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Junior Seau Foundation Supports Brain Injury Studies and Education at UC San Diego

Matching funds will bring total support to \$1 million for critical research and community outreach efforts

The Junior Seau Foundation has pledged \$250,000 to support brain injury research and education at the University of California San Diego. The gift is made in memory of the beloved NFL Football Hall of Famer and longtime San Diego Charger, Junior Seau, who passed away in 2012 and was subsequently diagnosed with chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a neurodegenerative disease associated with repeated blows to the head. The funds will be used to establish the *Junior Seau Endowed Faculty Fellowship in Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)*, as well as the Junior Seau Lectureship Series to inform the community and K-12 students about the causes and risks associated with traumatic brain injury.

Tripling the impact of the Junior Seau Foundation's gift, the donation will be matched dollar for dollar as part of the UC San Diego Chancellor's Endowed Chair and Faculty Fellowship Challenge, as well as by the university's Division of Biological Sciences and the Kavli Institute for Brain and Mind, bringing total funding to \$1 million.

"As one of the world's premier institutions for brain research, UC San Diego shares the Junior Seau Foundation's strong commitment to studying the brain in an effort to find better ways of treating and preventing neurodegenerative diseases caused by traumatic brain injury," said UC San Diego Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. "We are so grateful to the foundation for its generosity in supporting scientific research and education in this area."

"We are pleased to provide this support to UC San Diego," said Jay Kawano, president of the Junior Seau Foundation. "Junior would have been passionate about building our understanding of the disease that he battled, as well as educating young people about CTE and TBI, and how they can be prevented."

The *Junior Seau Endowed Faculty Fellowship in Traumatic Brain Injury* will be used to attract or retain a rising academic star whose basic sciences research is related to TBI, with the goal of building our understanding of brain injury. Ultimately, research will be targeted to finding better ways to prevent and cure related diseases. Faculty fellowships at UC San Diego honor promising junior faculty who show capacity for great distinction in their research. Fellowships provide a perpetual source of funds

to support scholarly work, and they can play an important role in attracting and retaining academic leaders. The holder of the *Junior Seau Endowed Faculty Fellowship in Traumatic Brain Injury* will also be a faculty member within UC San Diego's acclaimed Kavli Institute for Brain and Mind.

"UC San Diego is a leader in brain research and we believe that recruiting young stars to our already impressive team of scientists will spark new and exciting discoveries that will make a difference for countless people," said Bill McGinnis, dean of the Division of Biological Sciences. "Building our fundamental understanding of the brain with basic science research is critical to the translation of discoveries into cures."

The endowed Junior Seau Lectureship Series at UC San Diego will be established in honor of Seau's commitment to leadership and empowering young people. The lectureship will focus on educating K-12 kids and members of the community about science and the brain, including the injuries and impacts that can be sustained from inadequate protection.

"Junior was dedicated to community outreach and supporting young people with access to healthcare, education, recreation and safety from harm," said Kawano. "Empowering students with information about the brain and the risks from trauma would have been important to him."

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MEDIA CONTACT

Jade Griffin, 858-246-5418, cjgriffin@ucsd.edu

Kim McDonald, 858-534-7572, kmcdonald@ucsd.edu

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