



Lynda and Stewart Resnick Pledge \$50M to UC Davis for Sustainability Research

Historic Gift Funds New Center for Agricultural Innovation and Research Grants to Drive a Sustainable Future

October 13, 2022

The University of California, Davis, today announced that philanthropists Lynda and Stewart Resnick, co-owners of The Wonderful Company, have pledged the largest gift ever to the university by individual donors. The \$50 million pledge will support the school's longstanding commitment to address today's most pressing challenges in agriculture and environmental sustainability.

The \$50 million gift will establish the Lynda and Stewart Resnick Center for Agricultural Innovation, with \$10 million of the Resnicks' gift to be directed toward annual competitive research grants through the Resnick Agricultural Innovation Research Fund. Their donation also supports UC Davis' \$2 billion fundraising campaign, "[Expect Greater: From UC Davis, for the World](#)," the university's largest philanthropic endeavor to date.

"Protecting and preserving our planet for the future means we must take bold steps and push the boundaries of what's possible," said Stewart Resnick, who is also a member of the UC Davis Chancellor's Board of Advisors. "UC Davis is at the forefront of tackling climate change, developing groundbreaking technologies and solutions to reduce our collective carbon footprint, and creating a more sustainable agriculture system. This gift aims to help our greatest scientific minds rise to the great challenge of our time — the sustainability of our planet for future generations. Lynda, I, and The Wonderful Company are proud to partner with UC Davis to support this all-important work."

Design on the Resnick Center is expected to begin in 2022, with construction slated for completion by 2026. Once built, the new 40,000-square-foot, LEED-certified, state-of-the-art hub will house classrooms, research and lab spaces, and student career and advising support near the current plant sciences building off Hutchison Drive in Davis.

This initiative will unite experts from across UC Davis focused on five thematic research areas including identifying innovative solutions for agricultural byproducts, maximizing water and energy efficiencies, developing next-generation technologies, making crops more resilient and sustainable in the face of a rapidly changing climate, and expanding access to nutritious food. Ultimately, the center will explore new ways of balancing food production with leading sustainability practices while advancing the global agricultural industry with scalable solutions.

“Thanks to this historic gift from Lynda and Stewart Resnick, UC Davis will further expand its global reach, helping to shape the future of sustainable food production,” said Gary S. May, chancellor, UC Davis. “This gift demonstrates a continued commitment to innovative environmental stewardship and allows us to create science-based solutions that can be rapidly deployed while mitigating the impacts of climate change.”

The Resnick Agricultural Innovation Research Fund will provide grants to promote cross-collaboration and strengthen the network among research faculty, agricultural producers, food companies, pharmaceutical companies, commodity boards, and other key stakeholders. Beginning this year, competitive research grants will be awarded annually to UC Davis faculty and Cooperative Extension specialists focused on identifying value-added properties in pistachio, almond and pomegranate byproducts.

“Many specialty crop byproducts are treasure troves of compounds that can promote health, improve soil quality, influence microbial ecology, or be converted into valuable products,” said Helene Dillard, dean of the College of Agricultural and Environmental Sciences. “This transformative gift will help increase the potential of these byproducts, enhance sustainability and create new markets.”

The center will provide student advising and career support including for more than 60 Wonderful Scholars enrolled at UC Davis. The Resnick-created Wonderful Scholarship program was initially established to provide college scholarships to the children of Wonderful employees from the Central Valley. It has expanded over the last 28 years to also award college scholarships to Wonderful Education Career Pathways Program students, as well as graduates of the Wonderful College Prep Academy and neighboring schools. Many of these recipients are first-generation college students.

The Wonderful Company, co-run by the Resnicks, is one of the largest privately held companies in the United States, whose iconic brands include FIJI Water, POM Wonderful, Wonderful Pistachios, Wonderful Halos, Wonderful Seedless Lemons, Teleflora, JUSTIN, JNSQ, and Landmark wines. Every year, the Resnicks invest in education, community development, and health and wellness initiatives across the Central Valley and beyond, a place-based giving approach centered on investing in, listening to, and collaborating with the communities where their employees live and work. To date, the Resnicks have invested more than \$2.3 billion in philanthropy, with more than \$1.3 billion invested in environmental sustainability, to help combat climate change and preserve the planet for future generations.

“The Lynda and Stewart Resnick Center for Agricultural Innovation will be a game-changer for research and teaching,” said Shaun B. Keister, vice chancellor for Development and Alumni Relations. “Now, experts from diverse fields will have the critical resources and tools needed to train the leaders of tomorrow. The Resnicks’ vision is a testament to what philanthropic partnerships with UC Davis can achieve.”

Together, donors and UC Davis continually strive to advance and accelerate sustainability and social responsibility initiatives to create positive outcomes for the planet and people.