

UC SANTA BARBARA

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UCSB Receives \$10 Million Gift to Improve Public Education

With California's fast-growing school-age population, perhaps no issue is more important to the future of the state and the nation than the educational success of its children.

At UC Santa Barbara, researchers in the Graduate School of Education are leading the way in developing innovative collaborative approaches and solutions to some of the most pressing challenges facing elementary and secondary school educators today.

In recognition of the overall excellence of the Graduate School of Education and inspired by a commitment to improve public education, Don and Marilyn Gevirtz, of Santa Barbara, have made a \$10 million gift to the professional school. To honor the benefactors, the school will be named the Gevirtz Graduate School of Education.

"This generous investment is going to help our Graduate School of Education build on its strengths in ways that will have a profound impact on the lives and well being of children," said the university's chancellor, Henry T. Yang.

"We applaud Ambassador and Mrs. Gevirtz for the boldness of their vision, and thank them for demonstrating their confidence in the creativity and leadership of our faculty in a way that will provide tremendous benefits to tomorrow's teachers and students."

Approximately 90 percent of American children receive their education through public schools.

The importance of providing quality education for children is often identified as one of the nation's highest priorities, yet relatively few schools of education receive the levels of philanthropic support and professional recognition enjoyed by schools of business, medicine, or law.

"We believe that educational access is critical to all children for the fulfillment of their hopes and dreams and for success in their chosen careers, whatever they may be," said Marilyn Gevirtz, a trustee of The UCSB Foundation.

"We have all had the experience of having a teacher who made a profound impact on our lives.

Our goal is to support the Graduate School of Education at UCSB as it prepares teachers who will have that kind of impact on all their students and in that way fulfill their own dreams as well."

The Gevirtz gift, the largest ever to UCSB's Graduate School of Education, will support new research designed to improve academic achievement in public schools and influence educational policy and practice.

The gift will help in the development of a network of scholars and practitioners across California and the nation to address critical issues in K-12 education.

Researchers will have additional opportunities to collaborate with school districts to develop, implement, and research programs that will benefit and enhance the nation's school systems.

A visiting scholars program and conferences that explore important themes and issues in education will also be established.

Recognizing that successful schools are dependent on leaders who can foster the best in all those involved in teaching and learning, a new Leadership Initiative will study school environments where children excel, teachers create content-rich and motivating curriculum, and schools embrace parents to form a culture of belonging and a community of learners.

The gift will also help attract the best students to UCSB's Graduate School of Education by providing fellowships, stipends, and tuition support.

"It is our vision that the gift will fuel the discovery of new knowledge to ensure that when children come to school they will see themselves as learners who find joy in the challenges of education," said Don Gevirtz, a businessman and former Ambassador to Fiji.

"One of our principal objectives is to see this graduate school produce the very best teachers who can also provide strong leadership in public education."

The gift will support programs to bring creative ideas and new perspectives to thinking about the leadership needs of education, from the teacher in the classroom to the principal and on up to the superintendent of schools.

The graduate school will be looking to develop new ways to bring to education the kind of leadership that is committed to creating the most effective learning environment for children.

Jules Zimmer, dean of the graduate school, said, "This extraordinary gift will enable our faculty to address today's most important educational issues and to develop approaches to teaching that create learning environments that are respectful of who children are and what they bring to the classroom.

The graduate school is committed to research that adds to the knowledge base upon which best practices in education are established."

Over the years, the Gevirtzes have made many generous gifts to UCSB.

Marilyn's interest in advancing primary education led to the couple's initial involvement with the Graduate School of Education and to a \$1 million gift to establish the Gevirtz Research Center.

Long before the Santa Barbara campus was part of the University of California, it was a manual arts school and a training center for elementary school teachers. Today, UCSB's Gevirtz Graduate School of Education is a leading center for educational research and teacher training that contributes to the improvement of K-12 education nationwide through scholarly inquiry, research, and practitioner programs.

Graduate students benefit from a wide range of faculty expertise in sociology, economics, psychology, teacher education, and curriculum development.

The school prepares researchers, scholar-practitioners, and educational leaders through academic programs in a variety of educational specializations leading to the Ph.D. and M.A.

In addition to awarding California teaching and other credentials, the school's Counseling/Clinical/School/Psychology Program prepares psychologists to work in a wide variety of settings.

The Gevirtz Graduate School of Education currently has 39 faculty members and enrolls 358 graduate students.

ABOUT THE DONORS:

Ambassador and Mrs. Gevirtz are partners in their philanthropic support for education and related programs aimed at improving the well being of children.

Don Gevirtz is a successful businessman, entrepreneur, author, and a former U. S. Ambassador.

Born in Chicago, Illinois, Gevirtz was raised in Kokomo, Indiana, and attended the University of Southern California on a basketball scholarship.

He earned a bachelor's degree in business administration from USC.

For more than 25 years, he served as chairman and chief executive officer of The Foothill Group, Inc., one of the nation's largest publicly owned commercial finance companies which he co-founded.

In 1989, Mr. Gevirtz was named Entrepreneur of the Year by Arthur Young and Inc. Magazine.

He was also named Entrepreneurial Alumnus of the Year by USC.

Mr. Gevirtz is author of Business Plan for America: An Entrepreneur's Manifesto, which was designated one of the top 10 business books of the year by Business Week in 1985.

He has lectured throughout the world on leadership, capital formation, and business management.

In addition, he has served on a number of state and national commissions dedicated to promoting economic growth, innovation, and entrepreneurship.

From 1996 to 1997, Mr. Gevirtz was U.S. Ambassador to the Republic of Fiji, the Republic of Nauru, the Kingdom of Tonga and Tuvalu.

He is currently a professional investor and a visiting professor in UCSB's Global and International Studies Program.

Mr. and Mrs. Gevirtz established the Gevirtz Research Center in UCSB's Graduate School of Education in 1996 with a \$1 million gift.

The center is committed to improving public education in America through research. Don Gevirtz serves as chairman of the board of directors at the center.

Marilyn is a trustee of The UCSB Foundation and plays leadership roles in numerous community organizations, including serving on the boards of the Santa Barbara City College Foundation and Girls Inc.

She is a former member of the California Commission on Crime Control and Violence Prevention.

For 10 years she was a partner in a successful antique business called Country Connection.

Don Gevirtz has also served as a UCSB Foundation trustee.

In recognition of their dedication to UCSB, the Gevirtzes were named Honorary Alumni in 1996.

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The University of California, Santa Barbara is a leading research institution that also provides a comprehensive liberal arts learning experience. Our academic community

of faculty, students, and staff is characterized by a culture of interdisciplinary collaboration that is responsive to the needs of our multicultural and global society. All of this takes place within a living and learning environment like no other, as we draw inspiration from the beauty and resources of our extraordinary location at the edge of the Pacific Ocean.