

# THE BALTIMORE SUN

## Hopkins cancer center gets gift of \$150 million

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A New York clothing industry billionaire has donated \$150 million to the Johns Hopkins University's cancer center, the largest single gift ever to the university.

The gift by Sidney Kimmel, 73, who owns a fashion empire that produces brands including Polo Jeans, Ralph Lauren and Nine West, will enable what is already one of the world's best cancer centers to expand its research, recruit talented young scientists and build lodging for the families of cancer patients, hospital officials said at a news conference yesterday.

"We seek nothing less than the eradication of cancer in our lifetime, and this gift brings us closer to that goal," Dr. Edward D. Miller, dean of the medical school, told an audience at what is now called the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins.

The son of a Philadelphia cabbie, Kimmel owns restaurants, a hotel, a movie production firm and part of the Miami Heat basketball team. He was inspired to start a career as a philanthropist when a family friend died of cancer in the early 1990s.

Kimmel's nonprofit foundation during the past eight years has handed out millions of dollars and endowed three other cancer centers named after him in Philadelphia, San Diego and New York. He has also bankrolled a performing arts center in Philadelphia and a special exhibit gallery at the Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington.

"He wants to give away all his money to help find a cure for cancer," said Dr. Curt I. Civin, a Hopkins oncology professor, at yesterday's news conference. "That is going to be his lasting contribution to the world. ... Sidney Kimmel, you are a mensch - a tremendously good man."

### **No personal tie to city**

Kimmel has never been treated for cancer and has no personal connection to Baltimore.

But he was apparently impressed on his visit to the cancer center two years ago, university officials said.

During a long meeting in the medical school dean's board room, Kimmel listened to presentations from a dozen cancer researchers who explained why their cutting-edge experiments could go further with more money. Although he has no formal medical education, Kimmel fired back with pointed questions, Hopkins administrators said.

After two years of deliberations with his own panel of scientific consultants, Kimmel decided that his largest gift should go to Hopkins.

Kimmel seemed especially impressed by how Hopkins has worked with the state to use money from the settlement of Maryland's lawsuit against the tobacco industry to fight cancer, university officials said.

### **'I am blessed'**

The businessman-philanthropist did not appear at Hopkins yesterday and was not available for comment.

But in a written statement, Kimmel said, "I am blessed. To be able to support one of the leading institutions in the world and build on its momentum gives so much meaning to what we have all done thus far to defeat cancer."

About a third of Kimmel's gift was received by the university this month, with the rest to be transferred by his estate after his death.

Part of the money will be used to build comfortable, home-like accommodations for the families of cancer patients, said Ronald R. Peterson, president of the Johns Hopkins Hospital and

Health System. The location of the residential facility has not been decided.

The East Baltimore center has two nearby homes to accommodate families. But each has about 10 rooms, too few to meet demand, said Dr. Martin Abeloff, director of the cancer center.

### **Clearing way for expansion**

The 28-year-old cancer center is one of the nation's largest, treating more than 6,000 new patients a year. Doctors there conduct research into vaccines, gene therapy and the molecular genetics of cancer, and offer treatments including bone marrow transplantation and innovative surgery.

Kimmel's donation will enable the center to expand its staff of 400 physicians and scientists and recruit the best young researchers, Abeloff said. Kimmel has given the center the freedom to decide exactly which areas of research would be best served by additional funding.

The center expanded in January last year from cramped quarters into a \$125 million clinical facility called the Harry and Jeanette Weinberg Building and the \$59 million Bunting Blaustein

Center Research Building.

Those buildings will continue to keep those names, which identify previous donors. But the umbrella name for the cancer center will become the Sidney Kimmel Comprehensive Cancer Center at Johns Hopkins.

Kimmel's donation dwarfs the \$7 million - worth about \$100 million in today's dollars - that the banker named Johns Hopkins gave in 1873 to create a university and hospital in his name.

### **Tops Bloomberg donation**

Before Kimmel's gift, the largest donation to the university was \$100 million by media mogul Michael R. Bloomberg, a 1964 graduate who is chair of the university's board of trustees. He is also the mayor-elect of New York City.

“On the day after my election,” Bloomberg said in a written statement, “I took time out to call and thank Sidney. He’s probably the nation’s leading individual donor to cancer research, and that deserves recognition not only from the Hopkins community but all of us.”

The gift was among the largest ever in the United States for cancer research, matching the \$151 million that chemical company magnate Jon Huntsman gave in 1999 to create the Huntsman Cancer Institute at the University of Utah.

### **Intel founder has record**

The contribution is not the largest ever to a university. Intel computer company co-founder Gordon Moore and his wife, Betty, donated \$600 million to the California Institute of Technology in Pasadena this fall.

William C. Baker, a member of the Johns Hopkins Medicine Board of Visitors, said the impact of the Kimmel donation will be felt in hospitals around the globe.

“The importance of this contribution from the Kimmel family is immeasurable,” he said. “It’s an enormous contribution, the granddaddy of them all.”

“Not only will the Hopkins institutions benefit from this, but people who care about health care all around the world,” said Baker, president of the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.