

Mandell Weiss donates \$1 2 million dollars to complete the new theater

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The University of California Board of Regents today (October 16) accepted a gift of approximately \$1.2 million for capital improvements on a new theater nearing completion at the University of California, San Diego.

The regents also approved naming the facility the Mandell Weiss Center for the Performing Arts in honor of the donor.

Weiss' gift will be used to construct a scene and costume shop and toward the purchase of needed equipment to make the theater operational.

The 500-seat theater is a cooperative venture between the Theatre and Arts Foundation of San Diego County and the university. The first performance in the new theater is scheduled for the late spring of 1982.

Weiss, 90, is a San Diego resident and one of the founders of the Fed Mart Corporation and the Price Club. His gift to the Theatre and Arts Foundation and the university consists of stock in the Price Club.

Funds from the sale of the stock, along with other gifts from the community, will be used to construct a two-story building adjacent to the theater to house scene and paint shops, a costume workshop and storage room, and for lighting and other theater equipment.

The Foundation, formed in 1954 to provide a permanent home for the La Jolla Playhouse, has provided more than \$3 million for construction of the theater. The university has provided the land, parking facilities, maintenance and security.

The facility will house student and professional staff productions of the UC San Diego Department of Drama during the school year, and the professional season of the La Jolla Playhouse during the summer.

The Romanian-born Weiss earned a degree in journalism at the University of Oregon, where he also participated in several student theater productions.

In 1929, he moved to San Diego, then a town of only 75,000, where he entered the jewelry business, beginning a career which thrived and grew along with the city.

Lewis Silverberg, chairman of the Fund for the New Theatre, said Weiss' gift was "just what we need to ensure the success of the campaign.

"This not only sets a fast pace for all of us to measure up to," Silverberg continued, "but it means that we can meet the goal and look ahead to a much needed building to house rehearsal rooms and offices."

Foundation President Ewart W. Goodwin Jr. said that "all of the people who have kept hope and faith alive and preserved the assets of the Foundation should feel that their faith and hard work has been rewarded.

"We owe a deep debt of gratitude to Mr. Weiss, not just the Foundation but the whole theater-going community in Southern California, for his recognition of the importance of the arts in San Diego County.

"We can turn that much more of our attention to producing a professional season in the summer of 1982 which will honor the name of La Jolla Playhouse and live up to those high standards of production and performance," Goodwin added.

After the Board of Regents approved the design of the theater in March 1979, ground was broken for construction of the \$2.7 million facility on June 22, 1980.

Subsequently, the University of California, San Diego and the Theatre and Arts Foundation developed plans to launch a campaign to raise an additional \$2.25 million for equipment and related facilities as well as for landscaping.

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