

UCSD Dedicates Leichtag Biomedical Research Building

April 27, 2004

Leslie Franz

The new Leichtag Family Foundation Biomedical Research Building on the UCSD School of Medicine campus was dedicated in ceremonies featuring California State Insurance Commissioner John Garamendi, UCSD officials and members of the Leichtag family.

The facility is named in recognition of a \$12 million gift from the Leichtag Family Foundation supporting research focusing on childhood diseases. The four-story, 140,000 sq. ft. building contains state-of-the-art laboratories and conference space.

Honored guests were Lee and Toni Leichtag, their daughter, Joli Leichtag Andre and their granddaughter Heather Hertz. Lee and Toni own M.D. Pharmaceutical, Inc., and are the co-founders of the Leichtag Family Foundation. Toni is chair and president of the foundation, Lee is secretary, and Joli is the vice chair and vice president.

"This is the first major new biomedical research facility for the health sciences in almost 10 years, and during that time our research activity has nearly doubled. These laboratories will be utilized by some of UCSD's most talented and productive scientists, working to answer questions about the fundamental mechanisms underlying health and disease," said Edward W. Holmes, UCSD Vice Chancellor for Health Sciences. "The Leichtag Family Foundation's generous gift will further support our faculty's efforts to improve patient care by understanding disease at the most basic level."

The building was funded through a mechanism established in 1990 by legislation sponsored by Commissioner Garamendi when he was in the state legislature. The construction and ongoing operation and maintenance of "Garamendi" buildings is paid for via the indirect costs generated by federal contracts and grants awarded to researchers in the facility.

"Buildings such as this one bring together the very best minds, and give them the opportunity to conduct fundamental research and generate knowledge that will improve the lives of people today and into the future," said Garamendi. "Today we are dedicating a building, and thanking the Leichtags for their generosity. I also ask each and every one of us here today, to dedicate ourselves to sharing and investing in the university -- in medical research that will improve human health -- and in programs that also contribute to the economic strength of the state."

The Leichtag Family Foundation is a longtime philanthropic organization in the San Diego community. The Foundation has donated 44 apartments to Seacrest Assisted Living Center; sponsored the C.H.A.M.P. program at Jewish Family Service of San Diego; supports Voices for Children; donated the Healing Garden at Children's Hospital and Health Center; was one of the original Founders of the Holocaust Museum in Washington D.C.; donated the Emergency Wing and Women's Health & Birth Pavilion at Scripps Memorial Hospital, Encinitas; and supports many other local charities.

"Through the research conducted at UCSD it is hoped that new cures will be discovered, and in the process, young research doctors and scientists will be educated, supported and motivated while they seek to advance the health and well-being of children," said Lee Leichtag.

"Finding cures for childhood diseases has always been of high importance to our family and of great value to the nation's future," said Toni Leichtag. "It will be very exciting and rewarding for us to follow the progress of UCSD's research."

The building was designed by architects Zimmer, Gunsul, Frasca Partnership of Portland, Oregon. A dramatic feature of the facility is a multi-story sculpture by Ed Carpenter, located in the building's airy atrium entrance.

Media Contact: Leslie Franz (619) 543-6163

