

# **Donor pledges and state matches will translate into \$6.5 million for WVU research**

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In its inaugural report to the state, West Virginia University officials announced that efforts from the first year will translate into at least a \$6.5 million investment from private donor pledges and state matching funds for the Research Trust Fund . The money not only establishes a firm foundation for further research initiatives, but it represents a tangible investment in the future of West Virginia, said President James P. Clements .

Midge Thorn understands this investment well. When she was diagnosed with Non-Hodgkin's lymphoma, after finding a lump looming on her forehead, she immediately sought the expertise and care of doctors at WVU s Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center .

"I owe my life to the Cancer Center," Thorn said. "They are very special to me. They're my family."

Thorn can call herself a cancer survivor today principally because of the treatment she received at the Center. Earlier this year, that life-saving treatment was enhanced and improved by a \$22 million renovation and expansion of the Center.

It is initiatives like this one that demonstrate West Virginia University's commitment to developing partnerships with the community and state to offer real people real solutions. The Research Trust Fund is one of the critical elements in this effort.

The state of West Virginia established the Trust Fund in 2008 with an initial appropriation of \$50 million, and a focus on economic development, job growth and health care. Both West Virginia and Marshall universities are able to tap into this fund to double private gifts. At WVU , the funds will be used for biomedical sciences, energy, biometrics and nanotechnology.

"Raising private dollars to match the state appropriation remains a top priority of our team," said R. Wayne King, WVU Foundation president and CEO ."Advancing research is a major focus of the University, and the Foundation is committed to the success of the Research Trust Fund initiative."

"The research were doing at WVU is incredibly important," said Clements. "It represents our dedication to improving the lives of West Virginians and our intent to be a leader in the fields of energy, national security and health care. The states willingness to match funds dollar-for-dollar is a large commitment, and one that we are grateful for. The very fact that they are willing to do this shows what confidence people have in our outstanding faculty and researchers."

Many of those researchers work with WVU through WVNano, where they conduct research on the atomic and molecular level. Its a critical program within the University and the state because the research performed here has been recognized and used across the country.

One of WVNano's scientists, Letha Sooter, is currently working with the U.S. Army to create devices that can detect explosives and warn soldiers of the impending danger. Its technology that could soon be used to save lives.

Saving lives is at the heart of another successful program of investment, the Eminent Scholars Recruitment and Enhancement Program, a precursor to the Research Trust Fund. With \$5 million in private giving and matching contributions from the state, WVU is able to put \$10 million to work enhancing its research and outreach efforts in the areas of cancer and stroke. A \$2.5 million private gift from Ben and Jo Statler and the states match, allowed the Mary Babb Randolph Cancer Center to establish two endowed positions for preeminent physicians. WVU s Health Sciences Center has been able to initiate a comprehensive stroke research program with the forthcoming recruitment of three eminent faculty members thanks to a \$2.5 million gift from WVU Hospitals and the states matching contribution. The work conducted by these Eminent Scholar researchers in both cancer and stroke will lead to clinical trials, specifically targeting illnesses found at higher levels in West Virginia.

Like the Research Trust Fund, the Eminent Scholars program demonstrates the kind of real world results that spring from strong partnerships, a commitment from the state, and world-class research at WVU .

Elsewhere on campus, the creation of the Advanced Energy Initiative is expected to establish WVU as a world leader in energy, and the construction of premier research space for the Center for Identification Technology Research is expected to assist the FBI , among others, in national security.

These investments in the University's human and physical infrastructure are the building blocks with which the states economy will be formed. The Research Trust Fund is another example of the University's commitment to seeking such investments.

"We see the funds we were able to secure this year as just the beginning," said Curt M. Peterson, vice president for research and economic development at WVU . "Were going to continue to support this program because we envision a future where the research were doing now helps the people of this state in a way that they can feel and that they can understand."

"The bottom line is that West Virginians deserve the best health care this country has to offer and they deserve to live an environment that's safe and secure," Clements said. "With the help of the governor and the Legislature, West Virginia University will be able to make that happen. We will fulfill our mission as a 21st century land-grant institution to make West Virginia a better place to live and to offer West Virginians a better quality of life."

For more information, please visit: <http://www.wvuf.org/index.php?q=node/63&cat=2>

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