I grew up in a middle-class family in Detroit, Michigan. Ever since my early childhood I had large ambitions and firmly believed in my abilities to achieve them. Is short, I believed in the American Dream.

Through hard work and unrelenting persistence I turned a ten page business plan, created after being fired from a New York financial firm, into over a $15 billion business and one of the most prominent real estate companies in the world.

I have been incredibly fortunate to have achieved such success, but I never lost sight of a lesson I learned as a young boy from my Uncle Max Fisher. Max, a devout philanthropist, taught me the impact and influence you can have in making the world a better place. He taught me that with wealth comes responsibility. As a result, I have had the opportunity to give back in meaningful ways for decades and not just through charitable donations, but also through sharing my time and my expertise to help organizations be even more impactful.

I am proud to serve on the Board of Trustees of the Guggenheim Foundation, Lincoln Center, New York Presbyterian Hospital, the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation International, the Jackie Robinson Foundation and the World Resources Institute. I was also thrilled to be able to give back to my Alma Mater, an institution which had a profound impact on my success, the University of Michigan, which has since been renamed the Stephen M. Ross School of Business at the University of Michigan. Not only have I had the pleasure of being a significant donor, but this year I will be Chairing the University’s $4 billion capital campaign.

Although I have generally conducted my philanthropic efforts privately, I hope through publicly committing to the Giving Pledge that I will inspire others to commit to significant philanthropy the way my Uncle inspired me. I commit to give away the substantial majority of my assets to charitable causes and give back to the society of which my success was derived.

My efforts will continue to focus on the areas of education, the arts, healthcare and the creation of more sustainable cities throughout the world. I have always believed that if our cities do well, we all do well. To that end I am working with the World Resources Institute, the world preeminent global environmental think tank, to create a visionary leadership foundation to assist cities around the world in creating new models of livability, opportunity and business innovation.

I am delighted, grateful and honored to join Bill, Melinda, Warren and countless others in this important effort in the hope that we can leave the world a little better place then we found it.

Stephen M. Ross