Donald And Darlene Shiley Give $4 Million To Support Alzheimer’s Research At UCSD

The University of California, San Diego today announced a $4 million pledge from Donald and Darlene Shiley that supports UCSD’s Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center (ADRC). The announcement was made in conjunction with National Alzheimer’s Disease Awareness Month.

Through this gift the donors hope to further the center’s groundbreaking Alzheimer’s Disease research by providing both endowment and current-use funding for faculty support, research projects and clinical trials.

“Donald and I have supported Alzheimer’s Disease research and treatment for quite some time now. The disease has hit my family very hard – I have lost several close family members to the disease, including my mother,” said Darlene Shiley. “We chose to support UCSD’s Alzheimer’s efforts because of its national leadership in this area.”

In recognition of this gift, and in honor of Darlene’s mother Dee Marcos, the campus will name the ADRC the Shiley-Marcos Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center.

“We are very grateful for this gift that will help give families hope in caring for their loved ones. We are incredibly fortunate at UCSD to be able to enjoy a long-term and vital relationship with Donald and Darlene Shiley,” said Chancellor Marye Anne Fox. “This support will enable us to further our efforts to find treatments for this devastating disease. I am confident that our outstanding team of researchers will make a profound impact on the effects of this disease and how it is treated.”

“Thanks to the generous support of the Shileys, the ADRC will continue as a major contributor to solving the challenge of Alzheimer’s disease,” said Edward W. Holmes, M.D., UCSD vice chancellor for Health Sciences and dean, UCSD School of Medicine. “Researchers are close to identifying the causes of this disorder, which is the final step toward developing interventions to stop or even prevent the onset of the disease, at the same time improving the treatments we have today to improve the quality of life for Alzheimer’s patients and their families.”

“The strides we have made are due to strong collaborations among many dedicated scientists and physicians whose focus is defeating this disease,” said Leon Thal, chairman of the UCSD Department of Neurosciences and director of the UCSD ADRC. “This gift will enable us to continue to recruit the most talented clinicians and researchers to UCSD to further expand our patient care, clinical trials and basic research efforts.” Thal is also principal investigator of the national Alzheimer’s Disease Cooperative Study, a national network of centers studying promising new approaches to diagnosing and treating the disease.

Founded in 1984, the ADRC was one of the nation’s original five Alzheimer’s centers established by the National Institute on Aging, a branch of the National Institutes of Health. Thal was named director in 1994.
The UCSD ADRC has been instrumental in making a number of discoveries regarding biological and clinical aspects of the disease, including identifying new targets for therapy. As part of its mission, the ADRC also provides patient evaluation, community outreach and education, and access to clinical trials for various interventions.

The Shiley gift supports the ADRC as follows:

- A $2 million endowment intended to establish the Shiley Chair in Alzheimer’s Disease Research (pending UCSD Health Sciences Academic Senate and Office of the President approvals), a rotating chair that will provide funding to faculty members conducting Alzheimer’s research.
- A current use fund of $900,000 that provides start-up packages for newly recruited faculty members to UCSD’s Neurosciences.
- A current use fund of $850,000 that supports Alzheimer’s Disease research programs that are not funded by other grants.
- And a current use fund of $250,000 to support clinical trials for Alzheimer’s Disease treatments.

This month, in recognition of her deep commitment to finding a cure for this invasive disease, Darlene Shiley was named to the National Alzheimer’s Association Board. Darlene Shiley is a trustee for the UC San Diego Foundation, is a member of the UCSD Campaign Cabinet, is a member and past-chair of UCSD Chancellor’s Associates, and is a member of the UCSD Board of Overseers. She also serves on boards at the Salk Institute, Scripps Clinic and the University of San Diego.

The couple has supported other healthcare and neuroscience initiatives at UCSD including previous gifts to Dr. Thal’s Alzheimer’s research, experimental Alzheimer’s brain cell therapy research conducted by Mark Tuszyński, M.D., Ph.D., professor of neurosciences, as well as the world-renowned Shiley Eye Center at UCSD, and several other centers on campus. With this newest gift to UCSD, they have committed more than $8 million to the university.

They also have supported other local Alzheimer’s Disease organizations, including the Glenner Center building campaign, San Diego Alzheimer’s Association, and Alzheimer’s research at the Salk Institute. The couple has supported other San Diego health and scientific initiatives including the Shiley Center for Science and Technology at University of San Diego, the Shiley Sports and Rehabilitation Center at Scripps Green Hospital, and the Translational Sciences Fellowships, orthopedic chair and chemistry chair at Scripps Clinic. In addition, they are strong supporters of the arts and other academic organizations.

According to the Alzheimer’s Association, an estimated 4.5 million Americans have Alzheimer’s disease. The number of Americans with Alzheimer’s has more than doubled since 1980.

This gift contributes to the $1 billion fund-raising goal of The Campaign for UCSD: Imagine What’s Next. Campaign priorities include supporting students and faculty through scholarships, fellowships and endowed chairs; creating and expanding academic programs; funding research endeavors and health sciences advancements; and providing innovation funds and unrestricted support. To date, UCSD has raised $672.4 million; the campaign is scheduled to conclude in June 2007.

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