblings knitting (yes, the two boys also) squares for blankets to be sent to the troops overseas during World War II! An inspiration from Mother! It’s no surprise then, that each of us has contri-

buted to society, each in his or her own way.”

What he’s learned over the years is “pretty simple,” he said: “No matter how much money you have, how passionate you are about something, you cannot change the entire world. You have to find a niche and be effective. Don’t take something you can’t make a difference in.”