

Braille Guild endowments to aid visually disabled UCSD students

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The Braille Transcribers Guild of San Diego has presented the University of California, San Diego, with a \$305,093 gift to establish an endowed scholarship fund for visually disabled students at UCSD.

In addition, the guild has established a \$110,000 equipment endowment to the UCSD Office of Student Financial Services to provide equipment, such as computers, for these students.

Joseph Watson, UCSD vice chancellor for student affairs, said his office has contributed \$10,000 in matching funds to the equipment endowment for the purchase of a voice-activated computer system. It will be available on campus for all visually disabled students to use.

The guild, which has been operating since 1954, is made up of volunteers who prepare and transcribe written material into Braille. Its principal benefactors are students in the San Diego area.

Dorothy Del Vecchio, the guild's first vice president, said the endowments came as a result of the membership's decision to cease operations in October.

"Many of our members have been with the guild since the 1950s, and it's been difficult to get new volunteers through the years," she said. "Our age range is from the 70s to the 90s, and we were just getting tired. So we decided to disband."

Members wanted to disburse the money that had accumulated from stock given the guild from various donors. They felt that it should go in the form of scholarship endowments to UCSD because of its program to aid visually disabled students, Del Vecchio said.

"This gift will help visually disabled students at UCSD for many years to come," said Mary Gagliardo, director of development for student affairs.

"The university is delighted that the Braille Transcribers Guild decided to honor us with these endowments. This wonderful organization has a long history of giving to the community."

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