

July 14, 2013 | By Debra Kain and Judy Piercey

Campus Benefits from Generosity of Irwin and Joan Jacobs with Latest Gift to Fund Cancer Care



Joan Jacobs

A leadership gift of \$1 million from San Diego philanthropists Joan and Irwin Jacobs will help UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center change how cancer is treated by supporting the [Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy](#), a newly established center headed by Razelle Kurzrock, M.D. The UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center is one of just 41 National Cancer Institute-designated Comprehensive Cancer Centers in the United States, and the only one in the San Diego region.

“Thanks to the generosity of Joan and Irwin Jacobs, UC San Diego will strengthen our leading role in the future of cancer research,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “We are

grateful for the Jacobses’ longstanding commitment to improving the lives of San Diegans, and for their confidence in UC San Diego’s ability to positively impact this critical area of health care.”

The \$1 million contribution by the Jacobses is the most recent in a series of gifts from the local philanthropists that are helping to shape the impact of research at UC San Diego. In 2010, the couple pledged \$75 million to help fund the state-of-the-art Jacobs Medical Center, scheduled to open on the university’s East Campus in La Jolla in 2016. In 2003, they committed \$110 million—the largest gift in the history of the university—to the Jacobs School of Engineering. They have also made significant charitable gifts to numerous scholarship and fellowship programs, the School of Medicine, the Division of Arts and Humanities, the School of International Relations and Pacific Studies, the Stuart Collection and the Rady School of Management, where they are recognized as founding donors.

Irwin Jacobs was a founding faculty member of UC San Diego, serving as a professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering from 1966 to 1972. Jacobs is Founding Chairman and CEO Emeritus of Qualcomm Incorporated, a San Diego-based Fortune 500 company. Both he and his wife, Joan, have been dedicated advisors as well as donors to the university, and each has served as Board Members of the UC San Diego Foundation. Joan was a co-founder of the Friends of the International Center and the Friends of the Stuart Collection, as well as a long-term board member of the La Jolla Playhouse.

Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy

“Over the past months, Joan and I became increasingly excited as we learned more about successes in translational work in personalized medicine that Dr. Kurzrock had achieved at M.D. Anderson and her plans for the new UC San Diego Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy,” said Irwin Jacobs. “We agreed it was important to help ensure that this new Center move ahead rapidly, with research and support of clinical trials in an area that could have such positive results on cancer patients from around the world. We look forward to following the activities closely.”

Kurzrock, a renowned oncologist and professor of medicine who was recruited to UC San Diego last November, is known for developing one of the largest and best phase 1 clinical trials programs in the nation while at the University of Texas M.D. Anderson Cancer Center. A central theme of that program was the personalized medicine strategy, an approach utilizing advanced molecular technologies to match patients with targeted cancer treatments.

Personalized medicine is also the aim of UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center’s Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy—individualizing therapy for patients with cancer in order to optimize response to treatment and minimize serious side effects. The approach calls for identification of mutations or other tumor-specific abnormalities in the patient’s genetic profile, then match patients with a therapy tailored for that individual and type of cancer.

“Our next goal is to build a world-class center for clinical trials in cancer at Moores Cancer Center,” Kurzrock said. “This gift jump starts our initiative, starting with molecular profiling of cancer tumors, and gets us started in a very quick way.”

In addition to Kurzrock’s world-recognized work in translational medicine—bringing the discoveries of scientists in the laboratory to treat patients—she is also vice chief of the Hematology-Oncology Division in the UC San Diego School of Medicine.

The Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy is one of the latest initiatives to come forward as part of the campus’s [strategic planning process](#), which has sharpened UC San Diego’s mission to be a student-centered, research-oriented, service-oriented public university.

“The Jacobses’ philanthropy will allow UC San Diego Health System to become one of the premier destination academic medical centers in the country, increasing the speed at which medical breakthroughs are translated into clinical practice,” said David A. Brenner, M.D., vice chancellor for Health Sciences and dean of the UC San Diego School of Medicine.



Added UC San Diego Moores Cancer Center director Scott M. Lippman, M.D., “Joan and Irwin Jacobs have once again exhibited their leadership and concern for our community through their support of personalized medicine with Dr. Razelle Kurzrock’s research at Moores Cancer Center. We are excited about the impact this gift will have on the Center for Personalized Cancer Therapy and caring for our patients.”

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