



MELISSA SANTEE
Chief Philanthropy Officer

Melissa Santee serves as the Cleveland Museum of Natural History's Chief Philanthropy Officer, a role to which she was appointed in 2018. As a member of the Museum's senior leadership team, Santee oversees all aspects of philanthropy for the Museum and has been instrumental in driving forward its \$150 million *Transforming the World of Discovery* campaign—the largest fundraising initiative in the Museum's history—raising more than \$30 million in the last two years alone. This campaign supports a complete reinvention of the Museum's campus and exhibits to make it a natural history museum unlike any other, with an inquiry-based, audience-centered approach that tells a unified story of life and the forces that shape our planet.

Santee's record of successful campaign leadership and her expertise in strategic planning and execution make her a vital asset to the Museum's overall mission. She has successfully led significant fundraising initiatives at each of the organizations she has served, and her career has been highlighted by numerous record-setting campaigns.

Prior to joining the Museum, Santee served as Director of Advancement at Mount Pisgah Christian School in Johns Creek, Ga., where she was responsible for all programming and events related to fundraising, alumni relations, stewardship, marketing, and communications. While in this role, Santee successfully led a \$20 million comprehensive campaign—the largest in the school's history—which resulted in the largest-ever gift from a foundation and the largest single gift from a family.

Previously, Santee served as Director of Development for the Palm Beach County Cultural Council in West Palm Beach, Fla. In this role, she created and managed a development program that included the solicitation and stewardship of campaign, annual, and planned gifts. Santee also formulated the strategy for a \$6 million capital campaign, raised more than \$400,000 in major gift support, and planned and executed the council's annual gala, achieving a 22% increase in attendance and a 21% increase in revenue.

From 2001 to 2010, Santee held fundraising and leadership roles at Case Western Reserve University. As the Executive Director of External Relations at the Weatherhead School of Management, she supervised and developed the school's overall fundraising strategy. In this position, Santee raised more than \$10 million in major gift support—an increase of 236%—and more than \$850,000 in annual fund revenue, an increase of 155%. Previously, she served as the Associate Dean of Development & Public Affairs for the Case Western Reserve University School of Law, overseeing all aspects of institutional advancement including fundraising, external relations, and alumni affairs. Her efforts led to increased alumni participation in the annual fund.

In 2024, Santee was named a Progressive Woman honoree by *Smart Business Magazine*. She is a member of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, an organization that promotes stewardship, ethical fundraising, and the advancement of philanthropy. She is also a member of the Council for Advancement and Support of Education, a global nonprofit association dedicated to empowering educational advancement professionals to fulfill their missions. She serves as an officer with the Avon Athletic Boosters.

Santee holds a Bachelor of Arts in Communications and Public Relations from the University of Toledo. She lives in Avon, Ohio, with her husband and the couple's three children, two of whom are in college.