

DAVID K. NORTHINGTON, PH.D.
Principal and Partner



There is an old Chinese proverb: “The person who says it cannot be done should not interrupt the person doing it.” Known as someone who can get things done, Dr. David Northington enjoys working in philanthropy because it gives him the opportunity to interact with “energetic, bright, and capable colleagues, and to work with organizations that are motivated to grow and improve.”

To the hands-on, customized, problem-solving approach of Dini Partners, David adds his own work style, helping organizations by giving them the tools and the confidence to be successful. Considering himself to be both a coach and advisor, he brings experience and a focus on solutions to his clients. His tenure as the CEO of a major nonprofit organization as it evolved from its modest beginnings into a mature and nationally renowned organization gives him special insight into the problems and opportunities presented by institutional growth and change. An excellent communicator, David emphasizes the importance of listening to constituents, assessing their needs, and fashioning responsive solutions in both the management and fundraising arenas.

David earned his Ph.D. in botany from the University of Texas in Austin and was a professor of botany at Texas Tech University for 13 years before leaving academia. At the request of Lady Bird Johnson in 1984, he became the first Executive Director of the National Wildflower Research Center, which he led for 13 years. During his administration, he was actively involved with numerous nonprofit organizations across the country, including the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta and the American Association of Museums.

David is still personally active in conservation and environmental pursuits, but also enjoys spending time with his grandchildren, reading, and playing golf when he is not working with clients. He takes the same approach with work or play: “If it is not fun, something is seriously wrong. Embrace smart change over status quo.”

