

To the Editor:

What a delight to read Mr. Lenkowsky's review of Hasia Diner's biography of the philanthropist Julius Rosenwald. While Mr. Rosenwald's legacy may not be as recognizable today as that of some of his philanthropic peers (for example Carnegie or Rockefeller) his story should be more widely known. Mr. Rosenwald's giving history remains highly influential among those who study and engage in the practice of strategic giving.

The transition from the 19th to the 20th century witnessed the explosive growth of "scientific" or strategic philanthropy. Conceptualized as distinct from traditional almsgiving, strategic philanthropy sought to ameliorate or eradicate serious social ills by identifying and targeting root causes. Mr. Rosenwald's giving, particularly his support for the Rosenfeld Schools providing educational opportunities for African Americans living in segregated states, is an inspirational example of targeted strategic giving. If you believe a root cause of injustice and lack of opportunity is the inability to obtain an education, then building and supporting schools is a solution likely to have true ameliorative impact. And indeed it did.

The newest generation of philanthropists investing billions of dollars with the aim of improving education could benefit from becoming students of Mr. Rosenwald's approach; work diligently to identify a root cause – then boldly build a plan and act on it.

NOTE: This letter was originally published in the Wall Street Journal (<https://www.wsj.com/articles/julius-rosenwald-exemplar-for-philanthropy-1510357646>).