

Imagination Gets a Boost with \$1 Million Gift

ViaSat named Founding Partner of Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination in recognition of donation



Sheldon Brown, director of the Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination, at the opening of the center in May 2013. Photo by Erik Jepsen/UC San Diego Publications

The University of California, San Diego is home to the first and only Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination, honoring the vision of “2001: A Space Odyssey” author Arthur C. Clarke. Today, the campus is announcing a \$1 million gift from San Diego-based satellite and digital communications innovator ViaSat Inc. (VSAT) that will continue Clarke’s greatest legacy: imagination. In recognition of this charitable donation, ViaSat has been named Founding Partner of the Clarke Center.

“ViaSat’s co-founders include UC San Diego alumni, and they understand the importance of imagination in seeking new frontiers,” said Chancellor Pradeep K. Khosla. “The company’s generous gift will help the Clarke Center honor

Clarke Center Events

Dec. 3

[Becoming Galactic: Citizens of the Galaxy](#)

the late author and innovator through cultural, scientific and medical transformations. These occur when imagination is more effectively incorporated into research and our daily lives.”

Dec. 7
Galaxy Garden Workshop

Britain’s Sir Arthur C. Clarke, celebrated for his multi-disciplinary legacy in science and engineering, is also considered one of the most inspiring and engaging science fiction writers of all time for such classics as “Childhood’s End,” “Rendezvous with Rama” as well as “2001: A Space Odyssey.” His visionary books and papers have fueled the imaginations and avocations of young and old for more than six decades.

That vision is why *ViaSat* contributed to the center. The gift will support the Clarke Center’s operations and imagination research; a portion will also be used to establish the Arthur C. Clarke Center Endowment to ensure the Clarke Center’s sustainability.



UC San Diego ViaSat co-founders (from left) Mark D. Dankberg, Steven R. Hart and Mark J. Miller.

In 1986, Mark D. Dankberg, together with UC San Diego alumni Steven R. Hart, ’80 and Mark J. Miller, ’81, founded *ViaSat*. In 2008, in the face of much skepticism from both the satellite industry and financial markets, the trio embarked on their \$500 million project to build a satellite, *ViaSat-1*, with more capacity than all other satellites over North America combined. The project achieved commercial success and spurred an industry to follow *ViaSat*’s lead in finding innovative ways to continue to reposition satellite as a viable competitor to other communication technologies. Today, the company provides communication, security, and networking systems and services to consumers as well as government, military and corporate clients.

“When I was a little kid, I was always fascinated by space and science fiction. And Arthur C. Clarke was certainly someone I admired,” said Mark D. Dankberg, ViaSat chairman of the board and CEO. “Imagination is one of the core elements of who we are. Being the Founding Partner of the Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination is a way for us to encourage more people to expand the boundaries of what’s possible. We look forward to an ongoing partnership in support of the center’s research and program agenda.”

Dankberg said that when he and co-founders Mark Miller and Steve Hart were starting ViaSat they always aspired to do satellite networks, but never dreamed of having a satellite of their own. Citing the company’s recently announced next step of building ViaSat-2, he referred to Arthur Clarke’s quote: “Any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.”

Added Hart, vice president and chief technical officer for the company, “Human imagination will play a critical role in the future of our company, just as it will in shaping the future of society. As a Founding Partner, we fully support the goals and mission of the Arthur C. Clarke Center for Human Imagination.”

The center was established by an agreement between UC San Diego and the Arthur C. Clarke Foundation in 2012. Its initiatives will span a wide range of disciplines and collaborations among institutions and individuals to help understand the nature of imagination and to build tools and develop methods that will extend imagination. UC San Diego’s Sheldon Brown, professor of computing in the arts in the department of visual arts in the Division of Arts and Humanities, is the director of the center.

The mission of UC San Diego’s Clarke Center is to understand, enhance and enact the phenomena of human imagination. Engaging interested individuals and organizations through programs and events is a key focus of the center. On Dec. 3 from 5:30 to 6 p.m., Clarke Center scholar Jon Lomborg will present “[Becoming Galactic: Citizens of the Galaxy](#),” a free program open to the public at Atkinson Hall. Lomborg, considered one of the foremost artists inspired by astronomy, won an Emmy Award for his work as chief artist for the television series COSMOS. Learn more [here](#).

Private support will help the Clarke Center for Human Imagination make a transformational impact on new research directions, creative partnerships and collaborations, and educational practices for the 21st century. To support Sir Arthur C. Clarke’s greatest gift—imagination—visit the [Clarke Center website](#) and click the ‘Support the Center’ button.

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