HENRY KRAVIS, BCIU’S 2020 GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP AWARD RECIPIENT

Alex Gorsky, for changing the trajectory of health for humanity. Ajay Banga, for revolutionizing financial inclusion across the globe. Marillyn Hewson, for tackling some of the most pressing science and engineering challenges in history.

For 35 years, BCIU and its partners have gathered annually in New York for our Dwight D. Eisenhower Global Awards Gala. We come together to celebrate outstanding leadership in the international arena and the power of partnership to drive progress around the world. But this year is different.

It is different not only because, for the first time ever, members and guests from dozens of countries will gather virtually. It is different because we are at an incredible juncture in human history.

Our world has been shocked into transformation. The greatest confluence of economic, health and social crises in recent memory will shift 71 million people back into extreme poverty and 270 million toward food insecurity by the end of this year. At the start of 2020, nobody could have predicted we would suffer such a setback.

This is why with the 2020 BCIU Eisenhower gala we are looking beyond celebration in an effort to catalyze action. History has taught us that doing good for society leads to better outcomes for governments and businesses. This year, we are coming together around a common purpose to enhance unity and expand international understanding around the world.

The recipient of BCIU’s 2020 Eisenhower Global Citizenship Award, Henry Kravis, understands this mission well. Mr. Kravis has been driving unity and progress globally for over five decades.

Alongside his first cousin George Roberts and Jerry Kohlberg, Mr. Kravis founded private equity firm KKR in 1976, pioneering an industry that has since invested billions of dollars of capital to support businesses, economies and, importantly, communities. In doing so, his work has enhanced the retirement security and livelihood of millions, including teachers, firefighters and other public servants.

From its deep roots in private equity, KKR today has grown into a leading global investment firm managing $234 billion of assets. As KKR has grown, Mr. Kravis and his colleagues have stayed laser focused on their commitment to building value for their companies and their investors over the long term.

As part of that undertaking, KKR became an early mover in thoughtfully incorporating environmental, social and governance (ESG) considerations throughout its investment decisions and was one of the first signatories to sign on to the United Nations’ Principles for Responsible Investment. The firm has also been dedicated to helping solve some of the world’s most pressing challenges, with billions of dollars invested in companies directly addressing urgent societal issues.
KKR’s positive impact extends to its philanthropic efforts, built on the firm’s belief that successful companies are only as strong as the communities in which they operate. Mr. Kravis and KKR encourage employees to make a difference in their communities, particularly through the firm’s 40 for 40 program, providing employees 40 hours of paid time annually to volunteer with community projects and nonprofit organizations that are meaningful to them.

Most recently, with commitments from Mr. Kravis and the firm’s leadership, KKR built a $50 million relief fund to support people and communities dislocated by the COVID-19 pandemic. This fund will support nonprofit organizations responding to the COVID-19 crisis as well as small businesses globally that are struggling.

Mr. Kravis himself is a big believer in making an impact on communities where one lives and works, as demonstrated by his personal philanthropy. He is particularly dedicated to supporting causes that contribute to education, including helping the underserved education community through his work with Sponsors for Educational Opportunity. He is also dedicated to supporting the arts and science, including ongoing research at Memorial Sloan Kettering related to finding cures and better treatment options for rare cancers.

Through his work at KKR and beyond, Mr. Kravis has shown that making a positive impact is smart business and an essential part of long-term success in a rapidly changing world. Because of his leadership, businesses understand that when they lead better, the world does better. And if you invest in the future, you can become more than just a steward of a better tomorrow. In a very real way, you can help shift a whole host of challenges into the history books.

The Global Citizenship Award is presented in recognition of exceptional accomplishments in the field of social responsibility and sustainable development. We are honored this year to recognize Henry Kravis. His generational leadership and unwavering commitment to enhance the growth and development of humankind is a model for all of us.

But ultimately, it takes every one of us working together. Looking ahead, we must do everything in our power to promote international understanding, bring the power of partnership to people in every corner of the world, and transform our great challenges into opportunities to make global change.

Peter Tichansky
President and Chief Executive Officer