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Adrienne Arsht Gives Five Million Dollar Gift to University of Miami



CORAL GABLES, Fla., Oct. 16, 2008 (BUSINESS WIRE) -- University of Miami Trustee, philanthropist and community leader Adrienne Arsht committed to give a five million dollar donation to support key initiatives across the university. The gift includes two million for The University of Miami's (UM) Ethics Programs, adding to an earlier one million dollar donation and constituting the largest gift for ethics in Florida history; and one million dollars to the Hope for Vision program of The Bascom Palmer Eye Institute.

"Adrienne is passionate about a great many causes and, being the sharp businesswoman she is, she has been able to connect them all by generously investing in a variety of important projects at the University of Miami," University of Miami President Donna E. Shalala said today in announcing the five million dollar gift. "We are so fortunate to have this tireless champion for education in our community."

"I am pleased to lend my support to the University of Miami, an institution which touches so many lives in this community and elsewhere through higher education, medicine, medical research, culture and athletics," said Arsht.

Arsht made her initial one million dollar donation to UM Ethics Programs in 2006, at the time equaling the largest gift supporting ethics programs in the State of Florida. Her latest gift breaks that record and will continue to fund several university-wide interdisciplinary initiatives, including an ethics debate series, a research program and the Adrienne Arsht Distinguished Speaker Series in Ethics. The series will next present Bowen H. "Buzz" McCoy, a long-time leader, thinker and author in business ethics, on Oct. 27 on the Coral Gables campus. The latest gift will also support a faculty ethics project initiative and a visiting scholars program.

The UM Ethics Programs were recently designated a World Health Organization Collaborating Center in Ethics and Global Health Policy, the only one of its kind in the United States. The ethics center, in conjunction with the CITI Program in research ethics, has also just been awarded a National Institutes of Health grant to train researchers around Latin America and the Caribbean.

In addition to Arsht's ongoing relationship with the UM Ethics Programs, she has designated one million dollars to create the "Adrienne Arsht Hope for Vision Retinal Degeneration Research Laboratory." The generous gift will fund a laboratory for retinal degeneration research at the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute at the Miller School of Medicine. The lab will allow development of new treatments for hereditary eye disorders. For the fifth year in a row, the Bascom Palmer Eye Institute has been ranked the nation's best in ophthalmology in U.S. News & World Report's annual "Best Hospitals" survey. Bascom Palmer has received this top ranking seven times in the last 14 years.

Arsht has also designated funds to other University of Miami areas such as athletics and the Frost School of Music, and provides vital funding for strategic University priorities. Arsht was appointed to the UM Board of Trustees in May 2008. She serves on the boards of numerous charitable organizations, including Amigos for Kids, American Ballet Theatre and Best Buddies International, among others.

The University of Miami is the largest private research institution in the southeastern United States. The University's mission is to provide quality education, attract and retain outstanding students, support the faculty and their research, and build an endowment for University initiatives. www.miami.edu

