April 21, 2015
My Giving Pledge

It is with a profound sense of relief that I am able to write this letter, expressing my intent to give away the vast majority of my wealth. Having the opportunity to help others achieve a better and more fulfilling life, is not only an enormous privilege, but also a lifelong dream.

Several years ago, I received the support of my two young daughters, Jane and Hilary, in this pursuit. At an early age, my daughter, Jane, encouraged me to devote all of my resources to philanthropy and my dream of helping others. She assured me that my love and happiness were far more important to her than any inheritance she might receive. As they have grown older, both of my daughters have become even more adamant that I pursue this dream.

With the unwavering support of my wonderful daughters, I now feel a tremendous and growing responsibility to be a good steward of my resources. I have always believed that those who have the abilities and opportunities to accumulate wealth should utilize their skills, in addition to their wealth, to solve the world's problems. My objective is to apply the skills and knowledge that I utilized throughout my business career in the philanthropic realm. I will focus on the key issues, do my homework, partner with those who are the best at what they do, and try to seek long term solutions rather than “short-term fixes.”

I want to help those who do not have the ability to help themselves, and I plan to initially focus on children who have been dealt a bad hand, either physically or socially, and on providing these children, our children, the opportunity to live a productive and fulfilling life. As Frederick Douglass once said, “It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men.”

Currently, I am devoting my time and resources to help two specific groups of children—children with autism, and foster children. I am working to find the causes associated with a rise in the incidence of children along the autism spectrum, and to provide diagnosis and treatment within the first year of birth. I have also found that children who exit the foster care system in our State at age 18 often become wards of the state a second time; because our system fails to equip them with the necessary tools to survive as adults in our world. I want to break this cycle. We have assumed the responsibility for these children, so we need to finish the task.

I am also working to eliminate the need for pet euthanasia due to overpopulation. As an animal lover, it is simply unfathomable to me that, in our country, we euthanize over one million pets per year, simply because we have neglected those who have become dependent upon humans for their very existence.
With respect to these issues, and the many others I hope to address in my lifetime, my aim will be to tackle the source of problems, rather than simply meeting immediate, or short-term, needs.

I am fully aware of the great privilege that I have—the privilege to focus on helping others, rather than having to worry about my own survival, as millions of people throughout our world must do each day. It is easy to give away money when you want for nothing. Money does not buy happiness, but it can buy freedom - freedom from worry about your, or your child's, wellbeing, or next meal; or freedom from worry about simply surviving another day. So, I take this privilege of wealth with a great deal of gratitude and humility, and will attempt to use it to buy freedom for those shackled by poverty, neglect, or the cruel fate of circumstances.

Sincerely,

Sue Ann Arnall