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Gift for Amphitheater, Research Strengthens Community Connections

UC Merced's amphitheater and Health Sciences Research Institute are the recipients of a gift from longtime campus supporters Joel and Elizabeth Wallace

MERCED, Calif. — The ties between the community and the University of California, Merced, will grow stronger thanks to a gift from longtime campus supporters Joel and Elizabeth Wallace.

The Wallaces have given UC Merced \$575,000 to establish the Wallace-Dutra Amphitheater and the Yablokoff-Wallace Health Science Research Endowment, which will support the campus's Community Research, Innovations and Solutions for the Health of the San Joaquin Valley Network (CRIS).

"UC Merced has distinguished itself in many ways, and this gift supports two campus hallmarks— community and research," Chancellor Dorothy Leland said. "Whether it's through entertainment in the amphitheater or vital health research that serves the San Joaquin Valley, the Wallaces' generosity will have a tremendous impact."

Construction crews this fall will begin building an oval concrete stage and path, as well as run power to the amphitheater adjacent to Little Lake. When completed, the

Quick Facts

- The gift will fund construction of a stage and a path for the campus's amphitheater, now named the Wallace-Dutra Amphitheater.
- The gift will also fund innovative research that targets health issues plaguing the San Joaquin Valley.
- Joel and Elizabeth Wallace are longtime campus supporters and helped establish the university's dining center, named in their honor.

revamped area will provide a much-needed venue for outdoor events, including concerts or movies for up to 2,000 people. The amphitheater, managed by the Office of Student Life, will also be available for weddings or banquets. The concrete stage will be able to seat about 150 guests.

The construction should be done by the end of the fall semester.

The Wallaces' \$250,000 gift for the amphitheater builds on the Class of 2009's gift. The graduating seniors sold bricks — now installed in the sidewalk by the amphitheater — to help establish the venue. A sign reading "The Wallace-Dutra Amphitheater Celebrating the Class of 2009's Vision" will be installed at the site.

In addition to fostering community on campus, the Wallaces' support will help expand partnerships between UC Merced researchers and Mercy Medical Center Merced. The Yablokoff -Wallace Health Science Research Endowment will specifically support collaborative research between UC Merced and Mercy Medical Center Merced designed to improve health services and patient health.

Through this endowment, UC Merced will initiate one to two research projects with Mercy Medical Center every year. Each project will include UC researchers and hospital staff. The research projects could include clinical interventions to improve care, preventive services, and administrative and quality assurance innovations.

The \$200,000 endowment, as well as current support, to UC Merced's Health Sciences Research Institute is part of the Community Research, Innovations and Solutions (CRIS) Network. CRIS works to develop and support relationships between UC Merced researchers and community organizations throughout the San Joaquin Valley to improve health and well-being.

The Yablokoff -Wallace Health Science Research Endowment provides a unique model for how philanthropists can support ongoing research collaborations between community and academic partners to improve local and regional health in the San Joaquin Valley.

"It is a great pleasure to be part of this vibrant campus's development, and we are so happy to bring the dream of the Class of 2009 to reality with the creation of a campus amphitheater," Elizabeth Wallace said. "Additionally, it's gratifying to know that this

research endowment will support important projects aimed at immediately improving health in Merced and its surrounding communities."

The Wallaces are longtime supporters of the campus and in 2005 helped establish the Yablokoff-Wallace Dining Center, which has become a central campus hub for meals, entertainment and meetings. Additionally, their generosity in 2008 created the Joel and Elizabeth Wallace Terrace and Elizabeth's Garden.

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UC Merced opened Sept. 5, 2005, as the 10th campus in the University of California system and the first American research university of the 21st century. Situated near Yosemite National Park, the campus significantly expands access to the UC system for students throughout the state, with a special mission to increase college-going rates among students in the San Joaquin Valley. It also serves as a major base of advanced research, a model of sustainable design and construction, and a stimulus to economic growth and diversification throughout the region.