

# Justice for **ALL**

Attorney Fay Clayton's professional and philanthropic pursuits focus on social justice and women's issues.

By Ivy Gracie • Photo by Jesse Strilger

Fay Clayton came of age during America's greatest growth spurt, and it informed the rest of her life. "I grew up in a time when there weren't equal rights for a lot of groups, including women," she recalls. "I was delighted to see the changes that came about in the '60s through the Civil Rights legislation, but it took me a little longer to realize that women...were [still] being treated like second class citizens.

As I woke up to that, I wanted to do something about it."

After earning a law degree from Chicago-Kent College of Law, Fay embarked on a career that would rack up victories for the historically underrepresented. Fay became a highly regarded litigator, arguing cases for the ACLU and NOW. In 1989, she became a founding shareholder of Robinson Curley & Clayton, P.C. And after a particularly fruitful year in 1990, she began looking for another way to serve.

"I wanted to use a significant part of the money for causes I believed in," she recalls. Fay was intent on getting the greatest reach with her contribution. "It was enough money that I wanted to put it where it could earn dividends," she says. "I wanted it to continue to do good things even in years when I might not have as much income."

Fay decided to set up a donor advised fund, but she didn't know where to place the money. It took an airport delay to reveal the answer. "I was snowed in at LaGuardia and started chatting with the woman sitting next to me," she recalls. "She worked for a charitable trust in Chicago." Fay asked her advice, and the woman told Fay about the Chicago Foundation for Women (CFW).

CFW's driving tenet is that all women and girls should be able to reach their potential while living in safe, just and healthy communities. Fostering the advancement of women's causes through grant-

making and advocacy, the Foundation focuses on three issues: economic security, freedom from violence and health. Through her fund with CFW, Fay contributes to a number of organizations that resonate with her core values.

Fay also served on CFW's board and co-chaired the Allocation Committee, and she sits on the Alumni Board, continuing to contribute money and serving as a goodwill ambassador.

According to Fay, it's important to get involved with charitable organizations, not only through financial contributions but also with action. And she says there are ample opportunities within CFW. "There are leadership councils," she explains. "They're groups of similar women who come together to raise money with the idea of becoming the leaders of tomorrow."

And the benefits of getting involved can boomerang. "I got to know other members and made

some lifelong friends," Fay says, adding, "I didn't get involved on account of trying to get work. But when you work side by side with someone and they get to see your dedication, abilities and stamina, it's no surprise that they might look to you if they have a need for someone in your area of expertise. Some of my best clients have come through my public interest work."

But advancing women's causes is unfinished business. "On average, women suffer from more poverty, they have more involvement with child-care and they're more often the victims of violence," Fay observes. "If women aren't going to do it, sometimes it won't get done. When push comes to shove, it's our sisters we can count on the most." n



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Carlos Guerra and Jennifer Kromberg in *Symphony in Three Movements*, Choreography by George Balanchine. © The George Balanchine Trust. Photo by Joe Gato.