UC SANTA BARBARA
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Funding the Future

Voracious reader. Publisher. Avid book collector.

For Sara Miller McCune, words and the knowledge they impart are the foundation for a personal and professional history marked, from every angle, by philanthropy, a tradition carried on most recently in the form of a $5 million gift to UC Santa Barbara. Miller McCune, founder and board chairman of academic publisher SAGE, which turns 50 this year, has a history of supporting UC Santa Barbara that spans more than two decades. This donation marks the latest generous pledge to have an impact on an impressive array of university disciplines and departments.

“UC Santa Barbara is honored and privileged to have Sara Miller McCune as such a good friend of our campus, and we deeply appreciate her role in the growth and advancement of the arts, the humanities, the social sciences and the sciences at UCSB,” said Chancellor Henry T. Yang. “Her vision and broad philanthropic support for our programs, and for both graduate and undergraduate students, further strengthens the artistic work and critical research accomplished on our campus by leading faculty, researchers and dedicated students. We are profoundly grateful for all that Sara has done in support of UC Santa Barbara.”

Half of the new gift, or $2.5 million, is for the UCSB Library, where Miller McCune has been a steadfast benefactor. The other half will support Miller McCune’s many other passions — from social science to Shakespeare — at the university.

“I think education is the foundation of democracy — and public education in particular,” Miller McCune said of her belief in supporting education in general, and UCSB so extensively. “I have a great deal of respect and admiration for what goes on at UCSB and I think that the university contributes immensely to the quality of life in Santa Barbara. I guess I tend to put my money where my mouth is. That’s an old phrase, but a good one.”

The library’s Department of Special Research Collections already holds many rare books from her and her late husband’s (George D. McCune) original collection, and last year the UCSB Library mounted two exhibitions around some of Miller McCune’s current holdings. She had previously made an estate bequest leaving virtually all of her extensive, more recently acquired collection of first edition books to the library, a gift that will be transformative for the entire campus, as it complements many of UCSB’s existing interdisciplinary research collections.

With this latest contribution, the campus will create the Sara Miller McCune University Library Innovation Fund, meant to enable the library to evolve to best meet user needs and demands.

“Information technology continues to dramatically shape the preferences and possibilities for knowledge users and creators everywhere,” said Denise Stephens, university librarian at UCSB. “Thanks to the generosity of Sara Miller McCune, the UCSB Library will have a decided advantage in delivering the information services and environments required of our increasingly diverse and demanding scholarly community. It provides dedicated resources to envision and build the research library services of the future.”

The library is in the midst of a major renovation and addition that is slated for completion in fall 2015.

Both Miller McCune and SAGE have contributed significantly to UCSB over the past two decades. Among the highlights: The SAGE Center for the Study of the Mind; the SAGE Sara Miller McCune Dean of Social Sciences; the George D. McCune Dissertation Fellowship in Communication; the McCune Conference Room at the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center; and the Sara Miller McCune Internship and Public Service program at the Capps Center for the Study of Ethics, Religion and Public Life, where they have also funded student internships.

An honorary alumna of UCSB, Miller McCune is also a longtime benefactor to UCSB Arts & Lectures, where she created an endowment for the Sara Miller McCune Director of Arts & Lectures and now co-chairs the Council for Arts & Lectures. SAGE supports arts engagement to approximately 20,000 people annually, with partnerships on campus, in schools and in the community, through the A&L Arts Education Program.

Said Miller McCune, “One of the things that makes UCSB unique is that it is a very collaborative place across the disciplines, and it is a place where quality is valued. It’s not just about the money and it never has been. It’s about the building of institutions, be they for education, be they to improve democracy, be they to improve communities or to improve society. At the end of the day, that’s really what it’s all about.”

About UC Santa Barbara

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.